Spring 2016 American Studies and Ethnicity Course Offerings

*Courses with an asterisk require pre-approval to count towards your major requirements. Always refer to the course catalogue to find out how these courses count towards your major. Please see Ms. Cynthia Mata-Flores, your academic advisor, before registering for one of these courses. She can be reached at cmflores@usc.edu, at her office at KAP 450C, or by phone at (213)740-3198.

AMST 101gmw      Race and Class in Los Angeles
Analysis of race and the economic, political, gender, and social dimensions of contemporary Los Angeles including topics such as residential segregation, economic inequality, and city politics. (TTH 11 – 12:20pm + discussion, Prof. Alicia Chavez)

AMST 111g    Sex In America
Explores how the proliferation of sexual cultures, identities, politics shape everyday lives in the U.S. and beyond. (MW 2 – 3:20pm + discussion, Prof. Jack Halberstam)

AMST 135gmw   Peoples and Cultures of the Americas
An introduction to cultures and people in the Americas, the social, historical, economic, and cultural formations that together make up the Latino/a American imaginary. (MW 2 – 3:20pm + discussion, Prof. Macarena Gomez-Barris)

AMST150gw   The American War in Viet Nam
The Viet Nam War remains as the most controversial and divisive war for Americans in the 20th century. The war is still invoked in debates over American wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This course provides an introduction to the war’s history in order for today’s Americans to understand some of the key factors leading the US into its current geopolitical situation. (TTh 9:30 – 10:50am + discussion, Prof. Viet Nguyen)

AMST 200gm      Introduction to American Studies and Ethnicity
Introduction to American studies and ethnic studies. Provides an overview of major theories, concepts, and issues. (TTh 12:30pm–1:50pm + discussion, Prof. Chrishonna Nieva)

AMST 250gmw      The African Diaspora
History, political-economy and aesthetics of the African Diaspora with emphasis on Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe and Africa. (TTH 12:30pm–1:50pm + discussion, Prof. Vince Schleitwiler)

AMST 274gmw      Exploring Ethnicity Through Film
Examination of the constructions of American ethnicity/race in film. (TTh 11:00am-12:20 pm + discussion, Prof. Kara Keeling)

AMST 301gp   America, the Frontier, and the New West
This combination of a Humanistic Inquiry GE course and an ASE elective draws upon a wide range of primary materials in history, politics, literature—and some music and movies—to study the rich mix of voices, cultures, and traditions from the region that is our home or where we live and study: the West, California, Los Angeles, USC. A key concern of the course will be to view America, the frontier, and the new West as scenes of collisions of people or as crossroads and intersections where people from different countries, religions, ethnicities have both crashed and merged together. We will emphasize both the frictions resulting from such collisions (e.g., war, ethnic cleansing, riots) and the fusions (e.g., jazz music, the Civil Rights movement, the teriyaki burrito). The course will be structured as a set of critical investigations into various founding moments of American history including its discovery and settlement by the American Indians, 1492 and the European conquest and colonization of the Americas, the American Revolution and Constitution and Civil War, and the origin and development of Los Angeles, Hollywood, USC and the myth of the West. The course will conclude with reflections about how contemporary Los Angeles can serve as a laboratory for investigating how we are responding to the problems and challenges the United States faces at the beginning of the 21st century. A special effort will be made to study the story of the American West from Native Americans perspectives and from materials drawn from popular culture, film, television and music as well as classic texts of American politics, history and literature. (MW 2 – 3:50pm + discussion, Prof. Thomas Gustafson)

AMST 337m   Islam in Black America: From Slavery to Hip Hop
Exploration of the rise of Islam in Black America, and the relationship of Black American Muslims to more recent Muslim immigrants using historical and sociopolitical frameworks. (TTH 12:30pm-1:50pm Prof. Sherman Jackson)

AMST 342m   Law and Identities
Examines the complex and contested interaction between the law and racial, gender, religious, ethnic, and sexual identities using historical and contemporary cases. (MWF 10am, Prof. Alicia Chavez)
AMST 350  Junior Seminar in American Studies and Ethnicity: Theories and Methods
Advanced study in interdisciplinary theories and methods for analyzing race and ethnicity in the United States, including a comparative study of topics such as inequality, gender, and class. (T 2:00pm-4:50pm Prof. David Roman)

AMST 357m  Latino Social Movements
Focuses on the political experience of Latinos in the U.S. Comparative analysis of their political experiences and perspectives, their histories of identity formation, and their political organizations. (MW 2-3:50pm, Prof. Juan De Lara)

