



## AMST 350-01: Seminar in Theory and Method of American Studies Fall 2022

*This course is designated by the University Writing Proficiency Committee as a writing-intensive course. American Studies majors must earn a "C" (2.0) or higher in this course to fulfill the University's upper-division writing requirement (UDWR). If you are not an American Studies major, please check with an advisor in your major to determine if this source will satisfy the requirement for your major.*

---

<b>Instructor:</b>	<b>Dr. Alison Kanosky</b>
<b>Class Meetings:</b>	In-person, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30- 3:45 p.m. in EC 011
<b>Office hours:</b>	Thursdays 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. in GH 408 or over Zoom You are always welcome to drop in during these office hours, or, if you prefer, you may book an appointment during office hours at <a href="https://calendly.com/akanosky/15min">https://calendly.com/akanosky/15min</a> . Please email me if you need to schedule an appointment at a time outside of my regular office hours.
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:akanosky@fullerton.edu">akanosky@fullerton.edu</a> ; I will respond within 24 hours on weekdays.
<b>Phone:</b>	(657) 278-3595

---

**A Welcome Note:** First thing's first: We are continuing to live through a really hard and uncertain time. Despite the difficulties you may be experiencing, you are here persisting in your pursuit of higher education, and I applaud you for that! With so much in flux, things may change for you, and they may change for me, too. If you need any extra support this semester, please do let me know. You do not need to disclose your personal circumstances to me, but I will do my best to work with you, to remain flexible, and to figure it out with you. We share the same goal: for you to learn and succeed in this class.

### CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Understanding and appreciation of methodology, theories of society and images of humanity as they affect American studies contributions to scholarship. Fulfills the course requirement of the university upper-division baccalaureate writing requirement for American Studies majors.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND COURSE OBJECTIVES

This is a writing intensive course that does not include an examination. Because this course is a writing-intensive course that meets the Upper-Division Writing Requirement, students will write multiple papers that involve the organization and expression of complex ideas. For all essays, I will provide careful and timely evaluations of your writing including written feedback and a completed rubric (usually within 2 weeks, but always before the next essay assignment is due) so that you can identify areas to improve upon in subsequent essays. Students will learn about disciplinary conventions in American Studies for relevant audiences and purposes. In class discussion, in individualized feedback I provide, and in our in-class writing workshops, students will receive instruction on how to access, organize, analyze, synthesize, and cite information from source materials, as well as how to apply conventions of grammar, syntax, punctuation, style, and other editing conventions. Assessment of student writing performance will take into account changing norms in grammar, syntax, punctuation, and style across disciplines, contexts and audiences.

In addition to helping students develop their writing skills, this course helps deepen students' understanding of the interdisciplinary field of American Studies by introducing you to important theories that define the field, and by introducing you to different methods of American Studies. The theoretical concepts we will learn will overlap with one another, and readings intentionally connect to more than one theory. All theories, however, connect most fundamentally back to the concept of "culture," and all methods help us study that concept. We will investigate how American culture operates and exerts power in a wide variety of contexts—from Harlem Renaissance novels to the lived experiences of Muslim American teenage boys today. By the end of the semester, you will be familiar with key methods and theories of American Studies, and you will increase your comfort in critically analyzing a variety of cultural objects. This course prepares you for further coursework and research in the field of American Studies, including preparing you for further independent research.

### **PREREQUISITES**

AMST 201 and AMST 301; or consent of instructor.

### **STUDENT LEARNING GOALS**

Like every American Studies class, this course aims to enhance your understanding of America's diverse past, improve your ability to critically analyze historical and cultural evidence, and help you communicate your interpretations in discussions and writing. In this course, you will:

- Learn to evaluate, incorporate, interpret, discuss, and critically analyze a wide range of source materials, cultural documents and expressive forms, such as films, photographs, novels, ethnographies, and archival material
- Learn and practice active reading skills such as highlighting, annotation, and breaking down complex concepts to increase your comfort in reading dense and theoretical texts, and in using those theories to deepen your cultural analysis
- Develop your writing process by drafting, as well as revising your drafts through in-class workshops
- Analyze, organize, synthesize, and express ideas (your own and others' ideas) to communicate complex ideas about American culture in clear essays
- Learn the writing conventions appropriate for an American Studies essay, including the grammar, syntax, punctuation, style, and other writing conventions in this field.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the concept of culture by analyzing the functioning of American cultural texts within historic contexts, using knowledge developed by different disciplines.
- Learn to make scholarly arguments by drawing on primary and secondary sources from a variety of disciplines
- Gain a deep understanding of key theories in American Studies in order to use them in your own research and analysis
- Become familiar with a range of methods and disciplines within the field of American Studies

