



**Course** AMS 2341.001  
**Course Title** The Nature of Intellectual Inquiry  
**Professor** Dr. Larissa Werhnyak  
**Term** Fall 2017  
**Meetings** MW 4.00-5.15, HH 2.502

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### Professor's Contact Information

**Office Phone** 972.883.6259  
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**Office Hours** MW 2.00-3.30 & by appointment. (Please provide me with advance notice of your intent to visit my office hours.)

### General Course Information

**Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, & other restrictions** No pre-requisites.

### Course Description

Adopting an interdisciplinary and historical perspective and employing a range of cultural texts, this course will examine major themes in the study of American cultures. Students can expect to explore and interrogate guiding principles of the American experience, American myths, fundamental conflicts in American ideals, and the formation of American identities. In addition, the class is designed to assist students in developing critical thinking skills, to enhance their abilities to analyze and make academic arguments, and to strengthen their capacities for oral and written communication.

1. Students will develop an understanding of major social and cultural themes and currents in American history.

2. Students will be able to understand and analyze scholarly arguments about American socio-cultural developments.

### Learning Outcomes

3. Students will develop interdisciplinary skills and perspectives, including critical thinking, close reading, cultural awareness, and effective communication.

4. Students will enhance their ability to engage as citizens on matters of public significance.

### Required Texts & Materials

Burgett & Hendler, eds., *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (ISBN 978-0-8147-0801-9)

Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (ISBN 978-0-8090-0133-0)

Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun* (ISBN 0-679-755-330)

## Major Deadlines

September 27:	Keyword Essay
October 18:	Midterm Exam
November 15:	Critical Cultural Analysis Essay
TBA:	Final Exam

Further information regarding each assignment will be provided on the expanded schedule, in class, and on relevant assignment sheets.

## Grading Criteria

Keyword Essay:	20%
Critical Cultural Analysis Essay:	20%
Midterm Exam:	15%
Final Exam:	20%
Reading quizzes:	15%
Daily work (including participation):	10%

“A” grades are reserved for students who fulfill all course requirements and demonstrate a mastery of course content and concepts.

“B” grades are awarded to students who fulfill all course requirements and demonstrate a competent understanding of course content and concepts.

“C” grades are awarded to students who fulfill all course requirements and demonstrate familiarity with course content and concepts.

“D” grades reflect a partial knowledge of course concepts and content; some basic requirements are fulfilled.

“F” grades are reserved for students who have not demonstrated knowledge of course concepts and content; basic requirements are not fulfilled.

## Standards for Written Work

All written assignments must be free from pervasive spelling and grammatical errors, double-spaced, and printed in a twelve-point font on numbered pages; all documents extending to multiple pages should be stapled or paperclipped. Professional standards regarding margins and font style must be maintained. Handwritten work will not be accepted, nor will e-mailed work, unless prior permission has been received.

## Make-Ups and Late Work

I reserve the right to refuse to accept late work submitted without my prior consent, as well as the right to substantially penalize late submissions. Specific penalties will be discussed in class and will be described in detail on assignment sheets. In-class work cannot be made up.

## Class Attendance

Please arrive on time and ready to listen attentively to lectures and/or to contribute to classroom discussions, engage in activities, and participate in peer editing sessions. Along with the assigned readings, bring paper and a writing instrument to each class session.

Many important activities, such as roll call, peer editing sessions and the posting of reading-response prompts, will begin at the start of class. No extra time will be provided for students who arrive late.

If you are unable to attend class, you are responsible for obtaining lecture notes from another student. If, after doing so, you have questions about class materials, please plan to visit my office hours. If you are dealing with a situation that will or may require significant absences from class, please contact me at your earliest convenience to make arrangements.

## Classroom Citizenship

I expect students to be attentive during class. No sleeping, reading newspapers, or studying for other classes. So long as you do not disturb me or your classmates, you may eat or drink during class. If you need to briefly leave the classroom for any reason (restroom, etc.) it is not necessary for you to ask permission.

During discussions, I expect students to be respectful and courteous to others at all times. Name-calling, swearing, and racist/sexist/homophobic statements will not be permitted. Vigorous intellectual dissent is entirely compatible with decorous behavior. If you are having a problem with another student, please contact me to discuss it.

### **Communication policy**

Email (via my UTD account) is the best way to contact me. I check my email regularly and guarantee that, absent the direst of emergencies, I will respond to your message no more than 24 hours after its delivery (and generally much sooner.)

I do not respond to messages regarding written assignments that are delivered less than 24 hours prior to the deadline for that assignment. (Questions about readings, general course policies, and the like are fine at any time.)

### **Technology**

Electronic devices must be silenced and stowed during class. I do not want to hear them or see them, unless you are told otherwise. (This includes phones, iPads, and earbuds.) I recommend that you try to take notes using a pen and paper, but you may use a laptop if you feel it is imperative. Abuse of this privilege will result in its rescission. Violation of the technology policy will affect your grade; I also reserve the right to ask you to leave class if you are in violation. (Please speak with me if you are dealing with a situation that requires you to keep your cell phone visible, e.g., an ill family member.)