AMST 365  Leadership in the Community- Internship
8-10 hours per week in a community-based internship plus 2 hour class discussion. Theoretical and practical issues associated with community leadership. (W 2:00pm-4:50pm Prof. Stanley Huey)

AMST 373m  History of the Mexican American
Racial and cultural background of Mexico; immigration and conquest; the Mexican in California and the southwest; the rise of contemporary Mexican-American consciousness. (Date: TBD Time: TBD, Prof. Gorge Sanchez)

AMST 382: America and the World: Japan Case Study
Transnational, global perspective on American culture to examine the relationship between Los Angeles and various cities in Japan. Trip to Japan. (TBA, Prof. George Sanchez)

AMST 392  Undergraduate Research Methods
Examination of processes of scholarly research; quantitative and qualitative research methods; faculty mentorship; experiential learning; research proposal writing; careers in research. Sophomore or junior standing in the major. Departmental approval. (T 12:30pm-1:50pm Prof. George Sanchez)

AMST 395m  African American Humor and Culture
This course examines a long tradition of African American humor in theatre (e.g., “blackface” minstrelsy), TV/radio (e.g., Amos ’N’ Andy), literature/folklore, and, principally, Black or “urban” standup comedy. We will explore how these diverse comedic forms offer insights into shifting notions of race/racial “authenticity,” culture, language, and identity in and beyond Black America. Through an investigation of interdisciplinary theories of Black humor in folklore, linguistics, anthropology, and cultural/literary studies, we shall come to appreciate the themes/tropes, linguistic conventions, discourse styles, and performative genres that characterize the broad category of African American humor. Field visits to urban comedy clubs/shows and guest speakers will also afford our analysis of (i) comics and their audiences as co-producers of Black humor, (ii) the urban comedy clubs/show as a communal forum, and (iii) comics as members of a community of practice. Throughout the course, we will assess (iv) the politics of representing Black humor and laughter that have impacted African American humorists and their audiences in poignant ways throughout history. (MW 12- 1:50pm Prof. Lanita Jacobs)

AMST 449m  Asian American Literature
Writers who’d be classified as “Asian American,” under this more neutral definition, have been achieving fleeting or lasting acclaim in US for well over a hundred years. Somewhat separately, the history of something called “Asian American literature” begins with Third Worldist revolutionary movements of the late 1960s, but it has been reimagined in dramatically different ways over the subsequent decades. In this course, we’ll learn about what it means, and has meant, to call something “Asian American literature,” by reading some of the major texts on which various conceptions of that term have been grounded, as well as newer and older texts that complicate it in useful ways. (TTH 11-12:20pm, Prof. Vince Schleitwiler)

AMST 493  Senior Honors Thesis in American Studies and Ethnicity
Writing the honors thesis; for students in one of the four PASE majors and PASE Honors Program. (M 2:00pm-4:50 PM Prof. Macarena Gomez Barris)

AMST 498  Senior Seminar in America Studies and Ethnicity: Who’s Afraid of Failure?
This senior seminar will take a long detour through meditations on failure emerging from queer theory, Asian American studies, and black studies, drawing on fiction, comics, film, poetry, memoir, and theoretical texts. We’ll ask what failure can reveal about higher education and related disciplinary institutions, such as prisons or the so-called “internment camps” for Japanese Americans during World War II. (Q: What’s the difference between a prisoner and a college student? A: The prisoner has a richer imagination of freedom.) We’ll ask what it’s like to fail when you have been selected for a model of success, and to succeed when your failure has already been scripted. Eventually, we’ll shift our focus from the materials assigned by the instructor to questions and projects designed by students, to consider how contemporary social movements and cultural practices on and off campus are fracturing reigning ideologies of meritocracy. Prerequisite: AMST 200. (T 2:00-4:50pm Prof. Vince Schleitwiler)

HIST 355  The African American Experience
An historical and social analysis of the African-American experience from Colonial times to the present. (TTh 12:30pm-1:50pm Prof. Francille Wilson)

**Other Courses of Interest**

**AHIS 370**  Modern Art III: 1940 to the Present
Questions of social engagement and political structure address this examination of major movements in art since 1940. (TTh 3:30-4:50pm Prof. Samantha Burton)

**COLT 303**  Globalization: Culture, Change, Resistance
This course takes a critical approach to our contemporary understanding of “globalization” through a study of literature from a wide range of global locations. How have art and literature intervened into political discourses of globalization and contemporary geo-political formations? How has literature provided sites of resistance and alternative imaginings of global relations? We will examine a number of literary texts that attempt to provide counter-narratives to dominant political and economic discourses of globalization through its representation of histories of colonization, militarization, exile, and migration. The main focus of the class will remain on representations of the globalized urban city. How do these portrayals of modern urban spaces mediate the imaginings of “the local” in relation to “the global” and the processes of globalization? How do these texts imagine or attempt to re-imagine these dense social spaces of cultural conflict and interaction? (TTh 12:30-1:50pm, Prof. Neetu Khanna)

