AMERICAN STUDIES (AMST)

* AMST 021a / FILM 021a, Sports and Media  Charles Musser

This course develops critical thinking about sports in contemporary media culture. The social aspect of playing, watching, and talking about sports has always involved media; media likewise reflect the meaning of athletic events. “Media” here designates cinema, television, radio, print, and social media. We analyze the ways mass media and sports have shaped identity: gender, race, class, age, geography, and ideology. The background for considering these social phenomena is a general understanding of the commercial and civic nature of major sports, although some attention is also paid to amateur media and alternative sports. Our scope extends from the U.S. toward the globe, observing how international networks (Olympics, World Cup) act in specific national cultures. Principal readings are drawn from recent scholarship on sports and media, and criticism of films. Historically significant and contemporary films introduce the history of sports in media culture, from the Corbett-Courtney Fight (1894) to Rocky, Paper Lion, The Armstrong Lie, Invictus, Venus and Serena, and Chariots of Fire. Classroom activities include mini-lectures, discussion, group analysis of texts, and brief student presentations.  WR, HU

* AMST 029b / ENGL 029b, Henry Thoreau  Michael Warner

Henry Thoreau played a critical role in the development of environmentalism, American prose, civil rights, and the politics of protest. We read his writing in depth, and with care, understanding it both in its historical context and in its relation to present concerns of democracy and climate change. We read his published writing and parts of the journal, as well as biographical and contextual material. The class makes a field trip to Walden Pond and Concord, learning about climate change at Walden as revealed by Thoreau’s unparalleled documentation of his biotic surroundings. Students consider Thoreau’s place in current debates about the environment and politics, and are encouraged to make connection with those debates in a final paper. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  HU

* AMST 030b, Cultures of Travel  Talya Zemach-Bersin

From where does the desire to leave the familiar and experience the unknown emerge? What is the relationship between travel and the production of knowledge? What are the cultural politics of constructing, selling, and consuming “experiences” of alterity? In what ways is tourism today linked to historically constituted systems of power and inequality? This interdisciplinary course draws on anthropology, history, literary criticism, and feminist, postcolonial, and critical theory to examine the social construction of travelers and the making of knowledge and power through travel. We examine the processes through which displacement and travel yield normalized claims to knowledge, enhanced selfhood, and professional expertise. Through engagement with theoretical texts, case studies, and primary documents, we think critically about privileged discourses of travel. Major course themes include the politics of authenticity, the mythic figure of the traveler, the valorization of displacement as aesthetic gain, the fantasy of “going native,” patterns of consumption, and the pervasive links between travel, authority, power, and knowledge. Students are encouraged to engage their own research interests and to theorize themselves as both travelers and knowledge-producers. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  WR, HU

* AMST 031a / WGSS 031a, LGBTQ Spaces and Places  Terrell Herring

Overview of LGBTQ cultures and their relation to geography in literature, history, film, visual culture, and ethnography. Discussion topics include the historical emergence of urban communities; their tensions and intersections with rural locales; race, sexuality, gender, and suburbanization; and artistic visions of queer and trans places within the city and without. Emphasis is on the wide variety of U.S. metropolitan environments and regions, including New York City, Los Angeles, Miami, the Deep South, Appalachia, New England, and the Pacific Northwest.  HU

* AMST 032a, Gender, Sexuality, and U.S. Empire  Talya Zemach-Bersin

This course explores the cultural history of America's relationship to the world across the long twentieth century with particular attention to the significance of gender, sexuality, and race. We locate U.S. culture and politics within an international dynamic, exposing the interrelatedness of domestic and foreign affairs. While exploring specific geopolitical events like the Spanish-American War, World War I and II, and the Cold War, this course emphasizes the political importance of culture and ideology rather than offering a formal overview of U.S. foreign policy. How have Americans across the twentieth century drawn from ideas about gender to understand their country's relationship to the wider world? In what ways have gendered ideologies and gendered approaches to politics shaped America's performance on the world's stage? How have geopolitical events impacted the construction of race and gender on the home front? In the most general sense, this course is designed to encourage students to understand American cultural and gender history as the product of America's engagement with the world. In so doing, we explore the rise of U.S. global power as an enterprise deeply related to conceptions of race, sexuality, and gender. We also examine films, political speeches, visual culture, music, and popular culture. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  HU

