AMERICAN STUDIES (AMST)

* AMST 007a / HSAR 002a, Furniture and American Life Edward Cooke
In-depth study and interpretation of American furniture from the past four centuries. Hands-on experience with furniture in the collection of the Yale University Art Gallery to explore such topics as materials, techniques, styles, use, and meaning. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program. WR, HU

* AMST 019a / HIST 018a, Commodities as U.S. History Matthew Jacobson
American social, cultural, and political history introduced through study of the production, distribution, and consumption of common commodities. Topics include political economy, slavery, industrialization, labor, the rise of the corporation, the growth of the administrative and regulatory state, geopolitics, foreign policy, and cultural change. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program. RP

AMST 13b / ER&M 18b / HIST 107b, Introduction to American Indian History Ned Blackhawk
Survey of American Indian history, beginning with creation traditions and migration theories and continuing to the present day. Focus on American Indian nations whose homelands are located within the contemporary United States. Complexity and change within American Indian societies, with emphasis on creative adaptations to changing historical circumstances. HU

* AMST 184b / ENGL 457b / HUMS 184b, Writing and Reading Biography Karin Roffman
The art of biography explored through groundbreaking examples, with particular emphasis on contemporary texts that explore the lives and work of artists. Topics on biographical theory and practice include: the balance of life and work; the relationship between biographer and subject; creative approaches to archives and research; and imaginative narrative strategies. Some classes take place at the Beinecke Library and there are some visits by working biographers. Students must complete an original biographical project by the end of the semester. HU

AMST 197a / ARCH 280a / HSAR 219a / URBN 280a, American Architecture and Urbanism Elihu Rubin
Introduction to the study of buildings, architectural styles, and urban landscapes, viewed in their economic, political, social, and cultural contexts, from precolonial times to the present. Topics include: public and private investment in the built environment; the history of housing in America; the organization of architectural practice; race, gender, ethnicity and the right to the city; the social and political nature of city building; and the transnational nature of American architecture. HU

* AMST 206b / ER&M 221b / WGSS 222b, Introduction to Critical Refugee Studies Quan Tran
Reconfiguring refugees as fluid subjects and sites of social, political, and cultural critiques. Departing from dominant understandings of refugees as victims, consideration instead of refugees as complex historical actors, made visible through processes of colonization, imperialism, war, displacement, state violence, and globalization, as well as ethical, social, legal, and political transformations. Focus on second-half of the twentieth century. SO

* AMST 227a / AFAM 227a / ER&M 349a / HIST 137ja, From the Voting Rights Act to #blacklivesmatter Ferentz Lafargue
This course explores the period beginning from 1964 through the emergence of the #blacklivesmatter movement in 2013. Key concepts covered in this course include the Black Panther Party and rise of the Black Power movement; political campaigns of Shirley Chisholm, Jesse Jackson, and Barack Obama. The seminar concludes with an examination of the #blacklivesmatter movement and broader efforts addressing mass incarceration, poverty, and opportunity gaps in education. HU

AMST 228a / GLBL 201a / HIST 128a, Origins of U.S. Global Power Staff
This course examines the causes and the consequences of American global power in the “long 20th century,” pecking back briefly into the 19th century as well as forward into the present one. The focus is on foreign relations, which includes but is not limited to foreign policy; indeed, America’s global role was rooted as much in its economic and cultural power as it was in diplomacy and military strength. We study events like wars, crises, treaties, and summits—but also trade shows and movie openings. Our principal subjects include plenty of State Department officials, but also missionaries, business people, and journalists. We pay close attention also to conceptions of American power; how did observers in and beyond the United States understand the nature, origins, and operations of American power? HU o Course cr

AMST 234b / ER&M 243b / HIST 188b / RLST 342b, Spiritual But Not Religious Zareena Grewal
Study of the historical and contemporary “unchurching” trends in American religious life in a comparative perspective and across different scales of analysis in order to think about the relationship between spirituality, formal religion, secular psychology and the self-help industry. HU, SO

AMST 238a / AFAM 192a / AFST 238a / ER&M 238a, Third World Studies Gary Okihiro
Introduction to the historical and contemporary theories and articulations of Third World studies (comparative ethnic studies) as an academic field and practice. Consideration of subject matters; methodologies and theories; literatures; and practitioners and institutional arrangements. SO o Course cr

