

# FALL 2019

## AMERICAN STUDIES COURSE OFFERINGS

### **AM 101W 001 The Wizard of Oz**

TR, 9:10-11:00, Professor Gregory Piftzer, 4 credits

An interdisciplinary analysis of *The Wizard of Oz*, this course will examine the numerous adaptations of L. Frank Baum's classic tale to introduce students to the study of American culture, past and present. Students will read critically, think historically, practice interdisciplinarity, and acknowledge the intersections of race, class, and gender in order to analyze the ways that *The Wizard of Oz*, in its many versions, has reflected and shaped American culture. Students will consider primary and secondary sources that explore Oz through a range of media (fiction, film, theater, television, and music) and from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. In addition to reading Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), students will consider MGM's *The Wizard of Oz* (1939); the "super soul" Broadway musical, *The Wiz* (1975), and its 1978 film adaptation; Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side of the Moon* (1973); Gregory Maguire's *Wicked* (1996); Stephen Schwartz's 2003 Broadway musical version of the Maguire novel; ABC television's *The Muppets' Wizard of Oz* (2005); and the television mini-series *Tin Man* (2007).

### **AM 101W 002 American Cultural Geographies**

WF, 8:10-10:00, Visiting Assistant Professor Jacque Micieli-Voutsinas, 4 credits

What is American culture? Why is it such an important concept to how we perceive and live in relation to the world around us? Is American culture connected to certain places or people, or is it mobile? How does it impact the ways people perceive themselves in relation to others? What about all of these questions is geographic, and does thinking about American culture geographically give us a different understanding of the term? AM 103W is designed to address these and other questions about something called American culture. The course introduces students to the interdisciplinary study of American culture and the ways that a geographic approach helps us make sense of American cultural practices and how it shapes the world around us. Students will examine how questions of American culture are also questions of landscape, identity, politics, economics, history, and place, and how a geographic approach to such questions helps us understand the world in more critical ways. This course is not meant to be a comprehensive history of the United States; instead, it provides snapshots of the nation's history through an investigation of cultural landscapes.

### **AM 234 001 American Sports/American Culture**

TR, 2:10-3:30, Professor Daniel Nathan, 4 Credits

A historical examination of 300 years of sport in America as an important expression of culture, conflict, and meaning. Special attention is devoted to the ways in which contemporary sports provide a window into politics, economics, racial and ethnic relations, class formation, and gender identity. Students analyze the ways in which Americans have played, watched, and understood sports and will focus on some of the recurrent cultural values, trends, and symbolism associated with American athletes and public life.

**Note(s):** (Fulfills social sciences requirement.)

## **AM 261 C American Orientalism**

TR, 11:00-12:30, Visiting Assistant Professor Jacque Micieli-Voutsinas, 3 credits

Interdisciplinary examinations of critical themes in the development of American culture and American life. **Note(s):** May be repeated for credit with focus on a different theme.

## **AM 261D 001 American Horror Fiction-Multiple Media**

W, 6:00-9:00, Professor Aaron Pedinotti, 4 credits

This course explores the subgenres and modalities of American horror fiction in multiple media, including print, film, television, videogames, graphic novels and virtual reality. Its goals are four in number: 1) to introduce students to the formal characteristics of various horror subgenres, including American Gothic, ghost stories, pulp horror, weird fiction, sci-fi horror, body horror, post-apocalyptic horror, slasher films, splatterpunk, and the horror of the anthropocene; 2) to investigate the ways in which the texts of horror are refracted and inflected by the specific mediums in which they are presented; 3) to explore theoretical takes on how the classic aesthetic motifs of horror fiction—including the terror/ horror schism, Gothic sublimity, and cosmic pessimism—are refracted through specifically American texts and contexts; and 4) to relate the genres and texts that are studied in the course to major issues in American history and society, including racial and gendered oppression, economic exploitation, settler colonialism, genocide, imperialism, militarism and other forms of social violence. Specific authors studied in the course will include Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allen Poe, H.P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, Shirley Jackson, Richard Matheson, Stephen King, Kathe Koje, Octavia Butler, Scott Snyder and Jeff VanderMeer. (Some of the works by latter authors will be full novels, but several will be short stories.) Films and television screenings will include Rod Sterling's *The Twilight Zone*, Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*, Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*, David Cronenberg's *Rabid*, Matt Reeves' *Let Me In*, David Mitchell's *It Follows*, Jordan Peele's *Get Out*, Alex Garland's *Annihilation*, Season 2 of SYFY's *Channel Zero*, and Jen and Sylvia Soska's remake of David Cronenberg's *Rabid*. Some experiential engagement with horror-themed videogames and VR experiences will also be a part of the curriculum. Some accommodations will be made for anxiety responses, but students are advised that this course is not for the squeamish or faint of heart...

## **AM 322 001 Global Perspectives of the United States**

WF, 10:10-11:30, Professor Daniel Nathan, 4 credits

Assesses and puts in historical context global perspectives on and representations of the U.S., its citizens and culture. Employing an interdisciplinary methodology, student will consider how the U.S. appeared to Europeans in the eighteenth century and how others since then have made sense of this country, with an emphasis on the twentieth century and the post-9/11 cultural moment. Students will examine themes including the preferred national narrative of the U.S. as a place of freedom, opportunity, democracy, and multicultural pluralism; and different forms of anti-Americanism.

**Note(s):** 300-level courses in American Studies are not ordinarily open to first-year students except by permission of the instructor. (Designated a Cultural Diversity course.)

## **AM 356 001 Sports Cinema**

WF, 12:20-1:40, Professor Jeffrey Segrave, 4 credits

S 6:30-9:30

An exploration of feature films and documentaries about sports to understand and appreciate aesthetically, historically, culturally-the visual discourse of sports. Students will interrogate the cultural context of sports as expressed through visual media and will critically assess films as modes of communication that have their own codes and conventions. Films include Leni Riefenstahl's Olympia (1938), which chronicles and celebrates the 1936 Berlin Olympic games, and several "classic" sport films-among them, Raging Bull (1980) and Hoop Dreams (1994). Students are required to attend a weekly evening film screening.

## **AM 368 001 The 1960s**

MW, 4:00-5:50, Professor Gregory Pfitzer, 4 credits

A consideration of the major events of the 1960s, including the New Frontier, the Cuban missile crisis, the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the war in Vietnam, the civil rights movement, the sexual and gender revolutions, the rise of rock and roll, the counterculture, the moon landing and other landmarks of the decade. The course considers not only what happened during those climactic years, but why such events were so important to American development, and how perceptions about the 1960s have changed over time.

**Note(s):** 300-level courses in American Studies are not ordinarily open to first-year students except by permission of the instructor.

## **AM 374 00 Senior Seminar**

TR, 3:40-5:30, Professor Rebecca Krefting, 4 Credits

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.