* AMST 090b, Politics and Culture of Race in America  Matthew Jacobson

An interdisciplinary investigation of race in American life in the long twentieth century, including attention to politics, political economy, law, criminal justice, literature, and the arts. Encompassing a chronological scope from post-Reconstruction to the Obama and Trump years, the course considers Jim Crow, US empire, indigeneity, immigration, the long Civil Rights era, neoliberalism, white nationalism, and the powerful antiracist and pro-democratic currents in American thought. Texts include scholarly works, as well as primary works by novelists, poets, journalists, memoirists, photographers, film makers, and graphic novelists and cartoonists. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  HU RP
AMST 109a / ER&M 095a / SAST 061a / THST 095a, South Asian American Theater and Performance  Shilarna Stokes
South Asian Americans have appeared on U.S. stages since the late nineteenth century, yet only in the last quarter century have plays and performances by South Asian Americans begun to dismantle dominant cultural representations of South Asian and South Asian American communities and to imagine new ways of belonging. This seminar introduces you to contemporary works of performance (plays, stand-up sets, multimedia events, and more) written and created by U.S.-based artists of South Asian descent as well as artists of the South Asian diaspora whose works have had an impact on U.S. audiences. With awareness that the South Asian American diaspora comprises multiple, contested, and contingent identities, we investigate how artists have worked to manifest complex representations of South Asian Americans onstage, challenge institutional and professional norms, and navigate the perils and pleasures of becoming visible. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  HU

AMST 116b / RLST 115b, How to Build an American Religion  Kathryn Lofton
How communities can be organized through code, charisma, ritual, and cosmology. Topics include strategies for concretizing utopia and establishing communal principles, expanding audiences, and specifying creed. This course serves as an introduction to religion through theoretical readings and specific examples drawn from the transnational American scene, past and present. Discussion of particular leaders, sects, practices, and media will offer insights into how ideas organize societies and individuals establish themselves as icons. Students adapt strategies taught in the course in order to practice their own capacity to foster social movements, develop and critique brands, and consider the relationship between religion, politics, and economy.  HU

AMST 123b / ER&M 187b / 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 134a / ER&M 264a / SOCY 134a / WGSS 110a, Sex and Gender in Society  Rene Almeling
Introduction to the social processes through which people are categorized in terms of sex and gender, and how these social processes shape individual experiences of the world. Sex and gender in relation to race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, nationality, education, work, family, reproduction, and health.  SO

AMST 162b / AFAM 162b / HIST 187b, African American History from Emancipation to the Present  Elizabeth Hinton
An examination of the African American experience since 1861. Meanings of freedom and citizenship are distilled through appraisal of race and class formations, the processes and effects of cultural consumption, and the grand narrative of the civil rights movement.  WR, HU

* AMST 184a / ENGL 437a / HUMS 184a, 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 196a / AFAM 196a / ER&M 226a / EVST 196a / SOCY 190a, Race, Class, and Gender in American Cities  Staff
Examination of how racial, gender, and class inequalities have been built, sustained, and challenged in American cities. Focus on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Topics include industrialization and deindustrialization, segregation, gendered public/private split, gentrification, transit equity, environmental justice, food access, and the relationships between public space, democracy, and community wellbeing. Includes field projects in New Haven.  SO 0 Course cr