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, submitting for credit any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, or any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student, as well as the attempt to commit such acts.

Plagiarism, whether from the internet, from portions of papers submitted for credit in other classes, or from any other source, is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism, which may be found in the general catalog. This course will use anti-plagiarism technology in order to identify cases of potential plagiarism.

### **Comet Creed**

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

*"As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do."*

### **UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures**

The University policies and procedures that may be found at <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> are also incorporated into this syllabus.

***The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.***

## Schedule of Assignments

All assignments are due on the date under which they are listed. *Keywords* assignments marked as “online” can be found at <http://keywords.nyupress.org/american-cultural-studies/>. Click on “Read the Essays” and then “Web Essays” in the sidebar. Assignments marked as “eLearning” can be downloaded from the eLearning coursepage for AMS 2341.

### Week 1

M August 21: Introductions

W August 23: What is America? Why do we study it?

- Reading:
- 1) Burgett & Hendler, eds., *Keywords*, “America (21)
  - 2) Crèvecoeur, “Letter III from an American Farmer” (1782) (eLearning)
  - 3) Kouwenhoven, “What’s American About America?” *Harper’s Magazine* (1956) (eLearning)
  - 4) Reed, “What’s American About America?” *Utne Reader* (1989) (eLearning)

### Week 2

M August 28: ...and how do we study it?

- Reading:
- 1) *Keywords*, Culture (68); Society (online)
  - 2) Lauter, “Reconfiguring Academic Disciplines: The Emergence of American Studies” from *From Walden Pond to Jurassic Park: Activism, Culture, & American Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001) (eLearning)

Th August 31: From Colony to Empire

- Reading:
- 1) *Keywords*, Civilization (online); Indian (130); Indigenous (133)
  - 2) Handsome Lake, “How America Was Discovered” (c. 1735-1815) (eLearning)
  - 3) Columbus, “Letter to Lord Raphael Sanchez” (1493) (eLearning)

### Week 3

M September 4: No class – Labor Day

W September 6: Colony to Empire, cont’d

- Reading:
- 1) *Keywords*, Exceptionalism (online)
  - 2) Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity” (1630) (eLearning)
  - 3) Vowell, excerpt from *The Wordy Shipmates* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2008) (eLearning)

### Week 4

M September 11: Colony to Empire, cont’d

- Reading:
- 1) *Keywords*, Colonial (48); West (online)
  - 2) O’Sullivan, “Annexation” (1845) (eLearning)
  - 3) Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” (1893) (eLearning)

W September 13: Colony to Empire, cont’d

- Reading:
- 1) *Keywords*, War (online)
  - 2) James, “The Moral Equivalent of War” (1910) (eLearning)
  - 3) Hoganson, “The Manly Ideal of Politics and the Jingoist Desire for War” from *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998) (eLearning)

Screening: *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964)

## Week 5

M September 18: Colony to Empire, cont'd

Reading:

- 1) Whitfield, "Assenting: The Trend of Ideology" from *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) (eLearning)
- 2) May, "Explosive Issues: Sex, Women, and the Bomb" from *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War* (New York: Basic Books, 2008) (eLearning)
- 3) Fussell, "Thank God for the Atom Bomb," *The New Republic* (1981) (eLearning)

Screening: *Dr. Strangelove*, cont'd.

W September 20: Colony to Empire, cont'd

Reading:

- 1) *Keywords*, Empire (95) Islam (137); Terror (239)
- 2) McAlister, "A Virtual Muslim is Something to Be," *American Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (June 2010): 221-231 (eLearning)

## Week 6

M September 25: From Production to Consumption

Reading:

- 1) *Keywords*, Capitalism (37); Labor (142)
- 2) Franklin, "The Way to Wealth" (1758) (eLearning)
- 3) Weber, excerpt from *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905)

(eLearning)

- 4) Taylor, excerpt from *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911) (eLearning)
- 5) Marx, "Alienated Labor" (1844) (eLearning)

W September 27: Production to Consumption, cont'd

DEADLINE: Keyword Essay

Reading:

- 1) *Keywords*, Class (45)
- 2) Trachtenberg, "Capital and Labor" from *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1982/2007) (eLearning)
- 3) Gorn & Goldstein, "Saints and Their Bodies" from *A Brief History of American Sports* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1993) (eLearning)

## Week 7

M October 2: Production to Consumption, cont'd

Reading:

- 1) *Keywords*, Fashion (104)
- 2) Veblen, "Dress as an Expression of the Pecuniary Culture" from *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) (eLearning)
- 3) Ferber, "What She Wore" from *Buttered Side Down* (1912)

W October 4: Production to Consumption, cont'd

Reading:

