
Department of
African and Afro-American Studies

Courses of Study:
 Minor
 Major (B.A.)

Objectives

The department welcomes all members of the student body who have an interest in Africa and/or African-America. The major is arranged through consultation with the departmental advisor or another professor. Majors may ask for guidance in the selection of elective courses with related content or approach within their chosen disciplines.

Faculty

Wellington Nyangoni, Chair

Africa: Economic development.
 Comparative Third World politics.

Mark Auslander

Art and aesthetics. Museum studies.
 Religion. Kinship. Historical anthropology.
 Development. Africa. United States.

Joan Bryant

African-American history. Reform
 Movements. Race and ethnicity.

Georgiary McElveen

African diasporic music. African American
 sacred music traditions. Ethnography.
 Cultural studies.

Faith Smith

African and Afro-American literature.
 Anglophone Caribbean literature.

Ibrahim Sundiata

Africa: Social history. Slavery. The African
 diaspora. Afro-Brazil.

Requirements for the Major

A. Required of all candidates: eight semester courses from among the AAAS and cross-listed courses below. One of the eight courses must be AAAS 5a (Introduction to African and Afro-American Studies), which should be taken as the first AAAS course, as it provides an introduction to themes and methods of analysis.

B. At least one course will be taken in each of the following areas: social science, humanities, and history.

C. At least four courses will be taken in one of the following disciplines as a field of specialization: literature, music, history, political science, sociology, and economics. A candidate may elect a five-course interdisciplinary focus on Africa or Afro-American affairs as a specialization. Always confirm your choice of specialization with the department academic advisor.

D. Five of the eight required courses must be from within the department (e.g., from the AAAS courses below). No course with a final grade below C- can count toward the major.

E. Candidates for departmental honors must satisfactorily complete AAAS 99d (Senior Research).

Requirements for the Minor

Five semester courses are required, including the following:

A. AAAS 5a (Introduction to African and Afro-American Studies). This should be taken as the first AAAS course, as it provides an introduction to themes and methods of analysis.

B. AAAS 70a (Introduction to Afro-American History).

C. The remaining three courses will be selected from among the department's offerings in literature, history, political science, and music.

Students are required to declare the minor in AAAS no later than the beginning of their senior year. Each student will be assigned a departmental advisor by the undergraduate advising head.

Courses of Instruction

(1-99) Primarily for Undergraduate Students

AAAS 5a Introduction to African and Afro-American Studies

[ss]

An interdisciplinary introduction to major topics in African and Afro-American studies, providing fundamental insights into Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas through approaches and techniques of social science and the humanities. Usually offered every year. Will be offered in the fall of 2003.

Ms. Bryant

AAAS 18b Africa and the West

[nw ss]

Focuses on the relationship between Africa and the "West" from the time of the ancient Egyptians to the postcolonial period. It also assesses the dilemma neo-colonialism poses for the West. Usually offered every third year. Last offered in the spring of 2003.

Staff

AAAS 60a Economics of Third World Hunger

[nw ss]

Employs the tools of social science, particularly economics, to study causes and potential solutions to problems in production, trade, and consumption of food in the underdeveloped world. Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the spring of 2004.

Mr. Nyangoni

AAAS 70a Introduction to Afro-American History

[ss]

A survey of the Afro-American experience from the era of slavery to the present. Topics include the rise of a distinct community and its institutions, Reconstruction and segregation, the contributions of blacks to American society, and the struggles for freedom and equality. Usually offered every year. Will be offered in the fall of 2003.

Ms. Bryant

AAAS 79b Afro-American Literature of the Twentieth Century

[hum ss]

An introduction to the essential themes, aesthetic concerns, and textual strategies that characterize Afro-American writing of this century. Examines those influences that have shaped the poetry, fiction, and prose nonfiction of representative writers. Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the spring of 2004.

Ms. Smith

AAAS 80a Economy and Society in Africa

[nw ss]

Perspectives on the interaction of economic and other variables in African societies. Topics include the ethical and economic bases of distributive justice; models of social theory, efficiency and equality in law; the role of economic variables in the theory of history; and world systems analysis. Usually offered every third year. Will be offered in the fall of 2003.

Mr. Nyangoni

AAAS 81b Religion in African-American History

[ss]

Prerequisite or corequisite: AAAS 70a.

Examines religious development in African-American history. Explores religious experience and identity, religion in popular culture, institutional developments, political activism among religious figures, theological innovations, and religious conflict in order to understand how religion has informed African-American life.

Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the spring of 2005.

