AMERICAN STUDIES

Director of undergraduate studies: Albert Laguna, HGS 233, 432-1188, albert.laguna@yale.edu; americanstudies.yale.edu

The American Studies program encourages the interdisciplinary study of the cultures and politics of the United States, the changing representations of national identity, and the construction of borderland and diasporic cultures over time. Each student in the major combines courses in American Studies with courses from other relevant disciplines (literature, history, the arts, and the social sciences) to explore these broad topics from local, national, and global perspectives. Through the selection of an area of concentration, each student develops a focus for course work in the major. The program encourages scholarly work in nontraditional combinations of disciplines; at the same time, however, it assumes and requires a substantial foundation of knowledge in the history and culture of the United States. Students interested in the major are encouraged to consult with the director of undergraduate studies as early as possible.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

All students majoring in American Studies must take fourteen term courses approved by the program’s faculty. Although a good deal of freedom in course selection is permitted, it is expected that all students will acquaint themselves with the materials, skills, and perspectives of cultural studies. Accordingly, the major requires completion—preferably by the end of the sophomore year, but no later than the end of the junior year—of at least four gateway courses (AMST 111–299), including two in cultural history/cultural studies, one broad survey course in American literature, and one course preparatory for work in the student’s area of concentration, to be selected in consultation with the DUS. One of these four courses must be one of the designated “Early Americas” courses as listed on the American Studies Website. An additional five concentration courses from diverse disciplines must be taken for a letter grade, one of which must incorporate a comparable topic from a non-U.S. perspective. Two electives chosen from the American Studies course offerings are also required.

Students must take two junior seminars (AMST 300–399) during their junior year. At least one of the seminars must fall within the student’s area of concentration, described below. In each of the seminars, students are expected to demonstrate proficiency in interdisciplinary research and analysis through the production of critical essays on primary source materials or a paper of fifteen to twenty pages. Sophomores contemplating a junior term abroad are urged to take one of the junior seminars in the spring term of their sophomore year.

Areas of concentration Each American Studies major selects an area of concentration, normally in the fall of the junior year, from six possible choices: (1) national formations, (2) the international United States, (3) material cultures and built environments, (4) politics and American communities, (5) visual, audio, literary, and performance cultures, and (6) public humanities. The concentration in national formations explores historic migrations, settlements, and encounters among peoples who have formed the American nation, with an emphasis on Native American history and the construction of America’s frontiers and borderlands. The international United States concentration focuses on historic and contemporary diasporas, the role of the United States outside its national borders, and the flows of American peoples, ideas, and goods throughout the globe. Students in the material cultures and built environments concentration examine the formation of the American landscape from the natural to the human-made, including the development of American architecture, and the visual and decorative arts. The concentration in politics and American communities investigates the emergence of social groups and their political struggles at the local and national levels, emphasizing the themes of power, inequality, and social justice. Majors with a concentration in visual, audio, literary, and performance cultures study American consumer culture, popular culture, representations, and media in relation to U.S. literatures. Students in the public humanities concentration explore various forms of public intellectual engagement, including museum studies, documentary work, public history, digital humanities, and archival based work in the visual or performing arts; senior projects in this area may consist of works or productions beyond the traditional scholarly essay. Students may also petition the director of undergraduate studies to develop an independent concentration.

Roadmap See visual roadmap of the requirements.

SENIOR REQUIREMENT

During the senior year, each student in the major completes work in the area of concentration in one of three ways. First, the student may enroll in a senior seminar within the area of concentration (AMST 400–490). Students should apply interdisciplinary methods and undertake original research to produce a final paper of twenty to twenty-five pages. Students must complete all course requirements to fulfill the senior requirement. Students electing this option should submit the senior seminar registration form, signed by the seminar instructor, to the director of undergraduate studies.

Second, the student may complete a one-term senior project or essay (AMST 491). The product should be a thirty-page essay or its equivalent in another medium. To apply for admission to AMST 491, a student should submit a prospectus, signed by the faculty adviser, to the DUS.