AMST 239a / ENGL 187a, Love and Hate in the American South Staff
An introduction to the literature and culture of the American South, a region of the mind identified with the former Confederate States of America and fabricated from a mix of beautiful dreams and violent nightmares, including: histories of slavery and settler colonialism, gothic fiction, the Delta blues, Hollywood movies, evangelical sermons, The Confessions of Nat Turner, love poems, protest poems, prison

* AMST 241a / HUMS 245a, Poets and their Papers  Karin Roffman  
This Beinecke-intensive course considers the published works of living poets alongside the processes they used to create them: drafts, letters, journals, fragments, objects and other artworks that were directly or indirectly part of their artistic development. The course includes the participation of some of the poets themselves, a generation of writers who grew up with an acute awareness that their papers would someday be in a library. That long-term recognition of a public future for often seemingly private thoughts and ideas gives these papers particularly vital value and interest. The kinds of casual phrases and inclusions that were a crucial part of postwar American poetry one sees being worked out in poets’ attitudes of curiosity and attention toward works-in-progress, collaborative experiments and correspondence. Like the poets themselves, this course takes the Beinecke archives as primary not secondary to the production of late 20th and early 21st century poetry. An aspect of the course is the opportunity to talk with multiple generations of poets about their processes of creation, collection and organization and to capture their vision of archives as distinct from (and not merely preparatory to) publication.  

WR, HU  

* AMST 245a / ENGL 246a / PLSC 247a, The Media and Democracy  Joanne Lipman  
In an era of "fake news," when mainstream media is attacked as the "enemy of the people" and social platforms are enabling the spread of misinformation, how do journalists hold power to account? Students explore topics including objectivity versus advocacy, and hate speech versus First Amendment speech protections. Case studies will span from 19th century yellow journalism to the media’s role in #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter movements.  

* AMST 282a / AFAM 284a / ENGL 414a / ER&M 284a, Black Life and the Human/Body  Staff  
African American activists have long demanded equal rights by asserting the humanity of Black people. These activists have rejected their racist treatment as animals and property by championing the qualities ascribed to Western Man. More recently, however, scholars have questioned whether claims to humanity really result in freedom and justice for all Black people. They ask, “Does mobilizing humanity as a strategy for recognition and respect benefit Black non-men, disabled people, or the working class? What impact does this assertion of humanity have on our species’ relationship to other living beings and our environments? Ultimately, are all people allowed to be ‘human’?” In this course, we evaluate the category of the “human” by studying the challenge that the U.S. Black past and present pose to the category’s assumed neutrality. We attend to how Black peoples’ bodily experiences confirm, deny, and complicate humanness. We read poetry, short fiction, novels, and creative nonfiction to investigate what it means to live a Black life. Analyzing historical, social scientific, legal, and theoretical texts alongside literature helps us explore the debates over the power dynamics that underlie claims to humanity. Through writing and in-class discussions, we explore the relationship between race, species, and political strategy.  

* AMST 299b / AFAM 166b / HIST 166b, The History of Right Now  Matthew Jacobson  
Historiographic narrative of United States history over the past century and critical/methodological practices of thinking historically and of identifying ways in which our present has been conditioned by historical legacies, both momentous and subtle. Topics include the New Deal, WWII, the arms race, Reaganomics, and 9/11 in terms of their lasting influence on American conditions in the present.  

* AMST 326a / AFAM 349a / HIST 115a / WGSS 388a, Civil Rights and Women’s Liberation  Staff  
The dynamic relationship between the civil rights movement and the women’s liberation movement from 1940 to the present. When and how the two movements overlapped, intersected, and diverged. The variety of ways in which African Americans and women campaigned for equal rights. Topics include World War II, freedom summer, black power, the Equal Rights Amendment, feminism, abortion, affirmative action, and gay rights.  

* AMST 345a / ER&M 409a / WGSS 408a, Latinx Ethnography  Ana Ramos-Zayas  
Consideration of ethnography within the genealogy and intellectual traditions of Latinx Studies. Topics include: questions of knowledge production and epistemological traditions in Latin America and U.S. Latino communities; conceptions of migration, transnationalism, and space; perspectives on “(il)legality” and criminalization; labor, wealth, and class identities; contextual understandings of gender and sexuality; theorizations of affect and intimate lives; and the politics of race and inequality under white liberalism and conservatism in the United States.  