Ms. Bryant

AAAS 85a Survey of Southern African History

[nw ss]

Explores the roots of segregation and apartheid in South Africa, the development of a regional political economy dominated by South Africa, labor migrancy and land alienation in southern Africa, and the rise of African and Afrikaaner nationalisms.

Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the spring of 2004.

Mr. Sundiata

AAAS 89a Race and Ethnicity in American Politics

[ss]

A comparison of how different voting models account for racial and ethnic political behavior in the United States. The course also examines whether ethnic politics generates equal outcomes for equal participation and how the "nature of the game" changes across time. Usually offered every fourth year. Last offered in the fall of 1999.

Staff

AAAS 98a Independent Study

Signature of the instructor required.

Independent readings and research on a topic within the student's interest under the direction of a faculty supervisor.

Usually offered every year.

Staff

AAAS 98b Independent Study

Signature of the instructor required.

Independent readings and research on a topic within the student's interest under the direction of a faculty supervisor.

Usually offered every year.

Staff

AAAS 99d Senior Research

Signature of the instructor required.

Usually offered every year.

Staff

(100-199) For Both Undergraduate and Graduate Students

AAAS 115a Introduction to African History

[nw ss]

The history of African societies from their earliest beginnings to the present era. Topics include African participation in antiquity and early Christianity and preindustrial political, economic, and cultural developments, among others. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2003.

Mr. Sundiata

AAAS 117a Communications and Social Change in Developing Nations

[ss]

Examines the role of communications and information systems within and between developed and underdeveloped nations and addresses the larger perspective of global communications. Usually offered every third year. Last offered in the spring of 2000.

Staff

AAAS 120b Race in African-American History

[ss]

Prerequisite: AAAS 70a (may be taken concurrently) or AAAS 145b.

Is race un-American? African-American racial thought provides a critical lens for understanding the meanings and functions of race. Analyzing primary sources from the antebellum period to the present, we ask: Is race racist? What is black culture? Does justice require "colorblindness?" Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the spring of 2006.

Ms. Bryant

AAAS 123a Third World Ideologies

[nw ss]

Analyzes ideological concepts developed by seminal Third World political thinkers and their application to modern political analysis. Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the spring of 2004.

Mr. Nyangoni

AAAS 126b Political Economy of the Third World

[nw ss]

Development of capitalism and different roles and functions assigned to all "Third Worlds," in the periphery as well as the center. Special attention will be paid to African and Afro-American peripheries. Usually offered every year. Will be offered in the fall of 2003.

Mr. Nyangoni

AAAS 131b American Freedom before Emancipation

[ss]

Prerequisite or corequisite: AAAS 70a or HIST 51a.

What did it mean to be free in an age of slavery? The experiences of free African-Americans focus our investigation of this founding myth of America. Explores what freedom meant to criminals, reformers, laborers, slaveholders, artists, abolitionists, soldiers, and statesmen. Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the spring of 2006.

Ms. Bryant

AAAS 132b Introduction to African Literature

[nw hum ss]

Examines the cultural production of African writers and filmmakers and their critiques of the post-colonial state. Their exploration of gender, sexuality, language choice, the pressures placed on "authentic" identities by diasporic communities, and the conflicting claims of tradition and modernity. Usually offered every third year. Last offered in the fall of 2002.

Ms. Smith

AAAS 133b The Literature of the Caribbean

[nw hum ss]

An exploration of the narrative strategies and themes of writers of the region who grapple with issues of colonialism, class, race, ethnicity, and gender in a context of often conflicting allegiances to North and South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the spring of 2005.

Ms. Smith

AAAS 134b Novel and Film of the African Diaspora

[nw hum ss]

Writers and filmmakers usually examined separately under national or regional canonical categories such as "(North) American," "Latin American," "African," "British," or "Caribbean," are brought together here to examine transnational identities, and investments in "authentic" "African" or "black" identities. Usually offered every third year. Will be offered in the fall of 2004.

Ms. Smith

AAAS 143a Economies of African Countries

[ss]

Enrollment limited to 25.

Combines lectures and discussions of general themes with student research and presentations on specific countries in comparing and contrasting the economic experience of the nations of sub-Saharan Africa. Topics include the economic impact of colonialism, land tenure institutions and agricultural production, food policy, primary product exports, migration and urbanization, and industrialization. Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the fall of 2005.

Mr. Nyangoni

AAAS 145b What is Race?

[ss]

What is race? How has it shaped what it means to be American? We explore 19th- and 20th-century interpretations of race in science, law, reform initiatives, and popular literature. Issues include eugenics, census categories, race loyalty, polygenesis, immigration, passing, and miscegenation. Usually offered every third year. Will be offered in the spring of 2005.