Third, the student may enroll in the intensive major (AMST 493 and 494) and work independently for two terms. The intensive major offers an opportunity for significant original research leading to a substantial senior project. AMST 493, 494 carries two terms of credit; its final product should be a sixty-page essay or its equivalent in another medium. All students in the intensive major participate in a
yearlong proseminar on theory and method. One term of the two-term project may count as a course in the area of concentration. To apply for admission to AMST 493 and 494, a student should submit a prospectus, signed by the faculty adviser, to the DUS.

As a multidisciplinary program, American Studies draws on the resources of other departments and programs in the University. The list of American Studies courses is meant to be suggestive only: apart from those courses required for the major, it is neither restrictive nor exhaustive. Students are encouraged to examine the offerings of other departments in both the humanities and the social sciences, as well as residential college seminars, for additional relevant courses. The stated area of concentration of each student determines the relevance and acceptability of other courses.

ADVISING

Combined B.A./M.A. degree program  Exceptionally able and well-prepared students may complete a course of study leading to the simultaneous award of the B.A. and M.A. degrees after eight terms of enrollment. See “Simultaneous Award of the Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees” under Special Arrangements, section K, in the Academic Regulations. Interested students should consult the director of undergraduate studies prior to the sixth term of enrollment for specific requirements in American Studies.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Prerequisites  None

Number of courses  14 term courses (incl senior req)

Distribution of courses  4 gateway courses, as specified; 2 junior sems, 1 in area of concentration; 5 courses in area of concentration for letter grades, 1 on a related non-U.S. topic, (1 may be one term of two-term senior project); 2 electives

Substitution permitted 1 freshman sem for 1 gateway course; others with DUS permission

Senior requirement  Senior sem (AMST 400–490) or one-term senior project (AMST 491) related to area of concentration

Intensive major  Same, except a two-term senior project (AMST 493 and 494) replaces AMST 491

FACULTY ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROGRAM OF AMERICAN STUDIES

Professors  Jean-Christophe Agnew (History), Ned Blackhawk (History), David Blight (History, African American Studies), Daphne Brooks (African American Studies, Theater Studies), Hazel Carby (African American Studies), Edward Cooke, Jr. (History of Art), Michael Denning (English, Ethnicity, Race, & Migration), Wai Chee Dimock (English), Kathryn Dudley (Chair) (Anthropology), Joanne Freeman (History), Beverly Gage (History), Jacqueline Goldsby (English, African American Studies), Inderpal Grewal (Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies), Matthew Jacobson (African American Studies, History), Kathryn Lofton (Religious Studies), Mary Lui (History), Joanne Meyerowitz (History), Charles Musser (Film & Media Studies), Tavia Nyong’o (Theater Studies), Gary Okimoto (History Studies), Stephen Pitti (History, Ethnicity, Race, & Migration), Sally Promey (Divinity School), Ana Ramos-Zayas (Ethnicity, Race, & Migration, Women’s, Gender & Sexuality Studies), Joseph Roach (English, Theater Studies), Marc Robinson (Theater Studies, English), Alicia Schmidt Camacho (Ethnicity, Race, & Migration), Caleb Smith (English), Harry Stout (Religious Studies, History), Michael Veal (Music, African American Studies), John Warner (History of Medicine), Michael Warner (English), Laura Wexler (Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies)

Associate Professors  Crystal Feimster (African American Studies), Zareena Grewal (Ethnicity, Race, & Migration), Daniel HoSang (Ethnicity, Race, & Migration), Paul Sabin (History, Environmental Studies), Tisa Wenger (Divinity School),

Assistant Professors  Laura Barraclough (Ethnicity, Race, & Migration), Greta LaFleur, Albert Laguna (Ethnicity, Race, & Migration)

Senior Lecturer  James Berger (English)

Lecturers  Ryan Brasseaux, Irene Garza (Ethnicity, Race, and Migration), Christine Muller, Karin Roffman (Humanities, English), Joel Silverman, Quan Tran (Ethnicity, Race, and Migration)

