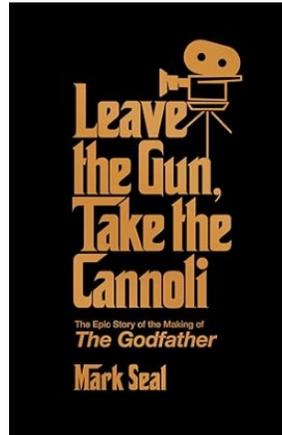
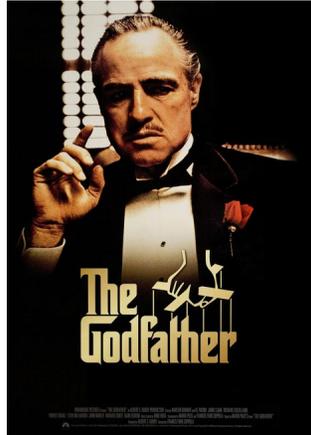
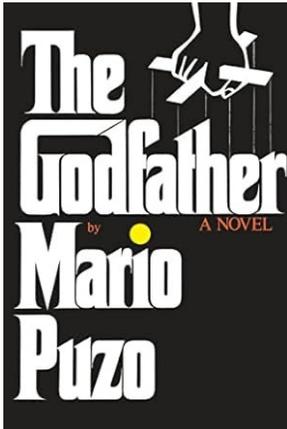


## American Studies Spring 2024 Course Offerings

### AM 101W 001 The Godfather and American Culture

Daniel Nathan TR 12:40-2:00 M 7-9 pm pm Credits 4



*The Godfather* is an American cultural phenomenon. It began as Mario Puzo's best-selling novel in 1969. Three years later, Francis Ford Coppola's film version was a blockbuster that won Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Actor (Marlon Brando), and Best Adapted Screenplay. The 1974, *The Godfather Part II*, was nominated for eleven Academy Awards, won six, and became the first sequel to win Best Picture. *The Godfather Part III* (1990) was not critically acclaimed but was nonetheless successful. Puzo wrote a sequel novel. And after his death in 1999, other writers produced more of them. References and allusions to *The Godfather* abound in many aspects of American culture. It has become a cultural touchstone, much like *Gone with the Wind*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Star Wars*. This class critiques and contextualizes *The Godfather* franchise and other related texts using an interdisciplinary approach. It carefully considers the four major texts, some of their antecedents and progeny, and the contexts in which they are best understood. The class will address myriad issues and subjects: the production and consumption of popular culture, of course; but also ethnicity, immigration, and assimilation; organized crime, power, and justice, among others. Like all versions of AM-101, this course emphasizes reading critically, thinking historically, practicing interdisciplinarity, acknowledging diversity, and making connections.

### AM 101W 002 Rise and Fall of the New Deal

Aaron Pedinotti TR 3:40 pm – 5:30 pm Credits 4



This course introduces students to the disciplinary parameters and methodologies of American Studies via a semester-long engagement with a major topic in twentieth-century American History that has recently begun to loom large in contemporary public discourses: the set of Depression Era Federal Government programs and reforms known as the New Deal. Throughout the course, the New Deal will serve as a practice object for applying the concepts, models, and empirical methods of American Studies to the understanding of historical topics. Students will learn about basic approaches within the field, apply them to the analysis of the New Deal, and in so doing, acquire skills that can be used in the analysis of other historical eras as well as contemporary culture. In addition to learning about the history, governing philosophies, and economic ideas that informed the New Deal programs, students will learn about the complex ways that the New Deal has functioned as a marker of historical memory and a contentious political signifier in the decades since its occurrence.

**AM 221 001 Methods and Approaches**  
**Tammy Owens TR 9:10-11 am credits 4**



An Introduction to American studies scholarship, methodologies, and approaches to the study of society and culture in the United States. Course materials include "classics" in American studies as well as the most recent scholarship: the "myth and symbol" school, the culture concept, psychoanalytic methodologies, new literary and feminist critiques, material culture and oral history resources, mass and popular culture analyses, with attention

to issues of race, gender, class, and ethnicity throughout. The intent of the course is to offer students a variety of opportunities to sharpen their analytical, research, and writing skills from interdisciplinary and historiographic perspectives. Required of majors and minors in their sophomore or junior years.