- 1) *Keywords*, Youth (245)
- 2) Kasson, *Amusing the Million*, pp. 1-56
- 3) O. Henry, "Brickdust Row" (1906) (eLearning)

## Week 8

M October 9: Production to Consumption, cont'd

Reading:

- 1) Kasson, *Amusing the Million*, pp. 57-113
- 2) Marling, "Disneyland 1955: Just Take the Santa Ana Freeway to the American Dream," *American Art* 5, no. 1/2 (1991) 168-207 (eLearning)

W October 11: Production to Consumption, cont'd

Reading:

- 1) Nickles, "More is Better: Mass Consumption, Gender, and Class Identity in Postwar America," *American Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (2002) 581-622 (eLearning)
- 2) Cowie & Boehm, "Dead Man's Town: 'Born in the U.S.A.', Social History, and Working-Class Identity," *American Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (2006) (eLearning)

### **Week 9**

M October 16: Production to Consumption, cont'd.

Reading:

- 1) *Keywords*, Technology (235)
- 2) Douglas, "The Turn Within: The Irony of Technology in a Globalized World," *American Quarterly* 58, no. 3 (2006) 619-637
- 3) Twenge, "Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?" *Atlantic* (September 2017)

(eLearning)

W October 18: Midterm exam (in class)

### **Week 10**

M October 23: Race and American Identities

Reading:

- 1) *Keywords*, Abolition (online); Slavery (224); White (online)
- 2) Brown, "Engendering Racial Difference, 1640-1670," from *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012) (eLearning)
- 3) Painter, "The Second Enlargement of American Whiteness," from *The History of White People* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011) (eLearning)

W October 25: Race & Identities, cont'd

Reading:

- 1) *Keywords*, Black (30); Property (online)
- 2) Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*, Act I
- 3) Wright, "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow: An Autobiographical Sketch" (1937)

(eLearning)

### **Week 11**

M October 20: Race & Identities, cont'd

Reading:

- 1) Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*, Acts II & III
- 2) King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail (1963) (eLearning)
- 3) Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet (1964) (eLearning)

W October 22: Race & Identities, cont'd

Reading:

- 1) *Keywords*, Reform (online)
- 2) The 1968 Report of the Kerner Commission (eLearning)

Screening:

*L.A. 92* (2017)

### **Week 12**

M November 6: Race & Identities, cont'd

Reading:

- 1) *Keywords*, White (online)
- 2) Alexander & West, "The Color of Justice," from *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color Blindness* (New York: New Press, 2010) (eLearning)
- 3) Coates, "The Case for Reparations," *The Atlantic* (2014) (eLearning)

Screening:

*L.A. 92*, cont'd.

W November 8: Race & Identities, cont'd

Reading:

- 1) Woods, "Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans?: Katrina, Trap Economics, and the Rebirth of the Blues," *American Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2005) 1005-1018 (eLearning)
- 2) Roediger, "Making Solidarity Uneasy: Cautions on a Keyword from Black Lives Matter to the Past," *American Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (2016) (eLearning)
- 3) Landrieu, "'We Can't Walk Away From This Truth'" *The Atlantic* (May 2017) (eLearning)

### Week 13

M November 13: Immigration, Ethnicity, and American Identities

- Reading:
- 1) *Keywords*, Immigration (125); Ethnicity (100)
  - 2) Lazarus, "New Colossus" (1883)
  - 3) Yeziarska, "How I Found America" (eLearning)

W November 15: Immigration, Ethnicity, & Identities, cont'd

DEADLINE: Critical Cultural Analysis Essay

- Reading:
- 1) *Keywords*, Latino/Latina/Latin@ (146)
  - 2) Sanchez, excerpts from *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) (eLearning)

### Week 14

M November 27: Immigration, Ethnicity, & Identities, cont'd

- Reading:
- 1) *Keywords*, Asian (26); Coolie (online); Internment (online)
  - 2) Angel Island Immigration Station Poetry (1910-1940) (eLearning)
  - 3) Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) (eLearning)
  - 4) Lee, "The Chinese Exclusion Example: Race, Immigration, and American Gatekeeping, 1882-1924," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 21, no. 3 (2002) 36-62 (eLearning)

W November 29: Immigration, Ethnicity, & Identities, cont'd

- Reading:
- 1) Heldke, "The Pursuit of Authenticity," from *Exotic Appetites: Ruminations of a Food Adventurer* (London: Routledge, 2016) (eLearning)
  - 2) "Food" from *Keywords for Asian American Studies* (eLearning)
- Screening: *The Search for General Tso* (2014)

### Week 15

M December 4: Immigration, Ethnicity, & Identities, cont'd

- Reading:
- 1) Gabaccia, "Ethnic Entrepreneurs" from *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998) (eLearning)
  - 2) Pilcher, "Inventing the Mexican-American Taco" from *Planet Taco: A Global History of Mexican Food*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) (eLearning)
- Screening: *The Search for General Tso*, cont'd

W December 6: Catch-up and review

\*\*Final exam date & location TBA.