* AMST 353b / HIST 196b, 21st-Century US History: The First Decade  Joanne Meyerowitz  
Students conduct collaborative primary source research on the first ten years of the 21st century. Topics include September 11th, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Hurricane Katrina, the financial crisis of 2008, the election of Barack Obama, and battles over domestic surveillance, immigration, policing, gun control, same-sex marriage, and reproductive rights.  

* AMST 395a / FILM 327a, Studies in Documentary Film  Charles Musser  
This course examines key works, crucial texts, and fundamental concepts in the critical study of non-fiction cinema, exploring the participant-observer dialectic, the performative, and changing ideas of truth in documentary forms.  

* AMST 397a / AFAM 251a, Critical Race Theory  Staff  
Introduction to critical race theory, a radical critique of relations among race, law, and power in U.S. politics and society. Intellectual foundations of the field, with emphasis on African American perspectives; key juridical acts. The centrality of U.S. law in producing
social hierarchies of race and racial difference, gender, sexuality, and class. The extension of critical race theory to global analysis of race, immigration, and cultural difference.  

* AMST 40b, Introduction to Public Humanities  
Staff  
Introduction to the various media, topics, debates, and issues framing public humanities. The relationship between knowledge produced in the university and the circulation of ideas among a broader public, including modes of inquiry, interpretation, and presentation. Public history, museum studies, oral and community history, public art, documentary film and photography, public writing and educational outreach, and the socially conscious performing arts.  

* AMST 425a / ENGL 283a / EVST 430a, American Culture and the Rise of the Environment  
Michael Warner  
U.S. literature from the late eighteenth century to the Civil War explored in the context of climate change. Development of the modern concept of the environment; the formation and legacy of key ideas in environmentalism; effects of industrialization and national expansion; utopian and dystopian visions of the future. Formerly ENGL 430.  

* AMST 427b / PLSC 269b / WGSS 427b, Politics of Gender and Sexuality in the United States  
Dara Strolovitch  
The 2016 Presidential election made clear that gender matters a great deal in American politics, but it also revealed that how gender matters is far from obvious. This course explores the ways in which gender and sexuality shape and are shaped by American politics and public policy. We explore the history, findings, and controversies in research about gender and sexuality in American politics from a range of approaches, examining what political science research helps us understand about questions such as: Does gender influence political campaigns and whether people will vote for particular candidates? Once elected, are gender and sexuality related to legislators' behavior in office? How are norms related to race, class, gender, and sexuality reflected in and constructed by public policy? We also explore feminist, queer, and intersectional theories and methodologies and important work from other disciplines and interdisciplines, paying particular attention to the implications of intersectionality for understanding gender, sexuality, and politics. We also analyze the ways in which gender and sexuality intersect with other politically salient categories, identities, and forms of marginalization, including race, ethnicity, class, and ideological and partisan identification, paying particular attention to their implications for the 2016, 2018, and 2020 elections.  

* AMST 439a / ER&M 439a, Fruits of Empire  
Gary Okihiro  
Readings, discussions, and research on imperialism and "green gold" and their consequences for the imperial powers and their colonies and neo-colonies. Spatially conceived as a world-system that enmeshes the planet and as earth's latitudes that divide the temperate from the tropical zones, imperialism as discourse and material relations is this seminar's focus together with its implantations—an empire of plants. Vast plantations of sugar, cotton, tea, coffee, bananas, and pineapples occupy land cultivated by native and migrant workers, and their fruits move from the tropical to the temperate zones, impoverishing the periphery while profiting the core. Fruits of Empire, thus, implicates power and the social formation of race, gender, sexuality, class, and nation.  

* AMST 441a / ER&M 370a / HIST 130Ja, Indians and the Spanish Borderlands  
Ned Blackhawk  
The experiences of Native Americans during centuries of relations with North America's first imperial power, Spain. The history and long-term legacies of Spanish colonialism from Florida to California.  