First-Year Seminars

Gateway Courses

AMST 133a / ER&M 187a / HIST 107a, 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 141a / HIST 141a, The American West  Travis Ross
The history of the American West as both frontier and region, real and imagined, from the first contacts between Indians and Europeans in the fifteenth century to the multicultural encounters of the contemporary Sunbelt. Students work with historical texts and images from Yale’s Western Americana Collection.  HU

AMST 160a / AFAM 160a / AFST 184a / HIST 184a, The Rise and Fall of Atlantic Slavery  Edward Rugemer
The history of peoples of African descent throughout the Americas, from the first African American societies of the sixteenth century through the century-long process of emancipation.  HU

AMST 188a / HIST 115a, The Colonial Period of American History  Mark Peterson
This course explores the history of North America from the period of European colonization through the era of the Seven Years’ War, from roughly 1492 to 1763. Emphasis is placed on the migration of people from Europe and Africa to North America; their contact and
interaction with Native Americans; the formation of new societies and economies; and the corresponding development of new political and social ideas in America, with special attention paid to the evolving relationship between slavery and freedom. Although the course addresses the major themes and issues of early American history, the lectures and readings frequently focus on the lives of individuals, both prominent and obscure, who shaped and were shaped by larger forces and developments. HU

**AMST 197b / ARCH 280b / HSAR 210b, 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 199b / HIST 165b, The American Century**  Beverly Gage
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. WR, 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 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 235a / ENGL 354a, Language, Disability, Fiction**  James Berger
Portrayals of cognitive and linguistic impairment in modern fiction. Characters with limited capacities for language as figures of "otherness." Contemporaneous discourses of science, sociology, ethics, politics, and aesthetics. The ethics of speaking about or for subjects at the margins of discourse. HU

**AMST 236b / EVST 318b / HIST 199b / 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. HU

**AMST 238a / AFAM 192 / AFST 238a / ER&M 238a, Introduction to 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

**AMST 239a / ENGL 187a, Love and Hate in the American South**  Caleb Smith
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 songs, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, country music, photographs, "Strange Fruit," folk tales, memoirs, cookbook recipes, and other fantasies. Close reading, cultural analysis, and historical context. Literary works by Capote, Faulkner, Hurston, Jacobs, O’Connor, Poe, Twain, Toomer, Walker, Welty, Wright. Music, film, and other media. HU

**AMST 247a / FILM 244a / HIST 147a / HLTH 170a / HSHM 202a, Media and Medicine in Modern America**  John Warner and Gretchen Berland
Relationships between medicine, health, and the media in the United States from 1870 to the present. The changing role of the media in shaping conceptions of the body, creating new diseases, influencing health and health policy, crafting the image of the medical profession, informing expectations of medicine and constructions of citizenship, and the medicalization of American life. HU

**AMST 257a / ENGL 354a, Modern Apocalyptic Narratives**  James 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 258b / EVST 258b, Wilderness in the North American Imagination  Yuhe Wang

The idea and practice of wilderness in American history, art, literature, society, and politics. Authors include Salomon Northup, Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Jack London, Aldo Leopold, and Rachel Carson. A class dinner and field trip are held during the term.  HU

AMST 272a / ER&M 282a / HIST 182a / WGSS 272a, Asian American History, 1800 to the Present  Mary Lui

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

* AMST 281a / ENGL 278a, 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 299b / 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

Junior Seminars

* AMST 303b / AFAM 385b / ER&M 375b, Plantation, Prison, and Ghetto in the United States  Aaron Carico

Survey of the plantation, ghetto, and prison. Three spatial forms as foundations for the American project, aligned with colonialism and domination. Theoretical and historical considerations of how production of space and racial differences have been articulated together in United States. Topics include political economy of slavery, ghetto origins, and prison abolition.  HU

* AMST 304b / EVST 352b, Food and Documentary  Ian Cheney

Survey of contemporary public debates and current scientific thinking about how America farms and eats explored through the medium of documentary film. Includes a brief history of early food and agrarian documentaries, with a focus on twenty-first century films that consider sustainable food.  HU

* AMST 310b / AFAM 410b / WGSS 410b, Interdisciplinary Approaches to African American Studies  Anthony Reed