### **UNIVERSITY STUDENT INFORMATION PAGE**

CSUF has a wide range of resources. Visit <https://fdc.fullerton.edu/teaching/student-info-syllabi.html> for information on:

- University Learning Goals and Student Learning Outcomes
- General Education Learning Outcomes
- Netiquette
- Students' Rights to Accommodations

- Campus Student Support Resources
- Academic Integrity
- Emergency Preparedness
- Library Services
- Student IT Services and Competencies
- Software Privacy and Accessibility
- Accessibility Statement
- Diversity Statement
- Land Acknowledgement
- Final Exam Schedule
- Term Calendar

### **Diversity Statement**

I value the diverse perspectives of students in this class. In our interactions in class, I work to create an environment that honors your identities, and I strive to create materials, activities, and assignments that are inclusive and respectful of diversity (gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, age, socioeconomic status, disability, culture, parenting status, religion, etc.). With that said, learning about others' walks of life is a lifelong endeavor; just as I will encourage you to consider other points of view in this course, please also let me know if there are times when I overlook an important perspective.

### **Course Requirements and Policies**

#### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

1. Nella Larsen, *Passing*, originally published in 1929, but any edition is fine. **This book is available as a free e-book through the CSUF library** and is also available for purchase at the campus bookstore and through other book retailers.

All other readings and materials for this class will be made available on Canvas.

#### **GRADING STANDARDS, AND CRITERIA**

In this course, the plus/minus system will be used. **American Studies majors must earn a grade of C or higher in this course to receive credit. American Studies majors earning grades of C- or lower must repeat the course.**

The grade scale is as follows:

- 98 - 100% = A+
- 93 - 97% = A
- 90 - 92% = A-
- 88 - 89% = B+
- 83 - 87% = B
- 80 - 82% = B-
- 78 - 79% = C+
- 73 - 77% = C
- 70 - 72% = C-
- 68 - 69% = D+
- 63 - 67% = D
- 60 - 62% = D-
- 0 - 59% = F

All assignments are graded out of 100 points using the above grade scale. I round up grades when possible (for example, 89.45% rounds up to a 90%). I do not grade on a curve, and your grade will be based solely on the quality of your academic performance.

### **GRADE BREAKDOWN AND MAJOR DUE DATES**

- **Participation** (15% of final grade): Throughout Semester
- **Essay 1** (20% of final grade): Due **Thursday 9/22 by 11:59 p.m.**, submitted via Canvas
- **Essay 2** (20% of final grade): Due **Thursday 10/13 by 11:59 p.m.**, submitted via Canvas
- **Essay 3** (20% of final grade): Due **Thursday 11/10 by 11:59 p.m.**, submitted via Canvas
- **Final Paper Portfolio** (25% of final grade): Due **Thursday 12/15 by 11:59 p.m.**, submitted via Canvas

I reserve the right to add or modify assignments over the course of the semester. There are currently no extra credit assignments for this course; if I elect to add extra-credit assignments during the semester, they will be equally available to all students.

### **ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS**

**All assignments will be explained more fully in class.**

**Essay 1:** In an essay of 4-5 pages, use the theories of culture, hegemony and/or power to analyze one of the following: a passage from the O'Brien book *Keeping It Halal*, your ethnographic observations from our in-class exercise, or a scene from *A Face In The Crowd*. How do the concepts of culture, hegemony and power help us interpret, understand, and analyze the source you have chosen? You should draw from in-class readings to apply the theoretical concepts of the course to the cultural object of study. You must develop an argument in your paper. This essay will help you learn how to combine close reading of a primary cultural evidence, analysis, and theory to craft a scholarly argument.

**Essay 2:** Select a topic from our units on Japanese American internment, incarceration and settler colonialism, or the COVID-19 pandemic. You will identify a primary and secondary source that add to what we have read in class. Then, in 4-5 pages, write an essay using two theories (archival silences and nationalism/one other theory) to make an argument about these cultural objects. This essay will help you practice locating evidence to combine analysis with theory to craft a scholarly argument.

**Essay 3:** In an essay of 4-5 pages, use the theory of intersectionality, racial construction and/or one other theory of your choosing to analyze one scene or one theme from Nella Larsen's novel *Passing*. You will also be asked to identify a few primary and secondary sources that would be useful for historical context. This essay will help you further develop your close reading skills, and strengthen your use of primary and secondary evidence. You will draw from these sources as well as from our theoretical concepts to make a scholarly argument of your own, while placing the text in historical context and thinking about how to expand that historical context.