Ms. Bryant

AAAS 147b Women in African Societies

[nw ss]

Enrollment limited to 25.

Explores women's ways of thought in different African societies. Studies how elite and non-literate women articulate their cultural and historical experiences. Usually offered every third year.

Staff

AAAS 155a Slavery in America

[ss]

Examines the rise of slavery in America, the formation of slave and free black communities, the emergence of the planter class, the role of slavery in the economy and politics, the relationship between slavery and racism, and the legacy of slavery. Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the spring of 2004.

Ms. Bryant

AAAS 156a The Civil Rights Movement

[ss]

Explores the civil rights movement through primary readings and films. Includes an assessment of the consequences of the movement and the ongoing controversies over the best ways to achieve equality for black Americans. Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the spring of 2004.

Ms. Bryant

AAAS 158a Theories of Development and Underdevelopment

[nw ss]

Humankind has for some time now possessed the scientific and technological means to combat the scourge of poverty. The purpose of this seminar is to acquaint students with contending theories of development and underdevelopment, emphasizing the open and contested nature of the process involved and of the field of study itself. Among the topics to be studied are modernization theory, the challenge to modernization posed by dependency and world systems theories, and more recent approaches centered on the concepts of basic needs and of sustainable development. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2003.

Mr. Nyangoni

AAAS 163b Africa in World Politics

[ss]

Explores the impact of African states in world affairs; the African and Afro-Asian groups in the United Nations; relations with Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and the Americas; the Afro-Asian Movement; nonalignment; the Organization of African Unity; and Pan-Africanism. Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the fall of 2004.

Mr. Nyangoni

AAAS 167a African and Caribbean Comparative Political Systems

[nw ss]

Introduces students to the literature and method of comparative political analysis. Case studies central to the course will be Ghana, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe; and Puerto Rico, Jamaica, and Cuba. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2003.

Mr. Nyangoni

AAAS 170b Seminar: Political Economy of Developing Countries

[ss]

Signature of the instructor required.

Analysis of political and economic issues in developing countries. Special emphasis on the major explanations for underdevelopment and alternative strategies for development. Topics include colonialism, nationalism, developing countries in the international system, state-building, rural development, and gender perspectives on underdevelopment. Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the spring of 2005.

Mr. Nyangoni

AAAS 175a Comparative Politics of North Africa

[nw ss]

Formation and development of political cleavages and cleavage systems, and of mass-based political groups. Analysis of the expansion of mass political participation, elections, the impact of the military on political groups, and international factors. Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the spring of 2006.

Mr. Nyangoni

Cross-Listed Courses**ANTH 133a**

Tradition and the Contemporary Experience in Sub-Saharan Africa

ENG 16a

Nineteenth-Century African-American Literature: Texts and Contexts

ENG 17b

African Novel

ENG 127b

Migrating Bodies, Migrating Texts

ENG 147b

South African Literature and Apartheid

HIST 115a

(formerly AAAS 116b)

History of Comparative Race and Ethnic Relations

HIST 116a

History of West Africa

MUS 186a

African American Sacred Music Cosmos

POL 140a

Politics of Africa

SOC 120a

Africa Reoriented: Theory and Experience of the African Diaspora

SOC 125b

U.S.-Caribbean Relations

SOC 171a

Women Leaders and Transformation in Developing Countries

American History

See History.

Department of

American Studies

Courses of Study:

Major (B.A.)

Objectives

American studies takes an interdisciplinary approach to the culture, society, politics, institutions, identities, thoughts, values, and behavior of Americans, in all their variety, and to the critical issues that confront the United States domestically and internationally. Using materials central to the disciplines of American studies—film, literature, popular and material culture, music, art and architecture, oral history, social and intellectual history—the major is designed to provide students with an educated awareness of the way the United States, viewed as a civilization, frames the lives, aspirations, and self-perceptions of its citizens. Typically, students who enroll anticipate careers in law, business, public service, communications, education, journalism, museum work, and teaching, at all levels. As the sponsor of the programs in legal studies, film studies, journalism, and environmental studies, the American studies major aims to provide a broad background to those areas and welcomes students who seek active engagement with the contemporary world through firm grounding in a sound liberal arts education.

