

# COURSES FOR DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN STUDIES

## American Studies Courses

### AMS100 Special Topics

SP

Hours 1

Selected American topics for lower-division undergraduate students offered by American studies faculty members or supervised teaching assistants. Some examples include the following five-week, one-hour courses: African-American Star Athletes, Superbowl Ads, Stand Up Comedy, Disney's America, and Why Eat Local?.

Special Topics Course

### AMS101 Special Topics

SP

Hours 1

Selected American topics for lower-division undergraduates offered by American Studies faculty members or supervised teaching assistants.

Special Topics Course

### AMS102 Special Topics

SP

Hours 1

Selected American topics for lower-division undergraduates offered by American Studies faculty members or supervised teaching assistants.

Special Topics Course

### AMS103 Special Topics

SP

Hours 1

Selected American topics for lower-division undergraduates offered by American Studies faculty members or supervised teaching assistants.

Special Topics Course

### AMS104 Special Topics

SP

Hours 1

Selected American topics for lower-division undergraduates offered by American Studies faculty members or supervised teaching assistants.

Special Topics Course

### AMS105 Special Topics

SP

Hours 1

Selected American topics for lower-division undergraduates offered by American Studies faculty members or supervised teaching assistants.

Special Topics Course

### AMS106 Special Topics

SP

Hours 1

Selected American topics for lower-division undergraduates offered by American Studies faculty members or supervised teaching assistants.

Special Topics Course

### AMS150 Introduction to American Pop Culture

HU

Hours 3

Exploration of the relation between the arts - popular, folk, and elite - and American culture in four selected periods: Victorian America, the '20s and '30s, World War II and the Postwar Era, and the '60s. Class presentations and discussions revolve around novels, movies, art, music, artifacts, and readings about the periods. This course is team taught by all the members of the American studies faculty. Offered fall semester.

Humanities

### AMS151 America and the World

HU

Hours 3

A broad survey of American culture formed by global, national, and regional influences. The first section, "World," looks at the United States as a product and shaper of international movements, ideas, and cultures from 1500 to the present. The second section, "Nation," examines the creation of a distinctly American identity between 1790 and 1890 that ultimately incorporated and reflected global issues. The third section, "Regions," focuses on the South and other regions as contributors to and consequences of national and global interactions. Team taught by the entire AMS faculty, lectures will include topics on film, music, literature, art, sports, and other cultural artifacts. Offered spring semester.

Humanities

### AMS200 Special Topics Amer Stud

SP

Hours 3

Selected American topics for lower-division undergraduate students offered by AMS faculty members or Americanists from related departments. Recent examples include The Asian-American Experience, The American Road, The Sporting Life, Baseball Since 1945, and Twilight Zone Culture. May be repeated for a maximum of 12 hours.

Special Topics Course

### AMS201 Intro African Amer Study

SB

Hours 3

This course provides a basic outline of the diversity and complexity of the African American experience in the United States. It surveys the early academic and social concern of Black Studies advocates; the changes in the field's objectives that arise from its connections to contemporary social movements for Black Power, women's liberation, and multiculturalism; and its major theoretical and critical debates.

Social and Behavioral Sciences

**AMS203 Introduction to Southern Studies**

*HU*

Hours 3

This discussion-based course introduces students to major texts and interdisciplinary methodologies in the field of Southern Studies. Traversing epochs from before the Civil War until after the Civil Rights Movement, we will scrutinize the interplay between course materials (autobiographies, fictional texts, historical accounts, and films) and major political, cultural, and social forces influencing the region and the nation.

Humanities

**AMS204 Introduction to Western American Studies**

*HU*

Hours 3

A lecture/discussion course utilizing a biographical approach to the salient themes, issues, and episodes of the American West. Some of these lives are real, some of them imagined, and others are a little of each. All of them, however, reveal much about both region and nation and how each has changed over time.

Humanities

**AMS205 Dirty Jobs**

*HU*

Hours 3

This course explores jobs that get you "dirty." Work is one of the aspects that most shapes individual lives, and many lines of work are viewed as dangerous, dirty, or somehow unsavory by American society. This course uses films, TV shows, written narratives, and music to explore different types of "dirty" work in the United States.

Humanities

**AMS206 Native American Studies**

*HU*

Hours 3

There's a lot more to Native Americans than the first Thanksgiving, the Battle of the Little Bighorn, and casinos (although we'll discuss all those things too). This course will introduce you to the diversity of Native American societies, their histories, and their significant influence on American culture, contemporary U.S. policy, and law. We'll be examining everything from ancient archaeological artifacts to contemporary film and literature as we investigate the vital role of indigenous people in North America. As much as possible, we'll be directly engaging Native sources and voices as we explore the struggles over land, sovereignty, and culture that have shaped (and continue to shape) Native American lives.