An interdisciplinary, thematic approach to the study of race, nation, and ethnicity in the African diaspora. Topics include class, gender, color, and sexuality; the dynamics of reform; Pan-Africanism, neocolonialism, and contemporary black nationalism. Use of a broad range of methodologies.  WR, HU, SO

* AMST 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 327a / ER&M 393a / RLST 309a / WGSS 280a, Religion and Capitalism  Lucia Hulsether

A comparative and interdisciplinary seminar exploring the religious qualities of capitalism and the economic qualities of religion. Topics include: consumer culture as religious practice; raced and gendered ethics of work; the legacy of Christianity for secular markets; missionary humanitarians and corporate social responsibility; images of diversity in global markets; technology, science, and the post-human; critiques of capitalism and alternative visions of freedom. Emphasis on critical race, feminist, and queer analysis.  WR, HU

* AMST 331b, Photographing the City: Urban Pictures, Urban Places  Kristin Hankins

How do we see places? How do we see boundaries? How do our practices of looking reproduce, complicate, and transform places? This junior seminar explores these questions through an engagement with American urban places and analysis of their representations throughout the 20th century, beginning with photography at the turn of the century and ending with contemporary social practice art projects. We analyze the relationship between visual culture and public space; the ways in which urban visual culture conceals and reveals power dynamics; and different ways of approaching, engaging, and representing urban places. The primary objective is to foster critical engagement with urban space and its representations—to develop an analytical framework which grounds exploration of the impact of representational strategies on experiences of space and vice versa.

* AMST 332a / HSAR 410a, 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 336b / ER&M 369b, American Fascism  Aaron Carico

A counterhistory of American democracy that traces the threads of xenophobia, demagoguery, and patriarchy in the United States from the nineteenth century to the present day through histories, novels, and films. Alongside theories of fascism and white nationalism, students read critical works by black, feminist, and indigenous scholars.
* AMST 337b / AFAM 275b, The Afterlives of Slavery in the United States  Aaron Carico
Examination of slavery in America after abolition and the arrival of freedom. Rather than presuming that slavery simply vanishes, consideration of whether slavery somehow remains, and if so, where its remnants are to be found in national life. Focus on boundary lines imagined to separate slavery and freedom and what might constitute a true state of freedom.  HU

* AMST 341a / AFAM 399a / ER&M 407a, Race and Capitalism  Aaron Carico
This interdisciplinary seminar explores, both theoretically and historically, how racial formations are bound to the formations of capitalism. Focus on the American scene, with sustained inquiry on slavery, its commodity logics, and their residues. Consideration of the effects of immigration and globalization.  SO

* 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.  SO

* AMST 346a / ENGL 235a / HUMS 252a, 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.  WR, HU

* AMST 349a / THST 427a, Technologies of Movement Research  Emily Coates
An interdisciplinary survey of creative and critical methods for researching human movement. Based in the motion capture studio at the Center for Collaborative Arts and Media, the course draws movement exercises and motion capture experiments together with literature from dance and performance studies, art, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, cognitive science, and the history of science to investigate the ways that artists and scholars conceive of human movement as a way of knowing the world. Students will develop their own projects over the course of the semester. No prior experience in dance required.

* AMST 354a, Music and Resistance in the Modern United States  Lucy Caplan
While music is often touted as a “universal language” that generates social harmoniousness, it also expresses dissent from and resistance to the status quo. This course asks how music works as type of social and political resistance, and what aesthetic and formal qualities enable it to do so. We examine the relationship between music and resistance in the twentieth- and twenty-first-century United States via an array of theoretical texts, historical examples, and sonic archives. Focusing especially (but not exclusively) on African American music and musicians, we consider how music informs modes of resistance tied to race, class, gender, and sexuality. In addition to asking how music can resist extant arrangements of power, we also consider the types of futures that music can imagine.  HU

* AMST 355a / AFAM 373a / ER&M 380a, White America  Aaron Carico
Critical exploration of how the whiteness of the United States and its institutions has been developed and maintained from the nineteenth century into the present. Special attention paid to the intersection of race and class, particularly to the position of poor whites. Examination of the politics and culture of American whiteness, texts include histories, literary essays, fiction, and films.  HU