How to Become a Major

Normally, students declare their major in their sophomore year and attempt to complete the three required courses (see below) by the end of the first semester of their junior year, or at the latest, the end of their junior year. Working with a departmental advisor, students are urged to develop a coherent selection of electives tailored to their particular interests and gifts. Because of the close working relationship between the department and its resident programs (law, film, journalism, environmental studies) students often offer several courses in joint satisfaction of their major (American studies) and their program. Students wishing to earn departmental honors must write a senior thesis in a full year course, AMST 99d. Special opportunities are available for supervised internships (AMST 92a,b). Many majors gain a valuable cross-cultural perspective on America by studying abroad in their junior year.

Faculty

Jacob Cohen, Chair

Culture and thought.

Joyce Antler

Women's history. Social history.

Thomas Doherty (Chair, Film Studies)

Film and culture.

Brian Donahue (Chair, Environmental Studies)

American environmental studies.

Henry Felt

Documentary film.

Richard Gaskins (Director, Legal Studies)

Law, social policy, and philosophy.

Laura Goldin

Environmental studies.

Georgiary McElveen

African diasporic music. African American sacred music traditions. Ethnography. Cultural studies.

Jennifer Seely

Democratization. African politics.

Michael Socolow (Chair, Journalism Program)

Journalism. Communications history.

Daniel Terris

Literature and intellectual history.

Stephen Whitfield

Modern political and cultural history.

Requirements for the Major

A. AMST 10a (Foundations of American Civilization). Normally, students will take 10a in their sophomore year and no later than the spring term of their junior year. Exceptions should be discussed with the student's advisor.

B. AMST 100a (Classic Texts in the American Culture to 1900). Normally, students will take 100a in their sophomore year and no later than in their junior year. Students may take 100a in their senior year only in the most unusual circumstances, with the approval of the department chair.

C. AMST 100b (Twentieth Century American Culture). After completing 100a, students must take 100b, normally in their sophomore or junior year.

D. Six (6) semester courses in American studies, chosen either from within the department or from other departments, with departmental approval.

E. To be eligible for departmental honors, seniors must enroll in AMST 99d (Senior Research) with departmental approval and participate in a year-long honors colloquium. AMST 99d does not satisfy other departmental requirements.

F. Not more than two courses satisfying a second major may be offered to complete the American studies major.

G. No course, whether required or elective, for which a student receives a grade below C- may be counted toward the major.

Courses of Instruction

(1-99) Primarily for Undergraduate Students

AMST 10a Foundations of American Civilization

[ss]

Interpretations of the meaning of the myths, symbols, values, heroes and rogues, character ideals, identities, masks, games, humor, languages, expressive repertoire, and ideologies that are exhibited in the social, political, economic, and cultural history of the United States. Usually offered every year. Will be offered in the spring of 2004.

Mr. Cohen

AMST 15a Writing for the Media

[ss]

Core course for Journalism Program.

Enrollment limited to 20.

A hands-on workshop designed to teach basic broadcast newswriting skills, as well as techniques for gathering, producing, and delivering radio and television news.

Stresses the importance of accuracy. Issues of objectivity, point of view, and freedom of the press are discussed. Writing assignments will be written on deadline. Usually offered every year. Will be offered in the spring of 2004.

Staff

AMST 20a Environmental Issues

[ss]

An interdisciplinary overview of major environmental challenges facing humanity, including population growth; food production; limited supplies of energy, water, and other resources; climate change; loss of biodiversity; waste disposal and pollution. Students examine these problems critically and evaluate different ways of thinking about their causes and solutions. Usually offered every year. Will be offered in the fall of 2003.

Mr. Donahue

AMST 92a Internship in American Studies

Signature of the instructor required.

Off-campus work experience in conjunction with a reading course with a member of the department. Requires reading and writing assignments drawing and amplifying the internship experience. Only one internship course may be submitted in satisfaction of the department's elective requirements.

Usually offered every year.

Staff

AMST 92b Internship in American Studies

See AMST 92a for special notes and course description.

Usually offered every year.

Staff

AMST 97a Readings in American Studies

Enrollment limited to juniors and seniors.

Signature of the instructor required.

Independent readings, research, and writing on a subject of the student's interest, under the direction of a faculty advisor. Usually offered every year.

Staff

AMST 97b Readings in American Studies

See AMST 97a for special notes and course description. Usually offered every year.

Staff

AMST 98a Independent Study

Signature of the instructor required.

Usually offered every year.

Staff

AMST 98b Independent Study

Signature of the instructor required.

Usually offered every year.

Staff

AMST 99d Senior Research

Enrollment limited to seniors. Signature of the instructor and the department chair required.

Seniors who are candidates for degrees with departmental honors should register for this course and, under the direction of a faculty advisor, prepare a thesis. In addition to regular meetings with faculty advisors, seniors will participate in an honors colloquium, a seminar group bringing together the honors candidates and members of the American studies faculty.