**COMM 384**  Interpreting Popular Culture
Popular culture as an indicator of cultural values, a producer and reflection of cultural meaning, and a means of communication; theory and case studies. (TTH 12:30pm-1:50pm Prof. Hye Lee)

**COMM 499: Public Controversies**
From Ferguson to political scandals and from Deflategate to Ahmed’s clock, controversies are common aspects of public communication. Join COMM 499 in the spring of 2016 to learn more about how and why controversies emerge, how we can intervene, and communication theories about race, gender, politics, sports, science, and many other topics! Email Professor Bloomfield at ebloomfi@usc.edu for more information. (MW 12-1:50pm)

**CRIT 371**  Art in the Public Realm: Contemporary Issues
Critical frameworks and theoretical perspectives of contemporary public art issues explored through case studies and discussions with artists, architects, and designers engaging the public realm. (MW 9-11:50am Prof. Rochelle Steiner)

**CTCS 394**  History of the American Film, 1977- Present
Cinematic and extra-cinematic determinants of Postmodernist Hollywood studio and independent genres, styles, and the star-phenomenon and their relationship to American history and culture. (T 6:00pm-10:00pm Prof. Drew Casper)

**ENGL 263**  American Literature and the Vox Populi (“Voice of the People”)
Even before the venerable poet, Walt Whitman, heard America singing “varied carols...each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else” in 1867, American literature bestowed the nation’s citizens with the sense that their individual voices mattered within our representative government. With every vote, we purportedly have a voice—or at least a voice speaking or singing for us—as contemporary reality competition shows like American Idol and The Voice, consistently remind us. At the same time, the source, authenticity, and honesty of the voice also has a vexed status in the history of American literature, and has sometimes been depicted as a medium for deceit, dissimulation and dissent. This survey course, starting with Madison’s Federalist Papers, will pay particular attention to the vox populi or “the voice of the people” throughout the historical range of American letters, literature and contemporary media, and explore the contradictions of “truth,” vocality and citizenship into the contemporary moment. From the American gothic of Charles Brockden Brown’s Wieland, about a devious biloquist, to poetry, political texts, and activist literature, like Carlos Bulosan’s America is in the Heart (1946), and works by Douglass, DuBois, Stowe, Melville, Thoreau, Whitman, Twain Poe, James, Fuller, as well as contemporary authors like R. Zamora Linmark and Claudia Rankine, this course will urge us to ask crucial questions about what kind of “citizens” are permitted a voice in American literature, while others are consigned to silence. Who sings when they speak, and who deceives us with their oratory? What are the values that uphold individual voices above choruses of dissent? And does a “vote” genuinely translate into a “voice” in our representative democracy? Students will be expected to read intensively into each text, and to come to class prepared to use their own voices in discussion, as well as through their writing assignments. (MWF 9:00am-9:50am, MW 11:00am-11:50am, TTh 9:30-10:50am THH 207, Prof. Thomas Gustafson, Elda Roman and Prof. Karen Tongson (respectively))

**ENGL 392**  Visual and Popular Culture
Course in the theory and practices of "popular culture," highlighting modern and contemporary culture, film, video and popular music, as well as narrative forms. (TTh 12:30pm-1:50pm Prof. Alicia Gambrell)

ENGL 442 American Literature of the 17th Century
American poetry, fiction, and drama since World War I with special attention to Eliot, Frost, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, O'Neill, Stevens, Faulkner, and Nabokov. (TTh 2-3:20pm Prof. Anthony Kemp)

*ENGL 451 The Golden Age of Broadway
This course examines what’s referred to as “the Golden Age of Broadway,” a period in American history when theatre was at the heart of the national culture. We will study key figures from the 1930s through the 1950s, including major playwrights such as Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller. We will also study major musicals from these decades including such classics as South Pacific, West Side Story, and Gypsy. We will consider how American theatre emerged as one of the most significant literary achievements of the mid century and address its critical role in the popular culture and national imaginary. Finally, we will consider the current revivals of these seminal works in our contemporary period. (MW 5-6:20pm Prof. David Roman)

*FACS 150g Visual Culture and Literacy
Introduction to modern and contemporary visual culture with emphasis on the major aesthetic theories and practices of the past 150 years. (MWF 8-8:50am + discussion, Professor Erin Silver)