AMST 197b / ARCH 280b / HSAR 219b / URBN 280b, American Architecture and Urbanism  Elihu Rubin
Introduction to the study of buildings, architects, 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 199a / HIST 165a, The American Century  Staff
United States politics, political thought, and social movements in the 20th century. Pivotal elections and political figures (Wilson, Roosevelt, Nixon, Reagan) as well as politics from below (civil rights, labor, women’s activism). Emphasis on political ideas such as liberalism, conservatism, and radicalism, and on the intersection between domestic and foreign affairs. Primary research in Yale archival collections. Students who have already completed HIST 136J must have the instructor’s permission to enroll in this course, and will perform alternate readings during some weeks.  HU 0 Course cr

AMST 209b / ER&M 223b / PLSC 262b, Race, Politics, and the Law  Daniel HoSang
Examination of how race—as a mode of domination and resistance—has developed and transformed in the United States since the early-twentieth-century. How political actors and social movements engage the law to shape visions of freedom, democracy, and political life. Consideration of critical race theory, political discourse analysis, intersectionality and women of color feminism, and American political development.  SO
AMST 215a / HIST 485a / HSHM 217a / HUMS 219a, Biomedical Futures and Michael Crichton’s Monsters  Joanna Radin
What forms of life have been produced by modern science? The literal life-changing technologies that began to emerge after the Second World War also provoked new anxieties. They expressed themselves in the speculative fiction of Michael Crichton in terms of monsters: the virus in The Andromeda Strain, the androids in Westworld, the velociraptors of Jurassic Park, and even the patients maimed by gunshot wounds in ER. Crichton wrote thrilling stories that also asked his readers to consider what monsters humans could make if they didn’t stop to consider whether or not they should. This course examines the emergence of modern life science to consider what it would take to produce more life-sustaining futures.  HU, SO  o Course cr

* AMST 227a / AFAM 227a / ER&M 349a / HIST 137Ja, From the Voting Rights Act to #blacklivesmatter  Ferenz 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 236b / EVST 318b / HIST 190b / HSHM 207b, American Energy History  Paul Sabin
The history of energy in the United States from early hydropower and coal to present-day hydraulic fracturing, deepwater oil, wind, and solar. Topics include energy transitions and technological change; energy and democracy; environmental justice and public health; corporate power and monopoly control; electricity and popular culture; labor struggles; the global quest for oil; changing national energy policies; the climate crisis.  WR, HU

AMST 238a / AFAM 192a / AFST 238a / ER&M 238a, Third World Studies  Gary Okhiro
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

* 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.  so

* AMST 257b / ENGL 332b, Modern Apocalyptic Narratives  Jim Berger
The persistent impulse in Western culture to imagine the end of the world and what might follow. Social and psychological factors that motivate apocalyptic representations. Differences and constant features in apocalyptic representations from the Hebrew Bible to contemporary science fiction. Attitudes toward history, politics, sexuality, social class, and the process of representation in apocalyptic texts.  HU

AMST 272a / ER&M 282a / HIST 183a / WGSS 272a, Asian American History, 1800 to the Present  Staff
An introduction to the history of East, South, and Southeast Asian migrations and settlement to the United States from the late eighteenth century to the present. Major themes include labor migration, community formation, U.S. imperialism, legal exclusion, racial segregation, gender and sexuality, cultural representations, and political resistance.  HU  o Course cr

* AMST 280a, Law and Legal History for the Interdisciplinary Humanities  Greta LaFleur
This course introduces students to how to use and make sense of legal sources: statutes, judicial opinions, legislative actions, legal studies, administrative rulings, and legal history, among others. This course is intended for undergraduates who are interested in incorporating law and legal research into their scholarship, from final papers to senior theses. The course is divided into two “units.” The first unit works with statutory and common law, and instructs students on how to think with and interpret these sources, especially as legal thought has distinct and often very rigid approaches to statutory and judicial sources. The second unit explores legal history – both the origins of U.S. American legal thought and structures – but we also delve into legal history itself, focusing on three case studies: the laws and court structures that codified slavery; the laws and legal structures that enacted and justified settler colonialism, settler land claims, the development of the federal administrative structure that controls Native lands, and tribal courts; and the laws and delegation of powers that structure (and continue to structure) immigration. These case studies are in no way meant to offer a comprehensive account of U.S. American legal history, or to offer a totalizing or full account of slavery, immigration, or settler colonialism. Rather, they are an opportunity for students to get direct experience with reading and interpreting the law; with legal research and the distinct architecture of sources for performing that research (Westlaw, Lexis, HeinOnline); and with scholarship in legal history and legal studies. Throughout the course, we also reflect more broadly on what legal sources and legal history is good for, and what it might simultaneously occlude. Finally, we explore the form and function of the law itself: what it does, what it cannot do, and how those who sought or seek to change it have strategically approached the promises and disappointments of legal reform and intervention.  HU