Usually offered every year.

Staff

(100-199) For Both Undergraduate and Graduate Students

AMST 100a Classic Texts in the American Culture to 1900

[wi ss]

Preference given to American studies majors. Signature of the instructor required. Various visions of America from the earliest colonization through the 19th century are explored. Of special concern will be the ways the individual's inner life is conceived or expressed in relation to the new society and nation-building of the 18th and 19th centuries. Usually offered every year. Will be offered in the fall of 2003 and 2004.

Mr. Doherty (Fall)

Mr. Donahue (Spring)

AMST 100b Twentieth-Century American Culture

[ss]

Prerequisite: AMST 100a.

The democratization of taste and the extension of mass media are among the distinguishing features of American culture in the 20th century. Through a variety of genres and forms of expression, in high culture and the popular arts, this course traces the historical development of a national style that came to exercise formidable influence abroad as well. Usually offered every year. Last offered in the spring of 2003.

Staff

AMST 101a American Environmental History

[ss]

Provides an overview of the relationship between nature and culture in North America. Covers Native Americans, the European invasion, the development of a market system of resource extraction and consumption, the impact of industrialization, and environmentalist responses. Current environmental issues are placed in historical context. Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the spring of 2004.

Mr. Donahue

AMST 102a Women, the Environment, and Social Justice

[ss]

Signature of the instructor required.

Focuses on the profound and unique roles women have played in preserving and enhancing the natural environment and protecting human health. Students explore a wide range of environmental issues from the perspective of women and examine how women have been a driving force in key efforts to improve our environment. Also further explores the legal, ethical, and social issues embodied in environmental racism and classism. Usually offered second year. Will be offered in the spring of 2004.

Ms. Goldin

AMST 103a The American Experience: Approaches to American Studies

[ss]

Students examine the many meanings of the American experience by exploring the sources, subjects, and methodologies used in the practice of American studies. In the classroom and on field trips, students use such resources as fiction and poetry, photography and painting, oral history and music, and architecture and the natural landscape to enlarge their knowledge and understanding of American history and contemporary society. Highly recommended for students intending to write theses and those considering graduate school. Usually offered every fourth year. Last offered in the fall of 1998.

Staff

AMST 104b Brandeis and Its Environs: The Geographic Analysis of Your Community

[ss]

Signature of the instructor required.

Learn how to know—and map—the place where you live. Develops skills for community environmental research. Intensive training in the use of GIS mapping software, while investigating ecological, historical, and other natural and cultural aspects of Brandeis, Waltham, and the surrounding environment. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2002.

Mr. Donahue

AMST 105a The Eastern Forest: Paleocology to Policy

[ss]

A library-intensive course.

Can we make sustainable use of the Eastern Forest of North America while protecting biological diversity and ecological integrity? Explores the forest's ecological development, the impact of human cultures, attitudes toward the forest, and our mixed record of abuse and stewardship. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the fall of 2001.

Mr. Donahue

AMST 106b The Pleasures and Perils of Eating: Food and Farming in America

[ss]

American food is abundant and cheap. Yet many eat poorly, and some argue our agriculture may be unhealthy and unsustainable. Students explore food issues and the history of American farming, and design a pleasing food system. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the fall of 2002.

Mr. Donahue

AMST 111a Images of the American West in Film and Culture

[ss]

Explores how motion picture images of the West have reflected and shaped American identities, ideologies, and mythologies. Through a variety of films—silent, “classic,” and “revisionist”—and supplementary readings, examines the intertwined themes of progress, civilization, region, nation, democracy, race, gender, and violence. Usually offered every fourth year. Last offered in the fall of 1997.

Staff

AMST 112b American Film and Culture of the 1950s

[ss]

Traces the decline of classical Hollywood cinema and the impact of motion pictures on American culture in the 1950s, especially Hollywood's representations of the Cold War. Students learn methods of cinematic analysis to conduct cultural historical inquiry. Usually offered every fourth year. Last offered in the spring of 1999.

Mr. Doherty

AMST 113a American Film and Culture of the 1940s

[ss]

Examines the nature of classical Hollywood cinema and the impact of motion pictures on American culture in the 1940s, especially Hollywood's representations of World War II. Students learn methods of cinematic analysis to conduct cultural historical inquiry. Usually offered every fourth year. Last offered in the spring of 2003.