* AMST 363b / ER&M 312b / WGSS 367b, Indigenous Feminisms  Kelly Fayard
Exploration of a wide array of indigenous feminisms—drawn from various thematic and transnational contexts across the Americas and Native Pacific—so as to analyze the scope and significance of such knowledges, particularly as they relate to broader theories and practices of decolonization.  HU

* AMST 368b / ER&M 224b, Marxism and Social Movements in the Nineteenth Century  Michael Denning
The history and theory of the socialist and Marxist traditions from their beginnings in the early nineteenth century to the world upheavals of 1917–19. Relations to labor, feminist, abolitionist, and anticolonial movements.  RP

* AMST 370b / THST 380b, The History of Dance  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.  WR, HU

* AMST 371b / ER&M 297b, Food, Race, and Migration in United States Society  Quan Tran
Exploration of the relationship between food, race, and migration in historical and contemporary United States contexts. Organized thematically and anchored in selected case studies, this course is comparative in scope and draws from contemporary work in the fields of food studies, ethnic studies, migration studies, American studies, anthropology, and history.  SO

* AMST 387b / SOCY 226b, American Nationalism and the Muslim ‘Other’  Jonathan Wyrtzen and Roger Baumann
We have seen resurgent assertions of white Christian American identity under the rubric of Donald Trump’s “Make America Great Again” discourse, provoking renewed questions about the relationship between religion and national identity in the U.S. today. Observing how Trump has exploited the populist resonance of white Christian American identity, we are watching a fierce battle over what constitutes “American-ness”—with conflicting ideas about religious identities, pluralism, and secularism at deep odds. This course surveys the role of religion in historical debates about American national identity, landing on our primary focus—the trope of the Muslim “other” as
it permeates American popular, religious, and political discourse. In this course, you encounter and grapple with the deep history of American interest in the "Muslim world," with attention to the role that Islam and Muslims play in constituting particular versions of American national identity. The course asks you to consider the juxtaposition of the categories "Islam" and "America," and especially how these categories are mutually constructed. We also analyze how the category of "Islam" activates certain modes of American nationalism, particularly latent forms of Christian American nationalism that have long genealogies in American history. The course broadly surveys the sources of American discourse on Islam, including in historical and contemporary context. We pay attention to the processes by which certain discourses come to dominate and other are marginalized. You become familiar with relevant disciplinary tools to understand and interpret American political and religious cultures across time and space, drawing from sociology, anthropology, history, and political science.

* AMST 398b / ER&M 308b / HIST 158Jb, American Indian Law and Policy  
Ned Blackhawk
Survey of the origins, history, and legacies of federal Indian law and policy during two hundred years of United States history. The evolution of U.S. constitutional law and political achievements of American Indian communities over the past four decades.  

Senior Seminars

* AMST 403a, Introduction to Public Humanities  
Ryan Brasseaux
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 403b / AFAM 406b / ENGL 405b, Autobiography in America  
Robert Stepto
A study of autobiographical writings from Mary Rowlandson's Indian captivity narrative (1682) to the present. Classic forms such as immigrant, education, and cause narratives; prevailing autobiographical strategies involving place, work, and photographs. Authors include Franklin, Douglass, Jacobs, Antin, Kingston, Uchida, Balakian, Rodriguez, and Bechdel.  

* AMST 405b / AFAM 406b / ENGL 405b, Constructing Coeducation in the American Academy  
Laura Wexler
In advance of the 2019-2020 university-wide celebration of coeducation at Yale College, and 150 years at the Yale Graduate School of Art, this course examines the history and philosophy of coeducation in American colleges and universities, with a special focus on Yale. We explore the many ways in which the meaning of the arrival of female undergraduates at Yale should be understood vis-a-vis other intersecting identity categories such as race, class, region, sexuality, occupation, and nation. We study the history of higher education in the United States; examine arguments for and against post-secondary education for women and co-education versus single-sex colleges; compare and contrast racialized initiatives including Freedman's Bureau schools for former slaves, Native American boarding schools, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and Hispanic Serving Institutions. We track changing patterns of inclusion and exclusion; inquire into the implications of landmark legislation such as Brown vs. Board of Education, and Title IX; and jointly develop a specific case history of Yale. Aided by especially prepared archives in the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library and Sterling Memorial Library, students produce original research on important moments and figures.  