* AMST 281b / ENGL 278b, Antebellum American Literature  Michael Warner
Introduction to writing from the period leading up to and through the Civil War. The growth of African American writing in an antislavery context; the national book market and its association with national culture; emergence of a language of environment; romantic ecology and American pastoral; the “ecological Indian”; evangelicalism and the secular; sentimentalism and gender; the emergence of sexuality; poetics.  WR, HU
AMST 284b / ER&M 217b, Introduction to Latinx Studies  Albert Laguna
Themes and issues that have shaped the experiences of Latino/a populations in the United States explored within an interdisciplinary and hemispheric framework. Relations between the United States and Latin America; the history of ethnic labels; the formation of transnational communities and identities; the politics of language and bilingualism; race, class, and ethnicity; and gender and sexuality.  HU

* AMST 286b / AFAM 182b / ENGL 182b / HUMS 241b, James Baldwin’s American Scene  Jacqueline Goldsby
In-depth examination of James Baldwin’s canon, tracking his work as an American artist, citizen, and witness to United States society, politics, and culture during the Cold War, the Civil Rights era, and the Black Arts Movement.  HU

AMST 299b / AFAM 166b / ER&M 299b / 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.  HU  RP

* AMST 301a / ER&M 382a / HIST 325Ja, Researching Mexican American Histories  Stephen Pitti
A survey of recent scholarship on Mexican American history. Students write a research paper based on primary sources and explore issues related to migration, education, detention, religion, urban communities, ethnic politics, and youth activism since the mid-nineteenth century. Reading knowledge of Spanish preferred.  HU

* AMST 309a / AFAM 259a / EDST 255a, Education and Empire  Talya Zemach-Bersin
This course offers an introduction to the transnational history of education in relation to the historical development of the U.S. empire both at home and abroad. By bringing together topics often approached separately—immigration, education, race, colonialism, and the history of U.S. empire—we interrogate the ways that education has been mobilized to deploy power: controlling knowledge, categorizing and policing differences, administering unequal paths to citizenship/belonging, forcing assimilation, promoting socioeconomic divides, and asserting discipline and control. EDST 110 recommended.  HU

* AMST 312a / AFAM 326a / ER&M 310a / WGSS 298a, Postcolonial Cities of the West  Fadila Habchi
Examination of various texts and films pertaining to the representation of postcolonial cities in the global north and a range of social, political, and cultural issues that concern those who inhabit these spaces.  HU

* AMST 314b / ER&M 314b / WGSS 306b, Gender and Transgender  Greta LaFleur
Introduction to transgender studies, an emergent field that draws on gender studies, queer theory, sociology, feminist science studies, literary studies, and history. Representations of gender nonconformity in a cultural context dominated by a two-sex model of human gender differentiation. Sources include novels, autobiographies, films, and philosophy and criticism.  RP