Mr. Doherty

AMST 113b American Film and Culture of the 1930s

[ss]

Traces the rise of Hollywood sound cinema and the impact of motion pictures on American culture in the 1930s, especially Hollywood's representations of the Great Depression. Students learn methods of cinematic analysis to conduct cultural historical inquiry. Usually offered every fourth year. Last offered in the spring of 2003.

Mr. Doherty

AMST 114a American Film and Culture of the 1920s

[ss]

Traces the rise and fall of silent Hollywood cinema and the impact of motion pictures on American culture in the 1920s, especially Hollywood's role in the revolution in morals and manners. Students learn methods of cinematic analysis to conduct cultural historical inquiry. All films are screened with a music score or live piano accompaniment. Usually offered every fourth year. Last offered in the fall of 2000.

Mr. Doherty

AMST 114b American Individualism

[ss]

Through various major works, central dilemmas of the American experience are examined: the ambition to transcend social and individual limitations and the tension between demands of self and the hunger for community. Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the fall of 2003.

Mr. Whitfield

AMST 118a Gender and the Professions

[ss]

Enrollment limited to 30.

Explores gender distinctions as a key element in the organization of professions, analyzing the connections among sex roles, occupational structure, and American social life. Topics include work culture(s) compatible with sexual harassment, pay equity, the “mommy” and “daddy” tracks, and dual-career families. Among the professions examined are law, medicine, teaching, social work, nursing, journalism, business, and the clergy. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2001.

Ms. Antler

AMST 120b Film Theory and Criticism

[hum ss]

Signature of the instructor required.

A course for students with some preliminary background in film studies, providing a forum not only to see and to interpret films but to master the ways films are seen and interpreted. Classic Hollywood cinema will be examined. Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the spring of 2004.

Mr. Doherty

AMST 121a The American Jewish Woman: 1890-1990s

[ss]

Signature of the instructor required.

Surveys the experiences of American Jewish women in work, politics, religion, family life, the arts, and American culture generally over the last 100 years, examining how the dual heritage of female and Jewish "otherness" shaped their often conflicted identities. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the fall of 2002.

Ms. Antler

AMST 123b Women in American History: 1865 to the Present

[ss]

A historical and cultural survey of the female experience in the United States with emphasis on issues of education, work, domestic ideology, sexuality, male-female relations, race, class, politics, war, the media, feminism, and antifeminism. Usually offered every third year. Last offered in the fall of 2000.

Ms. Antler

AMST 124b American Love and Marriage

[ss]

Signature of the instructor required.

Ideas and behavior relating to love and marriage are used as lenses to view broader social patterns such as family organization, generational conflict, and the creation of professional and national identity. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2003.

Ms. Antler

AMST 127b Women and Popular Culture

[ss]

Signature of the instructor required.

Examines women's diverse representations and participation in United States' popular culture. Using historical studies, advertising, film, television, music, and literature, discusses how constructions of race, gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity, and religion have shaped women's encounter with popular and mass culture. Topics include women and modernity, leisure and work, women's roles in the rise of consumer culture and relation to technology, representations of sexuality, and the impact of feminism. Special one-time offering. Was offered in the spring of 2003.

Ms. Phillips

AMST 130b Television and American Culture

[ss]

An interdisciplinary course with three main lines of discussion and investigation: an aesthetic inquiry into the meaning of television style and genre; a historical consideration of the medium and its role in American life; and a technological study of televisual communication. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the fall of 2002.

Mr. Doherty

AMST 131b News on Screen

[wi ss]

Combines an investigation of the history of broadcast journalism in America with practical training exercises in broadcast writing and Web production. Examines changes in the media landscape over the years and the legal and ethical issues facing contemporary broadcast journalists. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the fall of 2002.

Mr. Socolow

AMST 132b International Affairs and the American Media

[ss]

Analyzes and assesses United States media coverage of major international events, personalities, and perspectives. The course is designed to introduce students to the international events over the past three decades as they have been interpreted by American journalists and media instructors and to challenge students to evaluate the limitations and biases of this reportage. Usually offered every second year.

Staff

AMST 134b The New Media in America

[ss]

Analyzes the social and cultural adaptation of new media in American history. Examines the ways Americans have thought about and accepted new methods of mass communications in the 20th century. Usually offered every year. Last offered in the spring of 2003.

Mr. Socolow

AMST 135b The History and Principles of Photojournalism

[ss]

Signature of the instructor required.

Designed to introduce students to U.S. history as it has been recorded by photojournalists and to challenge students to evaluate the limitations and biases of this history in images. The course will analyze the major personalities, policies, institutions, and the technological advances in photojournalism since the mid-19th century, and will examine these within the context of historical changes in American society, government, and the media itself. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the summer of 2001.