*FACS 250 Visual Culture and Literacy II
Critical examination of the key developments and theoretical discourses of 20th century visual culture. Recommended preparation: FA 150. Students can contact Prof. Jones to petition into the course. (MW 12-1:50pm, Professor Amelia Jones)

*FACS 350 Art Theory and Criticism
An intellectual framework for the practice of artmaking; the historical context for current ideas. (F 9-11:50am or F 12:30-3:20pm, Instructor: Maura Brewer)

HIST 100gm The American Experience
Patterns of American development from Colonial times to the present. Duplicates credit in former HIST 200. (MW 11:00am-11:50am Prof. Michael Block)

*HIST 352 The Unfinished Civil War
This course covers the full scope of the U.S. Civil War. It reaches back to founding-era Constitutional debates over the place of slavery in a nation founded in principles of liberty and equality. It gestures forward to the way the War would come to be memorialized as a tragic “Lost Cause.” By applying critical legal theory--particularly that concerned with race and gender--to government responses to the domestic terrorism perpetrated by the Klu Klux Klan in the years that followed the official declaration of peace, it challenges the conventional wisdom of the war’s end in 1865. We foreground a cultural analysis of the emancipation era through a focus on law and popular culture. Consequently, although we address the unprecedented casualties and trauma of the first modern war, History 352 is not, generally speaking, concerned with traditional military history. (TTh 9:30-10:50am Prof. Diana Williams)

HIST 354 Mexican Migration to the United States
Today some 34 million people of Mexican origin live in the United States, including more than 11 million immigrants. Mexicans represent the largest immigrant group in the country—making up 28% of all foreign-born people and 11% of the total population. This course explores the history of Mexican migration to the United States since the 19th century. It examines Mexican American community formation, while also recognizing continued migration from Mexico and return migration to Mexico, whether by choice or force. Students will learn about the diverse experiences of migrants and how migration has changed over time through a close examination of primary sources, in addition to works of history, sociology, ethnography, fiction, and film. We will explore Mexican migration, past and present, by covering, among other topics, the Bracero Program; the creation and militarization of the US-Mexico border; the history of undocumented migration; how Mexico shapes migration and how migration shapes Mexico; the impact of NAFTA on migration; deportation’s punitive turn since 1996 and the growth of the business of immigration enforcement; and the DREAM movement and transnational immigrant activism on both sides of the border. Ultimately, we will come to understand not only the history of Mexican migration, but also the interconnected histories of the United States and Mexico. (MW 8:30am-9:50am Prof. Adam Goodman)

HIST 455 Advance Topics in African-American History
Exploration of African-American history through primary and secondary sources employing a colloquium format with an emphasis on shared responsibility for comprehensive discussion and analysis. Upper division or graduate standing. (Th 2:00pm-4:50pm Prof. Shaun Ossei-Owusu)
The American Press and Issues of Sexual Diversity
This course will examine the ways in which news (and entertainment) media treat issues of marriage equality and transgender, gay, lesbian, bisexual and gender fluidity issues, among others, and how that treatment influences public perceptions. It will provide historical and contemporary context through the lens of journalism, while preparing students to evaluate these issues intelligently and fairly. (W 12-3:20pm, Prof. Laura Castañeda)

Blacks and Jews: Conflicts and Alliances
Examination of the relationship between the American Jewish and African-American communities and what it teaches about race and coalition politics in American society. (TTH 12:30pm-1:50pm Prof. Bruce Phillips)

The Broadway Musical: Reflection of American Diversity, Issues and Experiences
Selected Broadway musicals serve as a catalyst for inquiry into human diversity, cross-culturalism, and significant social and political issues. (TTH 4:00pm-5:50pm Prof. Parmer Fuller)

The Beatles: Their Music and Their Times
Music, lyrics, recordings, production techniques, career strategy, social ramifications, and especially the technological impact of the musical group known as The Beatles. (MW 4:00pm-5:50pm Prof. Bill Biersach)

The Music of Black Americans
The musical contribution of Africans and African Americans to American society. Musical genres and the relationship between music and society will be topics for examination. (MW 10:00am-11:50am Prof. Ronald McCurdy)

International Law
Nature, origin, and development of international law; basic principles analyzed and illustrated with cases. (TTh 11-12:20pm Prof. Alison Renteln)

Ethnic Politics
Analysis of the political behavior and roles of ethnic and racial groups in the American political system; policy issues and patterns of political action are examined. (MW 8:30am-9:50am Prof. Jane Junn)