**AM 237 - Americans in Outer Space**  
**Gregory Pfitzer WF 8:40 – 10 am Credits: 4**

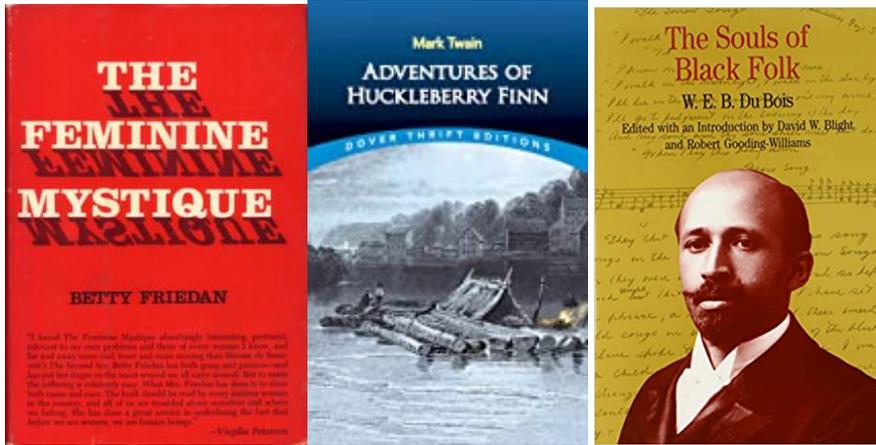


An examination of the cultural, political and economic contours of the debate about the exploration of deep space, with special attention to NASA's "Artemis" proposal to return astronauts to the moon by 2024. The course will focus on the power and justice dynamics associated with efforts to find answers to lingering and unresolved questions associated with the original lunar landings, including Who has access to space? What groups have the authority to control the use of space? Who should be responsible for funding exploration? And how do the lenses of identity, ethnicity, gender, nationality, socio-economic class and race inform these decisions?

***Prerequisites:*** [SSP 100](#).

**Note(s):** Fulfills Social Sciences requirement; fulfills Bridge Experience requirement.

**AM 261 001 Books that Changed America**  
**Daniel Nathan WF 12:20-1:40 credits 3**



Inspired partly by Randall Fuller’s *The Book That Changed America: How Darwin’s Theory of Evolution Ignited a Nation*, this course is an interdisciplinary examination of disparate books—including *Walden*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Souls of Black Folk*, and *Silent Spring*, among a few others—that altered how we think and act in the world. We will put the books in their various contexts, consider their critical receptions and legacies, and use them to reflect on American culture.

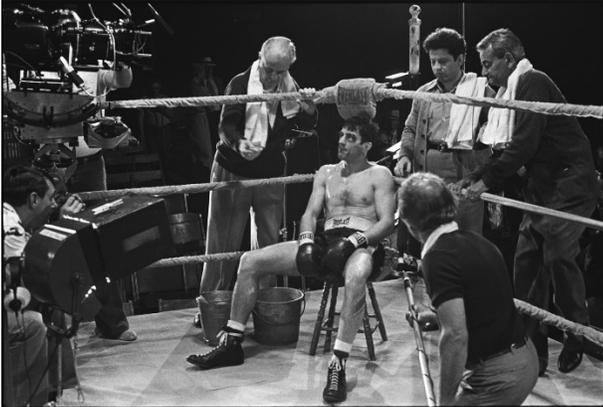
**AM 342 001 Black Feminist Thought**  
 Tammy Owens TR 11:10-12:30 credits 4



Black Feminist Thought - Examines the development and materialization of Black feminist thoughts within historical, social, political, and cultural contexts. Interdisciplinary in focus, it surveys feminist politics and theories through films, popular culture, manifestos, literary texts, archives, and theoretical and historical essays. In addition, the course will address how the concepts of black feminism and black womanhood overlap and diverge in accordance with the modes of representation used to articulate them.

## AM 356 001 Sports Cinema

Jeffrey Segrave TR 11:10 am – 12:30 pm & S 6:30pm-9pm credits 4



This class puts in context and critiques feature films and documentaries about sports to understand and appreciate—aesthetically, historically, culturally—a wide variety of experiences and issues. The course is also intended to enhance visual literacy, and thus students will assess the films *as films*, which have their own codes and conventions. As one would expect, most of the films we will study were made and set in the United States. A notable exception is Leni Riefenstahl’s *Olympia* (1938), which chronicles and celebrates the 1936 Berlin Olympic games. We will screen several “classic” sport films—among them, *Knute Rockne—All American* (1940), *Raging Bull* (1980), and *Hoop Dreams* (1994). After spring break, we will pair a Hollywood feature film with a related documentary: so, for example, Ken Carlson’s *Go Tigers!* (2001), which is about high school football in Massillon, Ohio, will be paired with Peter Berg’s *Friday Night Lights* (2004). The point is *not* to suggest that documentaries provide a more accurate version of sporting reality; rather, it is to consider what different kinds of visual texts, grammars, and discourses do well (and poorly) and how they interact with and enhance one another. Students are required to attend a weekly evening film screening.

## AM 368 001 Cultural Periods: The 1960s

Professor Pfitzer MW 4:00-5:50 Credits: 4



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.