Staff

AMST 137b Journalism in Modern America

[ss]

Core course for Journalism Program.

Examines what journalists have done, how their enterprise has in fact conformed with their ideals, and what some of the consequences have been for the republic historically, primarily in the 20th century. Usually offered every year. Will be offered in the fall of 2003.

Mr. Whitfield

AMST 138b Reporting Contemporary America

[ss]

Signature of the instructor required. Core course for Journalism Program.

Introduces students to the practice of news reporting for print media and links theory and history to the working craft of journalism. Trains students in the fundamentals of newsgathering and writing and provides an opportunity to practice those skills in conditions simulating a newsroom. A concern for ethics, balance, and accuracy is stressed in all assignments. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the fall of 2000.

Staff

AMST 139b Reporting on Gender, Race, and Culture

[ss]

Signature of the instructor required.

An examination of the news media's relationship to demographic and cultural change, and of how journalistic ideologies influence the coverage of women and various ethnic and cultural groups. Usually offered every second year.

Staff

AMST 140b The Asian-American Experience

[ss]

Enrollment limited to 25.

An examination of the political, economic, social, and familial adaptation of Asian-Americans to American society from the mid-19th century to the present. Patterns of acculturation will be analyzed in relation to many factors in American society in addition to the composition, size, skills, and cultural values of the newcomers and their progeny. Usually offered every year. Last offered in the spring of 2002.

Staff

AMST 141b The Native American Experience

[ss]

Enrollment limited to 20.

Survey of Native American history and culture with focus on the social, political, and economic changes experienced by Native Americans as a result of their interactions with European explorers, traders, and colonists. Usually offered every third year. Last offered in the spring of 2001.

Staff

AMST 143a War and the American Imagination

[ss]

Enrollment limited to 30.

Explores how American culture and society—as investigated through novels, plays, poetry, photography, painting, television, and film—mediate wartime experiences. The concentration will be on the American "art of war" from the Civil War to the present. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2001.

Staff

AMST 149a On the Edge of History

[ss]

Examines how visionaries, novelists, historians, social scientists, and futurologists in America, 1888-2000, have imagined and predicted America's future and what those adumbrations—correct and incorrect—tell us about our life today, tomorrow, and yesterday when the predictions were made. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the fall of 2002.

Mr. Cohen

AMST 155a American Individualism

(formerly AMST 114b)

[ss]

This course may not be repeated for credit by students who have taken AMST 114b in previous years. Enrollment limited to 30. Through various major works, central dilemmas of the American experience will be examined: the ambition to transcend social and individual limitations and the tension between demands of self and the hunger for community. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the fall of 2002.

Mr. Whitfield

AMST 156b America in the World

[ss]

Designed to elucidate how the United States—as a promise, as a dream, as a cultural projection—has interacted with the rest of the world (but primarily with Europe). Focuses less on the flow of people than on the flow of ideas, less on the instruments of foreign policy than on the institutions that have promoted visions of democracy, individual autonomy, power, and abundance. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2003.

Mr. Whitfield

AMST 160a U.S. Immigration History and Policy

[ss]

Enrollment limited to 25.

An examination of the economic, political, and ideological factors underlying immigration policy in U.S. history, especially since 1965. Analysis of contemporary immigration, refugee and asylum issues, and of problems of immigrant acculturation today. Usually offered every third year. Last offered in the fall of 2000.

Staff

AMST 163b The Sixties: Continuity and Change in American Culture

[ss]

Analysis of alleged changes in the character structure, social usages, governing myths and ideas, artistic sensibility, and major institutions of America during the 1960s. What were the principal causes and occasions for the change? Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the fall of 2003.

Mr. Cohen

AMST 167b The Cultural Work of Religion in America

[ss]

Examines the roles of religion in the adaptation of ethnic and racial cultures to one another in the United States, and to the mainstream American culture. Topics include the ways in which Americans used their religious institutions to assimilate newcomers and to contain those they defined as the "other," the religions of immigrants, and the responses of immigrants and Americans to religious pluralism. Usually offered every year. Last offered in the spring of 2002.

Staff

AMST 169a Ethnicity and Race in the United States

[ss]

Enrollment limited to 16.

Consideration of the experience of Native Americans, Euro-Americans, African-Americans, Latino-Americans, and Asian-Americans and distinctive patterns of racial and ethnic American pluralism and unity. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the fall of 2001.