**Final paper portfolio:** You will select one cultural object or topic that interests you to discuss in class in the last week of the semester. Then, during finals week, you will submit:

- a 4-5 page essay that analyzes that cultural object (perform a close reading, use theory to analyze it, and place it in historical context)
- A 1 page outline of a plan for researching this cultural object/topic more: Explain how you would study this object in more depth, including the methods you might use, where you might go to gather more evidence, and a list of 4 secondary sources (of which at least 3 must be peer-reviewed) that you would use to research this topic more fully. You do not need to have actually read these sources in their entirety, but you must include a sentence or two about why you think each particular source would be useful.
- A 1-2 page reflection on further ways that you might put your American Studies skills to use (perhaps one day creating a film, a podcast, a lecture, a research project, a class/syllabus, etc.).

## **COURSE POLICIES**

**Extensions:** If you believe you will need more time for an assignment, please consult with me as soon as possible about an extension and I'll do my best to be flexible. I ask that you request an extension at least 24 hours before an assignment is due.

**Late Assignments:** If you didn't request an extension but missed a deadline, *please still submit your work*. If you had a serious difficulty emerge that prevented you from completing your work on time, please communicate that with me. I accept late essays without an extension with a standard late penalty of 1/3 letter grade a day. For example, if your essay would have earned an A if submitted on time, you will instead receive an A- if you submit the essay 1 day late, a B+ if it is 2 days late, a B if it is 3 days late, etc.

**Participation:** The quality of this course depends largely on the level to which you and your classmates participate in class through discussion, completing the reading assignments, and working collaboratively. Your class participation grade will depend not only on attendance and frequency of participation, but also on the substance of your participation, and whether your comments and questions contribute to the creation of an engaged and intellectually rigorous learning community. Your participation is based on weekly class sessions, including our in-class writing workshops.

**Attendance:** I expect you to attend most class sessions. When you have to miss more than 6 classes, your participation grade will be negatively impacted, except in extenuating circumstances. If you are sick or have another extenuating circumstance arise and need to miss more than 6 classes, it may be possible to submit additional assignments to make up for your absences, but you must be in touch in a reasonable timeframe, rather than waiting until the end of the semester to make up for many absences

**Technical/Email Requirements and Course Communication:** Our course site is on Canvas. To complete this course, you will need regular access to a device that can access the internet to use our Canvas course site where course materials and assignments will be located. You will need regular access to email for this class because I email to communicate with you about this class and to return graded essays.

If you do not have an electronic device that allows you to access our Canvas materials, or if you do not have internet/WiFi to be able to connect online, please let me know so that I can connect you with IT.

**Course Communication and Response Time:** Outside of office hours, the best way to reach me is by Canvas message or by sending an email to me at [akanosky@fullerton.edu](mailto:akanosky@fullerton.edu). I try to respond to emails and calls within 24 hours during weekdays. If you email, message, or phone me and haven't heard back within this time frame, please re-send your message.

**Reporting technical difficulties:** If you encounter any technical difficulties, please contact me immediately to document the problem. In case of technical difficulties with Canvas, I will communicate with students directly through CSUF email, and assignments can be sent through email.

After contacting me to document any technical problems, please contact the [Student IT Help Desk](#) in one of the following ways:

- E-mail: [StudentITHelpDesk@fullerton.edu](mailto:StudentITHelpDesk@fullerton.edu),
- Call (657) 278-8888],
- Walk in to the [student genius center](#)
- Chat online by logging into the CSUF [portal](#), then clicking "Online IT Help"; and "Live Chat."

**For issues with Canvas, please contact the** Canvas Support Hotline (855) 302-7528 or [student support chat](#)

**Technology and recording policy:** Students may not audio or video record class videos, lectures, or class sessions, unless you have specific authorization to do so from Disability Support Services. Course materials and Zoom class sessions are only to be accessed by students currently enrolled in our course.