* AMST 319b / ENGL 327b, The Modernist Novel in the 1920s  Joe Cleary
Many of the classics of modernist fiction were published between 1920 and 1930. These novels did not come into the world as “modernist”; that term was later conferred on narrative experiments often considered bizarre at the time. As writers, the “modernists” did not conform to pre-existing social conceptions of “the writer” nor work with established systems of narrative genres; rather, they tried to remake the novel as form and bend it to new purposes. This course invites students to consider diverse morphologies of the Anglophone modernist novel in this decade and to reflect on its consequences for later developments in twentieth-century fiction. The seminar encourages careful analyses of individual texts but engages also with literary markets, patronage systems, changing world literary systems, the rise of cinema and mass and consumer cultures, and later Cold War constructions of the ideology of modernism.  WR, HU

* AMST 330a / ENGL 236a, Dystopic and Utopian Fictions  Jim Berger
Attempts since the late nineteenth century to imagine, in literature, cinema, and social theory, a world different from the existing world. The merging of political critique with desire and anxiety; the nature and effects of social power; forms of authority, submission, and resistance.  HU

* AMST 332b / HSAR 410b, Humbugs and Visionaries: American Artists and Writers Before the Civil War  Bryan Wolf
This course examines American literature and visual culture of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. We look in particular at outliers, prophets, and self-promoters, from the radical Puritan writer Anne Bradstreet to popular entertainers like P. T. Barnum. Topics include: visuality and the public sphere; landscape and politics; genre painting and hegemony; race and identity; managerial culture and disembodied vision. Class trips to the Yale University Art Gallery and the Metropolitan Museum (New York).  HU

* AMST 336a / WGSS 335a, LGBTQ Life Spans  Terrell Herring
Interdisciplinary survey of LGBTQ life spans in the United States concentrating primarily on later life. Special attention paid to topics such as disability, aging, and ageism; queer and trans creative aging; longevity and life expectancy during the AIDS epidemic; intergenerational intimacy; age and activism; critiques of optimal aging; and the development of LGBTQ senior centers and affordable senior housing. We explore these topics across multiple contemporary genres: documentary film (The Joneses), graphic memoir (Alison Bechdel’s Fun Home), poetry (Essex Hemphill’s “Vital Signs”), fabulation (Saidiya Hartman’s Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments), and oral history. We also review archival documents of later LGBTQ lives—ordinary and iconic—held at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library as well as the Lesbian Herstory Archives.  HU
* 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 346b / ENGL 235b / HUMS 252b, Poetry and Objects  Karin Roffman

This course on 20th and 21st century poetry studies the non-symbolic use of familiar objects in poems. We meet alternating weeks in the Beinecke library archives and the Yale Art Gallery objects study classroom to discover literary, material, and biographical histories of poems and objects. Additionally, there are scheduled readings and discussions with contemporary poets. Assignments include both analytical essays and the creation of online exhibitions.  

* AMST 348b / ER&M 381b / EVST 304b, Space, Place, and Landscape  Laura Barraclough

Survey of core concepts in cultural geography and spatial theory. Ways in which the organization, use, and representation of physical spaces produce power dynamics related to colonialism, race, gender, class, and migrant status. Multiple meanings of home; the politics of place names; effects of tourism; the aesthetics and politics of map making; spatial strategies of conquest. Includes field projects in New Haven.  

* AMST 356a / RLST 215a, Celebrity, Politics, Power  Kathryn Lofton

This course uses celebrity to think about American political power. Informed by American studies, gender studies, and religious studies, the course considers celebrity a way to talk about how popularity is an embodied and spiritualized appraisal. The bibliography on celebrity and politics is not a robust one, despite the fact that winning elections requires popularity and in the last twenty years of American politics some conscientiousness of the skill sets celebrities mastered seems a precondition for electoral success. The course assembles a range of scholarly and archival resources to think about what it means to achieve celebrity, and how it is a political form of public life. Of particular interest is how to think about the construction of magic and charisma, and how those very idioms often contribute to accusations of mesmerism and manipulation. Written assignments focus students on developing celebrity as an applied knowledge for social media development and political progress.  

