

**American Studies Department
Fall 2024 Course Offerings**



**AM 101 001 Queering American Culture
Deb Amory MW 4:00-5:50 Credits: 3**

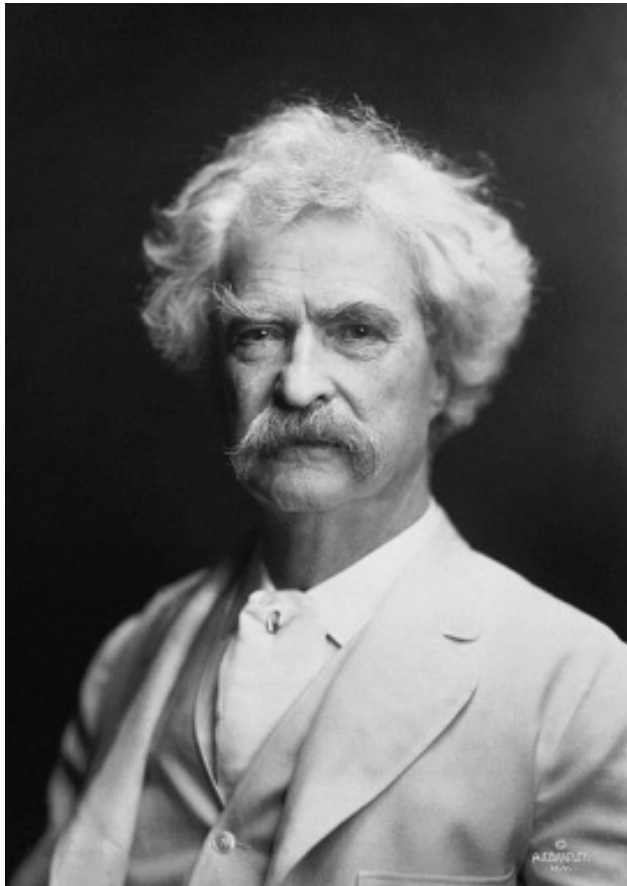
Interdisciplinary examinations of critical themes in the development of American culture and American life.

Note(s): May be repeated for credit with focus on a different theme.



**AM 101W: The Wizard of OZ as American Myth
Gregory Pfitzer Tues/Thursday 9:10-11:00 (4 credits)**

An examination of the cultural impact of L. Frank Baum's novel *The Wizard of Oz* (1900) and its various twentieth and twenty-first century adaptations, including MGM's 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*, the African American musical *The Wiz*, the novel *Wicked*, and the SyFy Channel miniseries *Tin Man*. Students will study the original novel and its sequels, reflecting on the social, economic, and political contexts of each. They will also consider how revised and reinvented versions of the Baum narrative reflect and shape cultural anxieties as they intersect with gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, age, spirituality, and consumerism as categories of analysis. A variety of methods and approaches will be employed, especially myth/symbol theory, feminism, queer theory, and performance studies.



AM 241: Mark Twain's America
Greg Pfitzer WF 8:40-10:00 M 9:05-10:00 credits: 4

This course considers American culture from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century through the life and works of Mark Twain. Using Twain's essays, letters, short stories, and novels as points of reference for discussions of major themes for the period of Twain's life (1835-1910), the course focuses on issues of regionalism, class, race relations, technology, humor and imperialism.



AM 261 001 Prince as Cultural Icon
Adrian Bautista T 6:30-9:10 credits 3

Few artists have impacted the world of music and pop culture like Prince. Beyond the prolific and tuneful brilliance of his catalog, Prince's death in 2016 continues to spark scholarly thought on such topics as masculinity, spirituality, politics, race gender, sexuality, and class. This course will explore Prince through critical perspectives related to musical creativity, intersections of faith and music, gender and sexuality, and the geography of the Minneapolis Sound. It will utilize a variety of materials to explore His Royal Badness, including music film and readings.



AM 261 002 Public History
Lauren Roberts MW 6:30-8:20 pm Credits 3

Public history can be considered a “boots on the ground” approach to preserving the past. This course explores the methods by which public historians collect, engage and make relevant those historical narratives. Topics including historic preservation, cultural resource management, living history and public commemoration will be covered. Students will research selected local sites and assess their historical significance. Practical application of skills such as determining eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places and applying for a New York State Historic Marker will supply students with real world experience in documenting community history. Emerging forms of public history such as augmented reality, podcasting and 3D modeling will also be explored.