* AMST 408a / AFAM 412a / ER&M 408a, Race and Comedy  
Albert Laguna
Introduction to theories of the ludic and to critical race theory. Ways in which comic modes have been utilized by racialized subjects to represent and issue critiques of the dominant regime. Analysis of stand-up comedy, film, television, and novels.  

* AMST 411b / AFAM 401b / ER&M 385b / FILM 453b, Introduction to Documentary Studies  
Zareena Grewal
An introduction to documentary film, photography, and radio for students interested in doing documentary work, as well as for those who simply wish to study the history of the documentary as a cultural form.  

* AMST 423b / AFAM 447b / HIST 190Jb / LAST 447b, New Directions in Caribbean History  
Edward Rugemer
An exploration of recent scholarship on the history of the Caribbean, a region defined by the islands of the Caribbean Sea, the Caribbean coastal region of Central America, and the northern littoral of the South American mainland north of Brazil. The course focuses on the establishment of European colonies in the 17th century through the emergence of independent states in the region today. Key themes include the operation of racial slavery; the abolition of slavery and the process of emancipation; the systems of forced labor that followed abolition; migration; and the persistence of race, religion, and imperialism in the formation of Caribbean societies. Enrollment priority given to upper-level students.  

* AMST 442a / ER&M 435a / HIST 151Ja, Writing Tribal Histories  
Ned Blackhawk
Historical overview of American Indian tribal communities, particularly since the creation of the United States. Challenges of working with oral histories, government documents, and missionary records.  

* AMST 455b / ENGL 430b / EVST 430b, 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.  

* AMST 459a / 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. HU, SO

* AMST 448b / AFAM 413b / THST 420b / WGSS 415b, Samuel Delany and his Worlds Tavia Nyong’o
Exploration of sex, science fiction, and the downtown scene in New York City, through the archives and writings of Samuel R. Delany.
Particular attention to the intersections of music, nightlife, avant-garde performance, literature, and visual art, within the context of social
movements from feminism, gay liberation, and HIV/AIDS activism. HU

* AMST 450a / ER&M 430a / WGSS 461a, Islam in the American Imagination Zareena Grewal
The representation of Muslims in the United States and abroad throughout the twentieth century. The place of Islam in the American
imagination; intersections between concerns of race and citizenship in the United States and foreign policies directed toward the Middle
East. WR, SO

* AMST 451a / HIST 174Ja / RLST 260a, Religion, War, and the Meaning of America Harry Stout
The relationship between religion and war in American history from colonial beginnings through Vietnam. The religious meanings of
Americans at war; the mutually reinforcing influences of nationalism and religion; war as the norm of American national life; the concept
of civil religion; biblical and messianic contexts of key U.S. conflicts. HU

* 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. WR, HU

* AMST 463a and AMST 464b / EVST 463a and EVST 464b / FILM 455a and FILM 456b, 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 469a / EP&E 396a / PLSC 251a, American Progressivism and Its Critics Stephen Skowronek
The progressive reform tradition in American politics. The tradition’s conceptual underpinnings, social supports, practical manifestations
in policy and in new governmental arrangements, and conservative critiques. Emphasis on the origins of progressivism in the early decades
of the twentieth century, with attention to latter-day manifestations and to changes in the progressive impulse over time. SO

* AMST 472b, Individual Reading and Research for Juniors and Seniors Albert Laguna
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

Special Projects and Senior Project

* AMST 471a and AMST 472b, Individual Reading and Research for Juniors and Seniors Albert Laguna
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 491a or b, Senior Project**  
  Staff  
  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**  
  Lee Johnson  
  Independent research and proseminar on a two-term senior project. For requirements see under “Senior requirement” in the American Studies program description.

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