* AMST 445b / AFAM 210b / HIST 148Jb, Politics and Culture of the U.S. Color Line  
Matthew Jacobson  
The significance of race in U.S. political culture, from the "separate but equal" doctrine of Plessy v. Ferguson to the election of an African American president. Race as a central organizer of American political and social life.  

* AMST 453b / HIST 119Jb, The United States Constitution of 1787  
Mark Peterson  
This undergraduate seminar is organized around developing a deep historical understanding of one of our most important documents, the United States Constitution, as it emerged in the late 1780s. In addition to close reading and analysis of this fundamental text, we read a series of other primary sources relevant to the evolution of constitutional thought and practice in the Anglo-American tradition of the early modern period. And we engage relevant secondary scholarship produced by professional historians over the past century or more, in an effort to grapple with the evolution of changing approaches to the Constitution and its meaning over time. This course carries PI credit in History.  

* AMST 460a / AFAM 239a / EDST 209a / ER&M 292a / WGSS 202a, Identity, Diversity, and Policy in U.S. Education  
Introduction to critical theory (feminism, queer theory, critical race theory, disability studies, trans studies, indigenous studies) as a fundamental tool for understanding and critiquing identity, diversity, and policy in U.S. education. Exploration of identity politics and theory, as they figure in education policy. Methods for applying theory and interventions to interrogate issues in education. Application of theory and interventions to policy creation and reform.  

* AMST 462b / ER&M 462b / WGSS 463b, The Study of Privilege in the Americas  
Ana Ramos-Zayas  
Examination of inequality, not only through experiences of the poor and marginal, but also through institutions, beliefs, social norms, and everyday practices of the privileged. Topics include: critical examination of key concepts like "studying up," "elite," and "privilege," as well as variations in forms of capital; institutional sites of privilege (elite prep schools, Wall Street); living spaces and social networks (gated communities, private clubs); privilege in intersectional contexts (privilege and race, class, and gender); and everyday practices of intimacy and affect that characterize, solidify, and promote privilege.  

* AMST 463a / EVST 453a / FILM 452a / THST 457a, Documentary Film Workshop  
Charles Musser  
A yearlong workshop designed primarily for majors in Film and Media Studies or American Studies who are making documentaries as senior projects. Seniors in other majors admitted as space permits.
* AMST 471a and AMST 472b, Individual Reading and Research for Juniors and Seniors  Laura Wexler
Special projects intended to enable the student to cover material not otherwise offered by the program. The course may be used for
research or for directed reading, but in either case a term paper or its equivalent is required as evidence of work done. It is expected that
the student will meet regularly with the faculty adviser. To apply for admission, a student should submit a prospectus signed by the
faculty adviser to the director of undergraduate studies.

* AMST 479a / AFAM 459a / ER&M 402a, The Displaced: Migrant and Refugee Narratives of the 20th and 21st Centuries  Leah
Mirakhor
This course examines a series of transnational literary texts and films that illuminate how the displaced—migrants, exiles, and refugees
— remake home away from their native countries. The twentieth and twenty-first centuries have produced massive displacements due
to wars, genocides, racial, ethnic and religious conflicts, economic and climate change, among other factors. Our course focuses on
several texts that explore questions of home, nation, and self in the context of specific historical events such as the Holocaust, civil rights
movements in the U.S., internment, the Indian partition, African decolonization, and Middle Eastern/Arab ethno-religious conflicts
and wars. We examine these events alongside the shifting legal and political policies and categories related to asylum, humanitarian
parole, refugee, and illegal alien status. Exploring themes such as nostalgia, longing, trauma, and memory, we look at the possibilities
and limitations of creating, contesting, and imagining home in the diaspora. Our objective is to debate and develop the ethical, political,
geographic, and imaginative articulations of home in an era of mass displacements and geo-political crises. We examine how notions of
home are imagined alongside and against categories of race, gender, and sexuality.  HU

* AMST 491a or b, Senior Project  Laura Wexler
Independent research and proseminar on a one-term senior project. For requirements see under “Senior requirement” in the American
Studies program description.

* AMST 493a and AMST 494b, Senior Project for the Intensive Major  Staff
Independent research and proseminar on a two-term senior project. For requirements see under "Senior requirement" in the American
Studies program description.