

AMS 356 / HIS 356K: Fall 2018  
Main Currents of American Culture, 1865-present  
Unique #31195 / 39295  
T/Th 2:00-3:30 PM, BUR 208

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Office hours: BUR 412 // Mon 11:30-2:00, Wed 11:30-2:00, or by appointment

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AMS 356/HIS 356K traces the development of American culture and society from the end of the Civil War to the present. Major themes include racial conflict, pluralism, religion, urban development, reform, modernism, government centralization, cultural radicalism, and the rebirth of conservatism. Using a variety of sources and methods, this course explores how different communities organized around identifiers such as race, ethnicity, national origin, class, gender, and ideology have negotiated with and contributed to changing conceptions of American identity.

This course follows a rough chronology of the past 150 years divided into three major sections – 1865 to the early 1920s, the early 1920s to the mid-1960s, and the mid-1960s to the present – demonstrating great transformations in American society, culture, and everyday life, while also showing main currents and trajectories regarding individual, communal, and national identities. The interdisciplinary approach of this course draws upon history, geography, sociology, literature, popular culture, and other methods of inquiry to reveal a century and a half of political and social conflicts that complicate narratives of national consensus.

**Class format:** This is primarily a lecture course but I encourage questions and discussion. Learning is collaborative!

**Requirements:** Regular attendance, completion of all reading assignments, three exams.

**Goals/outcomes:** As members of this intellectual community, you will:

1. Gain a greater understanding of people, groups, events, and ideas since 1865 and how they have impacted American culture and society in their time and in ours.
2. Engage with a variety of types of texts and evidence to become interdisciplinary interpreters of American history.
3. Build critical thinking and analysis skills through written expression, including constructing thesis statements and supporting your argument with evidence from lecture and readings.

**Grading:**

First exam	25%	Tue Oct 2 (in class)
Second exam	30%	Thu Nov 1 (in class)
Final exam	35%	Day, time, location TBA
Attendance/participation	10%	Assessed at the end of the semester

**Grading scale:** A 93-100; A- 90-92; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D+ 67-69; D 63-66; D- 60-62; F 0-59

**Exam format:** The first two exams will be closed book/notes and will contain FIVE (5) identification questions (choice of 10) and ONE (1) essay question (choice of 2) covering material from that particular unit. There will be a review session held before each exam. The final exam schedule and location will be published about a month before the end of the semester. The final exam will be closed book/notes and will contain EIGHT (8) IDs (choice of 15) and ONE essay (choice of 2). On the final exam, the IDs will be taken from the last third of the course but the essay will require you to integrate and synthesize material from the entire semester to construct your analysis. On all tests, you will be expected to support your essay answers with evidence from the assigned readings and lectures. For this reason, regular class attendance is crucial in order to do well in the course. Do not rely on the inevitable Google doc as a substitute for reading or attending lecture. I do not post lecture slides online.

**Make-up policy:** Failure to take a scheduled exam **without making prior arrangements with the teaching assistant or me** will result in an automatic zero for that exam. I will allow you to take a make-up exam only in the event of a medical or family emergency, or if you have official, documented University of Texas at Austin business outside of campus. In both cases, you must notify the TA or me BEFORE the scheduled exam, unless extraordinary circumstances while traveling to the exam dictate otherwise, in which case official documentation will still be required. All make-up exams must be taken within one week of the scheduled exam.

**Post-exam protocol:** If you would like the TA to review your exam after it has been graded, please carefully review the comments and wait a minimum of 24 hours before contacting the TA. Thereafter, make sure to address all questions about your grade within eight days after you have received your exam back. If you do not reach an understanding with the TA, then I will be happy to review your exam as well. Please keep your exams as they will help you as you review for the final exam.

**Required readings:** All required texts will be in the course reader, available for purchase at Jenn's Copies (2518 Guadalupe St). I encourage each of you to be active readers and interact with the texts by underlining, highlighting, and engaging with the texts as you see fit. Please show up to class each day ready to discuss the assigned texts.