* AMST 370a or b / THST 380a or b, Choreographic Invention in 20th Century America  Brian Seibert

An examination of major movements in the history of concert and social dance from the late nineteenth century to the present, including ballet, tap, jazz, modern, musical theater, and different cultural forms. Topics include tradition versus innovation, the influence of the African diaspora, and interculturalism. Exercises are used to illuminate analysis of the body in motion. Limited enrollment. See Canvas for details.  

* AMST 379b / ENGL 371b / FREN 371b / LITR 477b, Fictions of Canada: Colonialism, Nationalism, Postcolonialism  Katie Trumpener

This seminar explores the literature(s) of Canada in its long history, its considerable linguistic and cultural range, and its complex relationship to political history. Like Canada itself, its literature represents a "contact zone" between First Nations peoples, French and British settlers, and immigrants from Eastern Europe, East and South Asia, and the Caribbean. Particular focus on Canada’s diverse early literatures (from Jesuit hymn to epistolary novel); on the prominent role of women writers across Canadian literature history; on the emergence of an experimental Québécois literature (utilizing Montreal patois as a new literary language) in an era also marked by secularization, modernization and political separatism; of English Canadian attempts to rethink colonial history, and the critiques of Canada’s ongoing decolonization process by new generations of indigenous, immigrant and ethnic writers. This course explores both literary history and literary form; the work of internationally famous novelists and poets (Leonard Cohen, Marie-Claire Blais, Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro, Michael Ondaatje) and their innovative local counterparts. Throughout the semester, moreover, our discussion of written literary texts (poems, novels, plays) is supplemented by primarily oral texts, Canadian anthems, ballads, folk, rock and punk songs in a range of Canadian languages). We will thus listen to even as we read Canada.  

* AMST 382a / WGSS 372a, Theory and Politics of Sexual Consent  Joseph Fischel

Political, legal, and feminist theory and critiques of the concept of sexual consent. Topics such as sex work, nonnormative sex, and sex across age differences explored through film, autobiography, literature, queer commentary, and legal theory. U.S. and Connecticut legal cases regarding sexual violence and assault.  


The course explores Baldwin’s oeuvre since 1964 until his death in 1987. As critics have noted, there has been a renaissance regarding the work of James Baldwin since 1999, with scholarly publications devoted to his work, public tributes, films, and publications of previously uncollected or out of print works. Critics had hailed Baldwin’s earlier works—Go Tell It on the Mountain, Giovanni’s Room, Notes of a Native Son—as his greatest literary accomplishments. After Baldwin’s most celebrated work—The Fire Next Time—Baldwin appeared on the cover of Time magazine in 1963, under the heading “Birmingham and Beyond: The Negro’s Push for Equality.” In this moment, Baldwin became a celebrated public figure in the U.S. and beyond. Our class investigates the period after this height of celebrity, when critics lambasted him for being too political, too angry, too bitter, and losing narrative control and rigor. This two-decade span is significant because Baldwin was witness to the deaths and incarceration of Civil Rights leaders (whom he mourned as friends), the increased surveillance and incarceration of black activists, the Vietnam war, the emergence of Black Power, feminist movements, and gay and queer
A examination of contemporary literature written by Caribbean writers who have migrated to, or who journey between, different countries around the Atlantic rim. Focus on literature written in English in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, both fiction and nonfiction. Writers include Caryl Phillips, Nalo Hopkinson, and Jamaica Kincaid. * AMST 439a / ER&M 439a, Fruits of Empire

Gary Okuhiro
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. **HU, SO**
* 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.  HU  RP

* AMST 447b / EDST 270b / ER&M 367b, Contemporary Native American K-12 and Postsecondary Educational Policy  Matthew Makomenaw
This course will explore current Native American educational policy issues, programming, funding, and success. Native American representation in policy conversations is often incomplete, complicated, or relegated to an asterisk resulting in a lack of resources, awareness, and visibility in educational policy. This course examines the challenges and issues related to Native education; however, the impetus of this course centers on the resiliency, strength, and imagination of Native American students and communities to redefine and achieve success in a complex and often unfamiliar educational environment. EDST 110 recommended  SO

