

FALL 2012

AMERICAN STUDIES COURSE OFFERINGS

AM 103 001 A Humorous (Dis)Course

In this course we will use stand-up comedy to think critically about American culture and to explore key moments and transitions in American history. As burgeoning Americanists, we will examine the history of stand-up comedy as the history of the United States—that comedy reflects the institutions and ideologies shaping cultural production; the same institutions and ideologies that prompt us to warfare, that determine who has rights and who does not and that influence our consumptive practices. This course will examine the history of cultural production in America, specifically through the cultural form of stand-up comedy/comic performance and how it has been influenced and shaped by shifts in social consciousness, changing economy, industrial and technological innovations, political events, public/popular discourses and global conflict and relations. **Beck Krefting, 4 credits**

AM 103W 002 Intro to American Studies

This course considers how Americans have remembered and commemorated the Civil War from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. Drawing on depictions of the war in fiction, film, popular history, television, music, and re-enactors' conventions among other cultural sources, it focuses on how memory and history interact in the popular imagination to shape the cultural legacy of the conflict. **Gregory M. Pfitzer, 4 credits**

AM 232H 001 Hon: New England Begins

A critical examination of the evolution of culture and society in New England in the seventeenth century. After considering the origins of the Puritan community, the course will explore the ways in which that society changed over the course of the first seventy-five years of settlement, culminating in an investigation of the events of the Salem witch crisis of 1692 as well as subsequent historical, artistic, dramatic, and literary treatments of the witch trials. This is an honors course, and intended to challenge students to dig deeper into the subject and handle complex and difficult ideas. **Mary C. Lynn, 3 credits**

AM 250C 001 Regular Culture: the South

An exploration of the development of the distinctive culture of the southern region of the United States. The course examines myths and legends of the Old South including those surrounding the origins of the plantation system, southern womanhood and the development of the slave and free communities of the region in the antebellum period. Topics include the myths and legends of the New South, the legacy of the Civil War and Reconstruction, the imposition of segregation, modernization of agriculture and industry, and the migration of African Americans northward. The course culminates in a study of the civil rights movement, and recent demographic, economic, and political changes. **Leonard Slade, 3 credits**

AM 260C 001 African American Experience

A study of the African-American experience, 1860s-1980s. Using both primary and secondary source material, the course examines the critical issues and period relevant to the African-American struggle toward freedom and equality. Topics include slavery, emancipation, and Reconstruction; the woman's era; the age of Jim Crow and the new Negro; the civil rights movement; and the post-reform period. Sources include narratives, documents, photographs, and films. **Leonard Slade, 3 credits**

AM 260J 001 Diversity in the United States

An examination of the ways in which people in the United States try to reconcile the realities of cultural difference with preconceived notions of a unified America and American identity. Students will learn about the United States as a complex, heterogeneous society that has been profoundly shaped by both the connections and conflict implicit in its multicultural heritage. Students will also address interrelationships and tensions that characterize a culturally diverse democracy by examining how accepted cultural traditions intersect with contested themes such as race, the family, adoption, gender, sexuality, and education. (Fulfills social sciences requirement; designated as a Cultural Diversity course.) **Beck Krefting, 3 credits**

AM 360B 001 The 1950s

An interdisciplinary analysis of the decade of the 1950s in America. Using a wide variety of primary and secondary sources, including fiction, film, music, biography, autobiography, poetry, sociology, drama, and social criticism, the course explores the distinctive culture of this decade. It focuses on the way different groups of Americans experienced the period, studying conformity and consumerism, the beatniks, rock and roll, and the silent generation, as well as the roots of the protest movements and the counterculture of the 1960s.

Mary C. Lynn, 3 credits

AM 374 001 Senior Seminar

Exploration of primary and secondary sources in the interdisciplinary examination of a particular topic in American culture. Students will pursue a major research project or prepare an honors thesis proposal. Required of all senior majors. Open to majors only; normally taken in fall semester of senior year.

Gregory M. Pfitzer, 4 credits

AM 376E 001 Disorderly Women

Disorderly women focuses on some of the women who have been characterized by the larger society as unruly, disruptive, radical, militant, unfeminine—just generally “disorderly.” Why certain women have been perceived as disorderly is reflective of the society in which they lived. We will examine types of women considered disorderly as well as the experiences of specific so-called disorderly women in the nineteenth and twentieth-century United States. Some of the questions we will consider are: What defines women as “disorderly” in specific time and place; in what ways do some women deviate from the roles and behavior expected of all women; what motivates disorderly women, from their perspectives, to act as they do; what successes/non-successes have disorderly women experienced, and at what psychic cost? We will focus, then, on “disorderly women” as actors within and upon their society and on the response of that larger society to their actions. The course will culminate in an original disorderly project developed in groups or individually.

Beck Krefting, 3 credits