AMST 135: Peoples and Cultures of the Americas

Professor Juan de Lara

Tuesdays & Thursdays
9:30am - 10:50am
Location: SGM 101
Class # 10320R
4 Units

This course offers an introduction to the people and cultures of the Americas; the social, historical, economic, and cultural formations that together make up the Latino/a American imaginary. This course starts with the U.S. Latino experience then works its way back to understand the origins of contemporary Latin America. Recent statistics show Latinos have become the largest minority group in the nation. We take a closer look into the societies of countries in the Americas and how their economic and historical past has shaped the course of the people of the Americas.

* This course fulfills these requirements: Diversity Requirement, General Education Category II Global
The American Studies and Ethnicity Department at the University of Southern California offers a two-semester honors program for qualified students, first identified in AMST 350 or by the program advisor. Students spend their first semester in the honors program in an honors senior seminar, AMST 492, focused on developing their research and methods for the honors thesis. During the second semester, all honors students are required to take AMST 493, in which each completes a thesis project on a topic of his or her own choosing under faculty direction. Contact the program advisor for further information.
What does it mean to be a person of Latin American descent in the U.S.? And what does reading Latina/o literature teach us about race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality? This course is designed to give students an opportunity to study the diverse ways that Latina/os have narrated these intersecting experiences in literature, art, and film. Paying attention to the historical commonalities and differences among Latina/o cultural groups, we will analyze the literary and aesthetic strategies that authors employ in their texts. In focusing on how texts convey meaning, we will explore the ways in which cultural texts have shaped political consciousness through cultural nationalism, contested power dynamics through feminist and queer representations, interpreted the process of racialization, and narrated aspirations and patterns of migration.

*Course fulfills these requirements: Diversity Requirement, ASAF Social and Political Issues, Elective: ASE, ASCL, ASAS Majors, and ASE Minor Elective
As laborers, creators, culture bearers, political activists, dreamers, and renegades, African Americans were the fulcrum upon which the country’s material and cultural wealth was built. Throughout the last two centuries, black social movements occasionally pricked America’s moral conscience and compelled the nation to re-think the meaning of democracy. The core of much of “American” culture and politics has been shaped immeasurably by black social movements, which in turn have opened a path for the demands of other aggrieved populations.

In this course, we examine historical and contemporary black movements for freedom, justice, equality, autonomy and self-determination. Beginning with the struggles of Africans to destroy or escape from the system of slavery, we consider a wide range of movements, including labor, civil rights, radical feminism, socialism and communism, reparations, Black Nationalism, and hip hop as a political movement. We will explore, among other things, how movements were formed and sustained; the social and historical contexts for their emergence and demise; the impact they might have had on power, on par-

*This course satisfies these requirements: Diversity Requirement, ASAF Social and Political Issues, Elective (ASE, ASCL, ASAS Majors, and ASE Minor Elective*
African American Popular Culture

Taught by Lanita Jacobs

In addition to meeting the University Diversity Requirement, this course meets the requirements for all ASE Majors and Minors!

Thursday
4 Units
12:30pm-1:50pm
Location: KAP 146
Class # 10399R

This course employs a wide variety of different popular culture genres produced by and about African-Americans, including but not limited to theatre, music, sports, film, dance and literature. This course critically examines Black popular culture in the United States and its surrounding politics. Beginning with blackface minstrelsy, the Harlem Renaissance and Swing, and ending with Hip-Hop, Chappelle's Show and Bossip.com, we will chart chronological and topic driven paths, so as to answer key questions about the genealogies of Black forms and the ways in which they have been and are popularized. Recognizing how gender, sexuality, class, region, and other identity markers inform race, we will challenge assumptions about the parameters of African-American popular culture, as well as its political stakes, aims, and functions.

* This course satisfies the following requirements: Social and Political Issues, & Literature & Culture for ASE degree, Diversity, and General Education.
AMST 301: America, the Frontier, and the New West

We will study what historians term “the New West,” by which they mean how the West has been shaped by many different historical forces and peoples. Reading “New West” scholars like Richard Slotkin, Reginald Horsman, Patricia Nelson Limerick, we will also read and view novels, plays, films, and visual art works that give us a solid understanding of how Native Americans, African Americans, Euroamericans, Asian Americans, Mexican Americans, women, and LGBTs have contributed to our lived realities in the West.

Professor John Carlos Rowe, USC Associates’ Professor of the Humanities and Professor of English, American Studies and Ethnicity, and Comparative Literature

Monday/Wednesday
10:00 – 11:50 a.m
Class #10408R
Location: THH 201

AMST 301g fulfills the Category 1: Western Cultures and Traditions requirement in General Education at USC.
Am is made of Sharia in America today. But what is this much-talked about system of law? What are its sources, and who speaks authoritatively on its behalf? Is it amenable to change? Does it promote theocracy? Is it compatible with democracy? Are Sharia and the U.S. Constitution in fundamental conflict, or is it possible to reconcile the two? What of some of the many controversial issues relating to Sharia, e.g., women, jihad, terrorism? And how do Muslim-Americans relate to Sharia? These are some of the many questions we will explore and answer in this course through an in-depth examination of the sources, methodologies, authorities and major issues in Islamic law and how these relate to the major controversies surrounding Sharia in America.
This course is designed to introduce students to a diverse range of theories and methodologies relevant to the study of American culture. We will draw from a number of interpretive and analytical models including 3 case studies: the memoirs of women of color, the history of AIDS in the US, and contemporary US politics. While committed to the introduction of critical methods, the course will also be content-driven. We will focus on two immediate case studies: AIDS and the 2015 national elections. These two events will form the content of the class and provide us the occasion to think in interdisciplinary ways.

This course is a core requirement for all ASE Majors and Minors.