Staff

AMST 170a The Idea of Conspiracy in American Culture

[ss]

Consideration of the "paranoid style" in America's political and popular culture and in recent American literature. Topics include allegations of "conspiracy" in connection with the Sacco and Vanzetti, Hiss, and Rosenberg cases; anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism; Watergate and Irangate. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the fall of 2002.

Mr. Cohen

AMST 175a Violence in American Life

[ss]

Studies of the use of terror and violence by citizens and governments in the domestic history of the United States. What are the occasions and causes of violence? How is it imagined, portrayed, and explained in literature? Is there anything peculiarly American about violence in America? Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2003.

Mr. Cohen

AMST 180b Topics in the History of American Education

[ss]

Examines major themes in the history of American education, including changing ideas about children, childrearing, and adolescence; development of schools; the politics of education; education and individual life history. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2003.

Ms. Antler

AMST 183b Sports and American Culture

[ss]

How organized sports have reflected changes in the American cultural, social, and economic scene, and how they have reflected and shaped the moral codes, personal values, character, style, myths, attachments, sense of work and play, fantasy, and reality of fans and athletes. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the fall of 2001.

Mr. Cohen

AMST 185b The Culture of the Cold War

[ss]

Addresses American political culture from the end of World War II until the revival of liberal movements and radical criticism. Attention will be paid to the specter of totalitarianism, the "end of ideology," McCarthyism, and the crisis of civil liberties, and the strains on the pluralistic consensus in an era of anti-communism. Usually offered every year. Last offered in the fall of 2002.

Mr. Whitfield

AMST 186a Topics in Ethics, Justice, and Public Life

[ss]

Signature of the instructor required.

Introduces a significant international ethics or social justice theme and prepares students to integrate academic and community work during an internship. Special attention is given to comparative issues between the United States and other nations and regions. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2002.

Mr. Terris and Staff

AMST 187a The Legal Boundaries of Public and Private Life

[ss]

Signature of the LGLS program administrator required.

Confrontations of public interest and personal rights across three episodes in American cultural history: post-Civil War race relations, progressive-era economic regulation, and contemporary civil liberties, especially sexual and reproductive privacy. Critical legal decisions examined in social and political context. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the fall of 2001.

Mr. Gaskins

AMST 188b Justice Brandeis and Progressive Jurisprudence

[ss]

Signature of the LGLS program administrator required.

Brandeis's legal career serves as model and guide for exploring the ideals and anxieties of American legal culture across the 20th century. Focus on how legal values evolve in response to new technologies, corporate capitalism, and threats to personal liberty. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the fall of 2002.

Mr. Gaskins

AMST 191b Greening the Ivory Tower: Researching and Improving the Brandeis Environment

[ss]

Signature of the instructor required.

Uses the Brandeis campus as model laboratory for applied environmental study, research, and implementation of environmentally beneficial initiatives. Students analyze the environmental impact of human activities within the existing legal, political, and social structure; learn basic research strategies for auditing and assessing the effect of these activities; and contribute to the overall understanding of the environmental impact of the Brandeis community on its surroundings. Usually offered every year. Last offered in the fall of 2002.

Ms. Goldin

AMST 196d Film Workshop: Recording America

[ss]

Does not participate in early registration (April and October). Signature of the instructor required. Admission by consent of the instructor on the basis of an interview. It is preferred that students concurrently take an American studies course.

The training of students in audiovisual production to explore aspects of American urban society. Production format will include video, slide, tape, and audio. Students should be prepared to create a documentary during this course. Usually offered every year. Last offered in the fall of 2002.

Mr. Felt

Cross-Listed Courses

Other courses given by American studies faculty that satisfy American studies elective requirements:

HS 104b

American Health Care

JOUR 103b

Advertising and the Media

JOUR 104a

Political Packaging in America

JOUR 107b

The Media and Public Policy

JOUR 110b

Ethics in Journalism

JOUR 112b

Literary Journalism: The Art of Feature Writing

JOUR 125b

Journalism of Crisis

LGLS 10a

Introduction to Law

LGLS 114a

American Health Care: Law and Policy

LGLS 120a

Sex Discrimination and the Law

LGLS 121b

Law and Social Welfare: Citizen Rights and Government Responsibilities

LGLS 126b

Marriage, Divorce, and Parenthood

LGLS 127b

Law and Letters in American Culture

LGLS 129b

Law, Technology, and Innovation

LGLS 132b

Environmental Law and Policy

LGLS 137a

Libel and Defamation, Privacy and Publicity

MUS 186a

African-American Sacred Music Cosmos

NEJS 164a

Judaism Confronts America

PHIL 74b

Foundations of American Pragmatism

POL 142b

Global Prospects of the American Democratic Model