* AMST 452b / ER&M 452b, Movement, Memory, and U.S. Settler Colonialism  Laura Barraclough
This research seminar examines and theorizes the significance of movement and mobility in the production and contestation of settler colonial nation-states. To do so, it brings together the fields of settler colonial studies, critical indigenous studies, ethnic studies, public history, and mobility studies. After acquainting ourselves with the foundations and some of the key debates within each of these fields, we examine four case studies: The Freedom Trail and the Black Heritage Trail in Boston; the Lewis and Clark expedition and its recuperation as a site of healing and education for tribal nations in the Upper Midwest and Northwest; the Trail of Tears and the contest over southern memory; and the relationships between settlement, labor migration, and regional racial formation in California. Students then conduct their own research projects that integrate primary source research on a particular organized movement (of people, non-human animals, ideas, practices) with two or more expressions of memory about that movement (in the form of public history installations, popular culture, literature, music, digital memes, etc.). This course is best suited to students who have initial ideas about a potential research topic and are exploring related ideas for their senior essay.  HU

* AMST 453a / HIST 119Ja, 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.  WR, HU

* AMST 457a / AFAM 456a / WGSS 386a, American Abolition: From Slavery to Mass Incarceration  Micah Khater
This seminar is an interdisciplinary, historically-grounded examination of Black abolitionism in the United States from the mid-nineteenth century to the twenty-first century. Students engage deeply with readings in Black Feminist Theory, social and cultural history, literature, Disability Studies, and queer theory in order to investigate how abolitionist frameworks changed over time and, sometimes, remained the same. While this course focuses explicitly on Black activists who espoused abolitionism; it is important to remember that abolition did not always figure into the Black Freedom Struggle. As we navigate the expansion and contraction of abolitionism, we also consider why criminal justice reform, rather than abolition, was a central demand of Black political organizing. In order to better understand the complicated history of twenty-first century abolitionism—including its epistemological ties to histories of slavery—we engage with major paradigms in Black history. AFAM 162 is highly encouraged.  HU

* AMST 461a / AFAM 239a / EDST 209a / ER&M 292a / WGSS 202a, Identity, Diversity, and Policy in U.S. Education  Craig Canfield
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.  WR, HU

* AMST 462b / ER&M 462b / WGSS 462b, 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.  SO

* AMST 463a / EVST 463a / FILM 455a / 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.  RP

* AMST 466a / ENGL 444a, Contemporary Historical Novels  Jim Berger
Attempts of contemporary American authors to put the complexities of history into written form. Narrative as the privileged mode of historical representation; differences between what is regarded as academic history, popular history, and historical fiction; the influence of power and of the writer’s own historical position on historical narrative; effects of ethnicity, gender, and race on the creation and reception of history; writers’ use of historical fiction to change the ways readers think about the present and the future.  HU
* 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 484a / ER&M 405a / FILM 402a / HSAR 493a / WGSS 462a, Visual Kinship, Families, and Photography  
Laura Wexler
Exploration of the history and practice of family photography from an interdisciplinary perspective. Study of family photographs from the analog to the digital era, from snapshots to portraits, and from instrumental images to art exhibitions. Particular attention to the ways in which family photographs have helped establish gendered and racial hierarchies and examination of recent ways of reconceiving these images.  
HU

* AMST 487a / PLSC 275a, The Rise of “Presidentialism” in the United States  
Stephen Skowronek
This course is about the rise and makeshift character of “presidentialism” in the United States. It will examine different sources of power that have, singly and in combination, put the presidency at the center of government and politics. These include: 1) popular power: in elections, public opinion, parties, and social movements; 2) institutional power: in control of the executive branch, military command, and war making. Readings will delve into cases in which each of these sources of power figured prominently. In every particular, the seminar will consider the strains that this power has put on the constitutional frame. For advanced undergraduates, or by permission  
SO

* 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.