### **Class Expectations:**

- **Demonstrate tolerance and respect** in all interactions with your classmates and professor. Everyone in this class deserves to be treated with respect and collegiality. Students in this class are expected to treat different beliefs, ideas, practices, and life experiences with respect, civility, and consideration. You are expected to keep an open mind when others express opinions different from your own and approach all interactions in the spirit of intellectual curiosity and respect. However, if at any time you feel uncomfortable, insulted, or unsafe in our class, notify me immediately and we will work together to address the problem.
- **Stay on top of the reading.** It is important that you stay on schedule to avoid falling behind. If you have difficulty with a particular reading or section, I am always happy to talk to you about it during office hours or over email. Once you fall behind, it is hard to catch up.
- **Come to my office hours!** Do not hesitate to come to my office hours to talk about the course assignments, readings, questions you might have, or your general academic interests. It is a good idea to do this even if you are not having a problem in the course. I love to get to know my students and it is beneficial to you to have one-on-one time with your professors. You are welcome to make an appointment with me in advance, but an appointment is not needed during my regularly scheduled office hours; please feel free to drop in.
- If you have a question about an assignment, reading, or anything else, **double check the syllabus first.** More likely than not, your question has already been answered on one of these documents. If not, don't be shy to ask.

**Academic Integrity:** It is **always** better to submit your own work, even if it is not your best work, than to submit plagiarized work. All student essays are run through TurnItIn, a plagiarism-checking software, to help identify possible instances of plagiarism; any results will be evaluated by the instructor. Any student engaging in plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized collaboration, selling your own lecture notes, submitting the same work to multiple classes or for separate assignments without authorization or other academic dishonesty will receive a 0 on the assignment and will be reported to the Dean of Students Office. For further information, see <http://www.fullerton.edu/integrity/student/> and [www.fullerton.edu/senate/PDF/300/UPS300-021.pdf](http://www.fullerton.edu/senate/PDF/300/UPS300-021.pdf)

**Retention of Student Work:** Students' work will be retained by the instructor for a period of at least 5 years.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

---

**\*\*All assignments and readings are subject to change. I will announce any changes to the syllabus in class as well as via Canvas.\*\***

### **Week 1:**

**Tuesday, August 23: Welcome to Class!**

**Thursday, August 25: What is American Studies?**

Assignments due for Thursday's class:

- Review our syllabus and Canvas site
- Read Deloria and Olson, *American Studies: A User's Guide* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), pages 5-21.
- Complete the Student Questionnaire on Canvas

### **Week 2:**

**Tuesday, August 30: Theory: Culture**

Reading Assignments due for Tuesday's class:

- Clifford Geertz, selections from *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), selections on 5-14 and 44-46.

**Thursday, September 1: Method: Decoding Difficult Texts**

Assignments due for Thursday's class:

- Horace Miner, "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema," *American Anthropologist* 58, no. 3 (1956): 503-507.
- Schedule a 1-on-1 meeting with Professor Kanosky (must be completed by Thursday 9/15)

### **Week 3:**

**Tuesday, September 6: Method: Ethnography**

Reading Assignments due for Tuesday's Class:

- John O'Brien, *Keeping It Halal: The Everyday Lives of Muslim American Teenage Boys* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), Preface- Chapter 1, ix- 21.

**Thursday, September 8: Method: Ethnography and in-class ethnography exercise**

Reading Assignments due for Thursday's Class:

- John O'Brien, *Keeping It Halal*, Chapter 5, 112-148.

#### **Week 4:**

##### **Tuesday, September 13: Theory: Hegemony**

Reading Assignments due for Tuesday's class:

- Antonio Gramsci, Selections from *The Prison Notebooks* (approximately 7 pages)

##### **Thursday, September 15: Theory: Power**

Reading Assignments due for Thursday's class:

- Michel Foucault, Selections from "Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976," pages 13-19 and 29-34.

#### **Week 5:**

##### **Tuesday, September 20:**

Assignments due for Tuesday's class:

- Watch *A Face in the Crowd*, available to stream on Canvas

##### **Thursday, September 22: Review of Culture and Hegemony and In-Class Writing Workshop**

Assignments Due

- Bring a COMPLETE draft of your essay to class
- **ESSAY 1 DUE Thursday, September 22 by 11:59 p.m., submitted online via Canvas**

#### **Week 6:**

##### **Tuesday, September 27: Theory: Nationalism**

Reading Assignments due for Tuesday's Class:

- Benedict Anderson, Selections from *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983), pages 5-7.

##### **Thursday, September 29: Method: Photographic Analysis**

Assignments due for Thursday's class:

- Look at images of internment from Ansel Adams, Dorothea Lange, and Toyo Miyatake (links available on Canvas).
- Adrian Floridio, "Photos: 3 Very Different Views of Japanese Internment," *NPR Code Switch*, <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2016/02/17/466453528/photos-three-very-different-views-of-japanese-internment>

#### **Week 7:**

##### **Tuesday, October 4: Theory: Archival Silences**

Reading Assignments due for Tuesday's Class:

- Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Chapter 1 "The Power in the Story," in *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), pages 1-30.

