

DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN STUDIES

<http://www.indiana.edu/~amst/>

UNDERGRADUATE COURSE OFFERINGS – SUMMER 2012

AMST-A 100 What Is America?

Notes: 3 cr. hrs.

COLL (CASE) A&H Breadth of Inquiry Credit

Class # 13650 / Session: 4W1 (5/8-6/1) – MoTuWeThFr 10:20 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. / Instructor:
Cara Kinnally

Class # 15621 / Session: 4W2 (6/4-6/29) – MoTuWeThFr 10:20 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. / Instructor:
Siobhan Carter-David

Students explore ideas about citizenship, national identity, and the social contract in the broader Americas. What makes us “Americans”? How do we define “America”? How does national identity compete with and relate to other forms of identity, such as social status or class, religious association, gender and sexuality, and racial or ethnic description?

AMST-A 200 Comparative American Identities

Notes: 3 cr. hrs.

COLL (CASE) A&H Breadth of Inquiry Credit

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Class meets w/AAST-A 200

Class # 15384 / Session: 6W1 (5/8-6/15) – MoTuWeTh 10:20 a.m. – 12:10 p.m. / Instructor:
Vivian Halloran

This course exams the formation of legal, social, cultural, and economic identities within the United States and U.S. controlled territories. Who counts as “American?” To what ends have citizens and noncitizens assumed, claimed, or refused “American” identity? This course employs a comparative frame in considering elite and subordinated classes (and/or gender, races, ethnicities, sexualities); institutional and countercultural forms of self-definition; official history and alternative acts of collective memory.

AMST-A 202 U.S. Arts and Media / Topic: American Popular Music and Comparative American Identity

Notes: 3 cr. hrs.

IUB GenEd A&H Credit

COLL (CASE) A&H Breadth of Inquiry Credit

Class # 15563 / Session: 6W1 (5/8-6/15) MoTuWeTh 12:40 – 2:30 p.m. / Instructor: Mark Hain

Rock ‘n’ roll, a distinctly American art form, is often regarded as symbolic of American society and culture as a whole. Borrowing from a tremendous variety of musical antecedents from many different cultures, ethnicities, and regions, rock represents a marriage of African and European traditions that many regard as exemplary of an American ideal. Rock, however, is merely one of several American popular music forms and cultural phenomena that continue to grow and to reflect the contributions of new voices in an increasingly multicultural and transnational society.

This class focuses on American popular music as a way of exploring a number of the issues crucial to American Studies. Popular music, as one of the ways we most clearly see the amalgam of various traditions in American culture, serves as a particularly effective focus for examining and analyzing the various social, historical, political, and cultural issues wrapped up in our conception of America. Beginning with the question of what America is, we will examine the complex subject of what comprises an “American” identity, considering the many possibilities, conflicts, and opportunities raised by this matter. Through readings, projects, in-class lectures and activities, we will study the history and politics of American popular music from the late 19th century to the present, looking at genres and styles including minstrelsy, ragtime, blues, “Tin Pan Alley,” jazz, musical theater, country-western, R&B, pop, folk, rock, soul, dance music, hip-hop, “world music,” and variations and subgenres of each. Our examination will take an interdisciplinary approach, looking at music from historical, anthropological, social science, media studies, cultural studies, and American studies perspectives. Since this class focuses on music, class lectures and discussion will be supplemented with both audio and video clips to illustrate various types of music and their cultural significance.

AMST-A 202 U.S. Arts and Media / Topic: African American Suspense Fiction & Popular Culture

Notes: 3 cr. hrs.

IUB GenEd A&H Credit

COLL (CASE) A&H Breadth of Inquiry Credit

Class # 5330 / Session: 6W2 (6/18-7/27) – MoTuWeTh 3:00 – 4:50 p.m. / Instructor: Scarlett Brooks

This course proceeds from two observations. First, the African-American literary tradition is deeply involved with experiments in voice. Specifically, double consciousness, a psychological disposition that developed as much as a protection against punishment as a prerequisite for social advancement, has historically been stylized in literature in a way that can be described mostly as a set of effects: indirection, caginess, and outright jokiness—what aficionados of African American literature call “signifying”—developed through an endless labyrinth of puns, riddles, allusions, exaggerations, understatements, ironies and metaphors. Because of these stylistic elements, African American fiction can present unique challenges to reading: it simultaneously holds out and withholds the promise of legibility. The suspense genre presents interesting possibilities for elaboration of this feature of the African American literary tradition in that the suspense genre is all about the relationship between overlapping narratives: that of the crime and that of its discovery, framed in such a way that the latter is never completely reducible to the former (Gates 227-229). To the extent that solving the mystery often requires the hero to immerse himself into enclaves where black vernacular and folkways predominate, in many cases

the narratives may be as much about the compulsion of those who have made gains in middle-class professions to revitalize their affective ties to black communities as it is about solving the mystery. Yet the trajectory of influence is not one-sided, and we will explore how the authors imagine the dynamism of black communities and reformulate notions of transgression generally, if not crime specifically. The second observation animating this course's inquiry is that suspense novels such as those on the reading list tend to enjoy popular support among black readers themselves: the suspense novel has real traction as black popular entertainment. In this course, we will read the novels and view two film adaptations with an aim toward exploring how these cultural artifacts constitute the pleasures and perils of in-group membership, both racially and beyond racial classification.

AMST-A753 Independent Study

Class # 1324 ARR