AM 264 Themes In American Culture
African-American Experience
Tammy Owens TR 11:10-12:30 Credits: 3

An investigation of the role African Americans have played in the history of the nation, including African-American contributions to, and exclusions from, various aspects of a “democratic” American society. Students will examine the critical issues and periods 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. Primary and secondary sources include narratives, documents, photographs, and films.

Note(s): (Designated a Cultural Diversity course; fulfills social sciences requirement.)



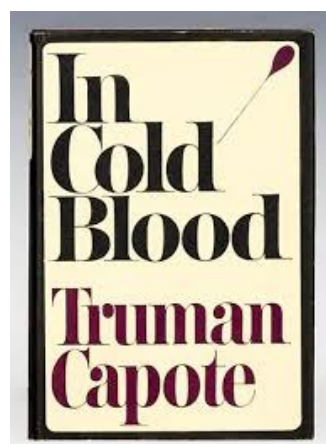
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AM 331 - Critical Whiteness In The U.S.

Beck Krefting W/F 10:10-12:00 Credits: 4

An interdisciplinary examination of whiteness in U.S. culture and history. Explores the racial construction of whiteness, focusing on its changing legal, political, aesthetic, and cultural definitions over four centuries of American experience, with special emphasis on the concept of whiteness in contemporary ethnographic studies, memoirs, and essays. Students will examine the relationship between whiteness and other components of identity. The nature of white privilege and the conditions of access to whiteness will be investigated.

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.)

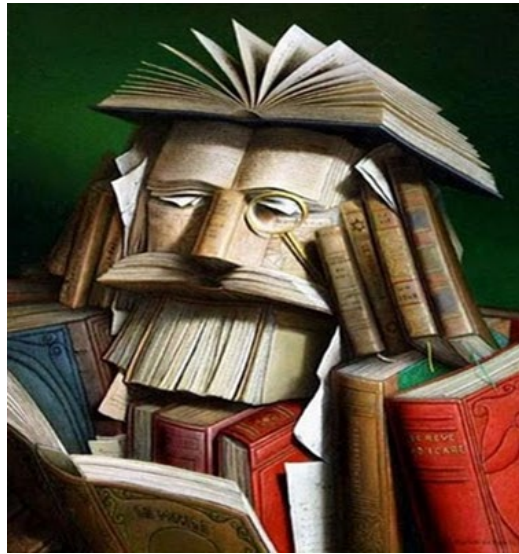


AM 346 001 True Crime in America

Daniel Nathan WF 12:20-2:10 credits 4

A critical examination of contemporary American true crime narratives, that is, accounts about a criminal act or acts based on fact rather than fiction. The course argues that true crime narratives throw into relief particular cultural concerns and values and help us understand American culture and the complex relationships among criminality, deviance, ethics, identity, justice, power, and representation. Students will consider questions such as What do true crime narratives tell us about the complicated relationship between power and justice at specific historical moments? Who has wielded (legitimate and illegitimate) power? And when crimes have been committed, what forms has justice taken, and who has administered it?

Note(s): Fulfills social sciences requirement; fulfills bridge experience.



AM 374 Senior Seminar

Daniel Nathan TR 3:40 -5:30 pm Credits: 4

American Studies 374 (Senior Seminar) is the culminating or "capstone" experience in the American Studies major. It builds on the concepts and strategies learned in American Studies 221: Methods and Approaches as well as on many of the theoretical and practical elements of other courses in the American Studies curriculum. The seminar is designed to help students find academic meaning and focus in the work they have already completed at Skidmore and to provide a bridge to the world beyond college by requiring them to confront squarely those two nagging questions: 1) "What is the purpose and meaning of what I have learned in college to date?" and 2) "What will I do with my American Studies degree when I graduate?" Answers to these questions will be sought primarily through the writing of a major research paper whose topic and scope will be determined by the prior academic preparation and future personal objectives of the students enrolled in the seminar.

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