##### **Thursday, October 6: Method: Historical Analysis**

Reading Assignments due for Thursday's class:

- Kelly Lytle Hernandez, *City of Inmates* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), Introduction and Chapter 1, pages 1-44.



### **Week 8:**

#### **Tuesday, October 11: Method: Archive-Building and Sourcing**

Assignments due for Tuesday's Class:

- Look at the online exhibit for Titans Remember: A COVID-19 Community Archive
- Identify one primary and one secondary source related to your topic for Essay #2. Bring it to class (a digital copy is fine)

#### **Thursday, October 13: Review of Power and Archival Silences and In-Class Writing Workshop**

Assignments Due

- Bring a COMPLETE draft of your essay to class
- **ESSAY 2 DUE Thursday, October 13 by 11:59 p.m., submitted online via Canvas**

### **Week 9:**

#### **Tuesday, October 18: Theory: Intersectionality**

Reading Assignments due for Tuesday's Class:

- Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, (1989)1: 139-167.

#### **Thursday, October 20: Theory: Intersectionality**

Reading Assignments due for Thursday's Class:

- Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1984), 114-123.

### **Week 10:**

#### **Tuesday, October 25: Method: Close reading and literary analysis**

Reading Assignments due for Tuesday's Class:

- Nella Larsen, *Passing*, edited by Carla Kaplan (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007, reprint of 1929 novel), pages 5-43 (up to the end of Part Two: Re-Encounter Section One).

#### **Thursday, October 27: Method: Close reading and literary analysis**

Reading Assignments due for Thursday's Class:

- Read the remainder of *Passing*

### **Week 11:**

#### **Tuesday, November 1: Theory: Racial Construction and Method: Historical Analysis**

Reading Assignments due for Tuesday's Class:

- Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs* 17, no. 2 (Winter 1992): 251-274.

#### **Thursday, November 3: Method: Historical Analysis**

Assignments due for Thursday's class:

- Select 3 primary documents related to *Passing*, or race, gender, and/or sexuality in the early 1900s. Bring them to class (digital copies are fine).

### **Week 12:**

#### **Tuesday, November 8: Method: Sourcing Wisely**

Assignments due for Tuesday's Class:

- Identify three secondary sources related to *Passing* or race, gender, and/or sexuality in the early 1900s. Bring them to class (digital copies are fine)

#### **Thursday, November 10: Review of Intersectionality and Racial Construction and In-Class Writing Workshop**

Assignments due for Thursday's class:

- Bring COMPLETE draft of your essay to class
- **ESSAY 3 DUE Thursday, November 10 by 11:59 p.m., submitted online via Canvas**

### **Week 13: What is at stake in American Studies?**

#### **Tuesday, November 15: What's at Stake?**

Reading Assignments due for Tuesday's Class:

- Howard Zinn, "The Use and Abuse of History," in *Declarations of Independence: Cross-Examining American Ideology* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990), 48-66.

#### **Thursday, November 17: "If You Don't Tell It As It Was, It Can Never Be As It Ought To Be"**

Reading Assignments due for Thursday's class:

- Review the 1619 Project (link available on Canvas site)
- Read critiques of the 1619 Project (links available on Canvas site)

### **FALL BREAK November 21-27- NO CLASS; Enjoy your break!**

### **Week 14: Mapping out your AMST plan**

#### **Tuesday, November 29: AMST Alumni Careers Panel**

No Reading Assignments due for Tuesday's class

#### **Thursday, December 1: Using your training out in the world**

Reading Assignments due for Thursday's class:

- Nathan Davis, "The People's Grocery Arrest," in *The American Papers* 40 (2021-2022), 145-148, AND
- One other article of your choosing from *The American Papers*

### **Week 15: Course Conclusion**

#### **Tuesday, December 6: In-class workshop of cultural objects for final paper**

No Reading Assignment, but bring in one cultural text or topic that you would like to focus on for your final paper portfolio

#### **Thursday, December 8: In-class workshop of final paper portfolio plan**

Come ready to discuss your final paper portfolio

### **Week 16: FINALS WEEK**

**Final Paper Portfolio Due on Thursday, 12/15 by 11:59 p.m., submitted online via Canvas.**