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend class regularly and to participate as best they can in such a sizable class. Just showing up to class is important but it is not the only factor in determining a student's participation. Various aspects of each student's overall performance will be taken into account, including attendance, pop quizzes, extra credit (if offered), participation in class discussion, and efforts to communicate with the professor and teaching assistant outside of class. Attendance will be taken either by a sign-in sheet or by attendance quizzes. Missing an **excess of five** class days will result in a zero participation grade. Explained absences for religious holidays, sanctioned travel related to sports or military service, or other absences you can plan in advance will not necessarily count against you if at least one week's notice is given. Unforeseen absences, such as illness or family emergency, will be excused once proper documentation is provided, at my discretion. The attendance policy will take effect on Tuesday, September 11.

**Office hours:** I encourage you to come to either my or the TA's office hours during the semester so you can get the most out of the course. This is an opportunity for you to discuss exam expectations, aspects of the lecture material or readings, or just stop by to say hello.

**Devices:** I strongly suggest that you take notes by hand rather than with a computer or tablet. Numerous scientific studies have shown that people remember lectures best when they've taken handwritten notes. Laptops and tablets in class must remain silent and may not be used for any reason other than course-related material (this should go without saying, but no phones are to be

used in class). I trust you to use technology responsibly, but failure to abide by this policy may result in the revocation of in-class laptop/tablet privileges at my discretion.

**Communication:** Course-related announcements, relevant or interesting links, potential changes to the course schedule, and other important information will be posted to the course Canvas site (and therefore sent to you via email), so please check your email at least once per day. All emails sent to me will be responded to within 24 hours of receipt unless unforeseen circumstances arise.

**Classroom conduct:** This course is built upon discussing topics that are often controversial and difficult. I encourage all of you to share your informed opinions, feeling, and experiences, and to engage in conversations that invite productive and respectful disagreement. As such, we all must maintain respect for the classroom environment and for our colleagues: no name-calling, slurs, interrupting, or otherwise fashioning a hostile environment. Be willing to have your own points of view challenged and be willing to respectfully challenge others. The most productive and exciting intellectual growth emerges from engaging with diverse opinions.

**Concealed handgun policy:** Per official University of Texas policy, “It is the responsibility of concealed-carry license holders to carry their handguns on or about their person at all times while on campus. ‘About’ the person means that a license holder may carry a holstered handgun in a backpack or handbag, but the backpack or handbag must be close enough that the license holder can grasp it without materially changing position. The holster must completely cover the trigger area and have enough tension to keep the gun in place if jostled. A license holder may not carry a partially or wholly visible handgun on campus premises or on any university driveway, street, sidewalk, parking lot, parking garage, or other parking area.” With this in mind, consider that the simplest thing for conceal-carry license holders to do would be to leave their handgun in a safe, secure location rather than bring it to class.

**Cultural Diversity flag:** This course carries the flag for Cultural Diversity in the United States. Cultural Diversity courses are designed to increase your familiarity with the variety and richness of the American cultural experience. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one U.S. cultural group that has experienced persistent marginalization. This course also fulfills the history core curriculum requirement.

**Students with disabilities:** Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). Faculty members are not required to provide accommodations without an official accommodation letter from SSD.

**Academic honesty:** In an effort to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and integrity in the classroom, cheating and plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Cheating or plagiarism will result in an automatic zero for the assignment and will be reported to the Dean of Students. University policies regarding academic honesty are available at [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint\\_whatish.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint_whatish.php)

**TL;DR version:** show up to class consistently, be respectful of each other, put phones away, use laptops for class-related stuff only, don't cheat on quizzes or exams.

→→→CLASS SCHEDULE←←←

**UNIT I: 1865-1920**

**Thu 8/30** Introduction to course; what is American studies?  
Reminder: purchase course reader at Jenn's Copies, 2518 Guadalupe St

**Tue 9/4** Reconstruction and a nation in turmoil

- 1) "Mississippi Black Codes" (1865)
- 2) Green Jones, "Statement of a Louisiana Freedman" (8/18/1866)
- 3) "Louisiana White League Platform" (1874)

**Thu 9/6** Slavery by another name

- 1) "Contract Between an Alabama Planter and Alabama Freedpeople" (6/1/1865)
- 2) "Ordinance by the Board of Police of Opelousas" (7/15/1865)
- 3) J.A. Williamson, "White Tennessean to the Freedmen's Bureau Superintendent of the Subdistrict of Memphis" (10/30/1865)
- 4) "Mississippi Freedpeople to the Governor of Mississippi" (12/3/1865)

**Tue 9/11** Industrialization and labor movement

- 1) Knights of Labor, "Preamble" (1878)
- 2) People's Party, "Omaha Platform" (1892)
- 3) Pullman Workers, "Statement to American Railway Union" (1894)

**Thu 9/13** America's new global reach

- 1) Arthur H. MacOwen, "Argument" and "Remember the Maine" (3/7/1898)
- 2) Samuel Gompers, "Imperialism – Its Dangers and Wrongs" (10/18/1898)

**Tue 9/18** The Age of Reform and a nation in transition

- 1) Jacob Riis, "How the Other Half Lives" chapter 6, "The Bend" (1890)
- 2) Upton Sinclair, selection from "The Jungle" (1906)
- 3) Eugene Debs, "Opening Speech of the Campaign" (8/10/1912)

**Thu 9/20** The struggle for political rights

- 1) Ida B. Wells-Barnett, "A Red Record" (1895)
- 2) W.E.B. DuBois, "Niagara Movement Speech" (1905)
- 3) Joint Suffrage Procession Committee, "Why Women Want to Vote" (3/3/1913)
- 4) The Woman's Journal, "Anti Wanted to Egg Suffragists" (6/14/1913)

**Tue 9/25** Growing radicalism

- 1) Industrial Workers of the World, "Manifesto" (1905)
- 2) Big Bill Haywood, "The General Strike" (1911)
- 3) John Reed, "War in Paterson" (1913)

**Thu 9/27** U.S. empire and the Great War

- 1) Richard H. Edmonds, "From Vantage Points in America Pro-Germanism Shoots in the Back with Poisoned Bullets Our Boys 'Over There,'" (5/2/1918)
- 2) D.J.R. Bruckner, Seymour Schwast, Steven Heller, *Art Against War*, 48-65 (1984)

**Tue 10/2** **EXAM 1 – BRING A BLUE BOOK**

## **UNIT II: 1920-1965**

### **Thu 10/4**      Immigration and anti-immigration

- 1) M.E. Ravage, "My Plunge into the Slums," *Harper's* (April 1917)
- 2) Senator Ellison DuRant Smith, "Shut the Door" speech (4/9/1924)
- 3) Representative Robert H. Clancy, "An Un-American Bill" speech (4/8/1924)
- 4) Eugenics Record Office, *Eugenics Seeks to Improve the Natural, Physical, Mental and Temperamental Qualities of the Human Family* (1927)

### **Tue 10/9**      Becoming modern

- 1) Selection of Alvah Posen "Them Days is Gone Forever" comic strips (1922-23)
- 2) Selection of President Hoover speeches (1928-31)

### **Thu 10/11**      The New Deal and the Popular Front

- 1) Caroline Henderson, "Letters from the Dust Bowl," *The Atlantic* (May 1936)

### **Tue 10/16**      Life during wartime

- 1) Mine Okubo, selections from *Citizen 13360* (1946)
- 2) Eugene Rostow, "Our Worst Wartime Mistake," *Harper's* (Sep 1945)

### **Thu 10/18**      The Cold War and the atomic age

- 1) Ambassador George Kennan, "The Long Telegram" portion (1946)
- 2) Jerry Marlatt, "Letter to President Dwight Eisenhower" (7/10/1959)

### **Tue 10/23**      Containment and the home front

- 1) Senator Joseph McCarthy, "Telegram to President Truman" (2/11/1950)
- 2) President Harry Truman, "Reply to Senator McCarthy" (Feb 1950)
- 3) Albert Feldstein and Jack Kamen, "The Orphan," *EC Shock SuspenStories* (April/May 1954)

### **Thu 10/25**      Suburbanization and white flight

- 1) "Up from the Potato Fields," *Time Magazine* (7/3/1950)
- 2) "Integration Troubles Beset Northern Town," *Life Magazine* (9/2/1957) and follow-up letters
- 3) David Bittan, "Ordeal in Levittown," *Look Magazine* (8/19/1958)

### **Tue 10/30**      The long struggle for desegregation

- 1) Supreme Court of the United States, "Brown v. Board of Education judgement" (5/31/1955)
- 2) President Dwight Eisenhower, "Mob Rule Cannot Be Used to Override the Decisions of Our Courts" (9/24/1957)

### **Thu 11/1**      **EXAM 2 – BRING A BLUE BOOK**

## **UNIT III: 1965-present**

### **Tue 11/6**      From nonviolence to "by any means necessary"

- 1) Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, "Statement of Purpose" (5/14/1960)
- 2) Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (4/16/1963)
- 3) Malcolm X, "The Afro-American's Right to Self-Defense" (1964) and "On Revolution" (1963)
- 4) Stokely Carmichael, "What We Want" (9/22/1966)
- 5) Black Panther Party, "Ten Point Program: What We Want/What We Believe" (Oct 1966)

**Thu 11/8**      Society polarizing

- 1) Robert Welch, portion of "The Truth in Time," *American Opinion* (Nov 1966)
- 2) Young Americans for Freedom, "The Sharon Statement" (1960)
- 3) Students for a Democratic Society, "Port Huron Statement" excerpt (Aug 1962)
- 4) Mario Savio, "Sit-in Address on the Steps of Cal Berkeley Sproul Hall" (12/2/1964)

**Tue 11/13**      The Vietnam era

- 1) Paul Potter, "The Incredible War" (4/17/1965)
- 2) "Vietcong Leaflet" (1968)
- 3) Ronald Ridenhour, "Letter to Military and Political Leaders" (3/29/1969)
- 4) John Kerry, "Vietnam Veterans Against the War Testimony to the Senate" (4/22/1971)

**Thu 11/15**      The sexual revolution

- 1) Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* chapter 1, "The Problem That Has No Name" (1963)
- 2) National Organization for Women, "Statement of Purpose" (1966)
- 3) Lucian Truscott IV, "Gay Power Comes to Sheridan Square," *Village Voice* (7/3/1969)
- 4) "Dialogue with Phyllis Schlafly," *Moody Monthly* (Nov 1978)

**Tue 11/20**      From Silent Majority to Moral Majority

- 1) Pat Robertson, "Action Plan for the 1980s" (1979)
- 2) Jerry Falwell, "Organizing the Moral Majority" (1980)
- 3) Ronald Reagan, "Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals" (3/8/1983)
- 4) Zach Schonfeld, "Parental Advisory Forever: An Oral History of the PMRC's War on Dirty Lyrics," *Newsweek* (9/9/2015)

**Thu 11/22**      NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING

**Tue 11/27**      Collapse of communism and the rise of the New World Order

- 1) George H.W. Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of Congress" (9/11/1990)

**Thu 11/29**      American empire 2.0

- 1) Tom W. Smith, "The Gulf War Produced a Jump in Patriotism and Support for Military," *Baltimore Sun* (1/16/1994)
- 2) Christopher Layne, "Why the Gulf War Was Not in the National Interest," *The Atlantic* (Jul 1991)

**Tue 12/4**      The 90s: America in transition

- 1) Pat Buchanan, "Address to the Republican National Convention" (8/17/1992)
- 2) Bill Clinton, "First Inauguration Speech" (1/20/1993)

**Thu 12/6**      9/11, the War on Terror, and the security state

- 1) George W. Bush, "Response to the Terrorist Attacks of Sep. 11" (9/20/2001)
- 2) Joanne Landy, Thomas Harrison, Jennifer Scarlott, "We Oppose Both Saddam Hussein and the U.S. War on Iraq" (Dec 2002)

**Final exam: December DAY, TIME, location TBA**

This syllabus is subject to change during the course of the semester, if necessary.