Humanities

**AMS207 Intro to Latinx Studies**

*HU*

Hours 3

This course introduces students to the range of issues and analytical approaches that form the foundation of Latinx studies. By tracing the history of the Latinx concept in relation to key elements of life, such as time, space, identity, community, power, language, nation, and rights, students will develop understandings of the particular ways in which Latinx studies takes shape. Focus for the course will be on the largest Latino groups in the U.S.: those of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban and Dominican descent.

Humanities

**AMS213 Honors Introduction to Southern Studies**

*HU, UH*

Hours 3

In this discussion-based honors course, students engage with major texts and methodologies in the interdisciplinary field of Southern Studies. We will study the history, literature, and culture of the U.S. South through autobiographies, fictional works, scholarly analyses, and popular media. We'll look at major events like the Civil War and Civil Rights Movement and evaluate varying and often conflicting ideas about what makes the South distinctive.

Humanities, University Honors

**AMS215 Introduction to Urban Studies**

Hours 3

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the intricacies of city life and to look at how place and space shape the human experience. Throughout the course, we will examine the city as a physical and spatial place as well as a place defined by its people and institutions. We consider the social and behavioral relations that form communities, including the diversity produced by factors such as race, class, and gender. As we proceed through the course, you should come to understand that physical and social structures are related to one another, and often times, are inseparable.

**AMS222 Modern Gay America: Introduction to LGBTQ Histories**

Hours 3

During the past decade, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) Americans have achieved various forms of empowerment and visibility in the nation's political, legal, social, and cultural arenas. However, LGBTQ persons continue to face various barriers to full equality and well-being including employment discrimination, high rates of homelessness among teens, violence, and inadequate access to health care. This 3 credit hour course places the events of the last decade into a longer history of LGBTQ communities, visibility and politics that begins in the late nineteenth century and ends in the early twenty-first century. During the semester, we will explore the historical development of LGBTQ identities, communities, politics, and cultural production. Together, we will analyze an array of materials including scholarly texts, oral histories, newspapers, films, photographs, art and political ephemera.

Prerequisite(s): None

**AMS231 Contemporary America***HU*

Hours 3

This course analyzes the changing nature of American values for the period dating from the 1970s through the 2000s by examining key developments in the everyday life patterns and cultural expressions of Americans in contexts that range from the local to the international. In doing so, we will draw connections between the economic and political contexts of these decades and contemporaneous works of creative expression and popular culture. This course also will serve as an introduction to the types of interdisciplinary research methods used in American Studies. Offered fall and spring semesters.\*.

Humanities

**AMS232 Honors Contemporary America***HU, UH*

Hours 3

This course analyzes the changing nature of American values for the period dating from the 1970s through the 2000s by examining key developments in the everyday life patterns and cultural expressions of Americans in contexts that range from the local to the international. In doing so, students will draw connections between the economic and political contexts of these decades and contemporaneous works of creative expression and popular culture. This course also will serve as an introduction to the types of interdisciplinary research methods used in American Studies.

Humanities, University Honors

**AMS280 American Pop Music***HU*

Hours 3

This course will tell the story of mainstream popular music in the United States from the arrival of rock and roll in the 1950s through to the present, including stops along the way for Top 40, soul, arena rock, country, punk, MTV, hip-hop, electronic dance music, American Idol, and the culture of streaming hits on YouTube and Spotify today. In addition to learning about different kinds of sounds, students will read work by artists, fans, and label people to think about how music shaped identity – the soundtrack of new groups emerging in American life.

Humanities

**AMS300 Special Topics***SP*

Hours 3

Selected American topics for advanced undergraduate students, offered by American Studies faculty members or Americanists from related departments. Recent examples include American Hobo Subculture, World War II and Modern Memory, Women's Liberation Movement, Justice and Civil Society, Southern Sexual Cultures, and Cultures of American Slavery. May be repeated for a maximum of 12 hours.

Prerequisite(s): Six hours of Humanities and/or Social Sciences courses or permission of instructor.

Special Topics Course

**AMS303 Education Of Southern Blacks**

Hours 3

A study of the "miseducation" of Africans in America. The course explores education for blacks from West Africa at the middle of the second millennium and early American society to the emergence of the separate school system of the 19th and 20th centuries.

**AMS305 Southern Poor Whites**

Hours 3

Shining a light on a marginalized yet momentous figure—the poor white –this class asks: What kinds of cultural work do representations of poor white Southerners do? How do depictions of poor white women's experiences differ from men's? How and why do accounts of poor white life in the South change over time? We will study scholarly analyses, fictional works, autobiographies, and movies in search of answers to these and other questions.

Prerequisite(s): 6 credit hours of Social/Behavioral (SB) or Humanities (HU) courses

**AMS310 The Latinx Experience***W*

Hours 3

This course focuses on the history of people of Latin American descent (Latinas/os) living in the United States. Although we will examine communities comprised of people of Central and South American descent, the focus of this course will be on the four largest Latinx groups: those of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban and Dominican descent. Students will become familiar with issues that have affected different Latinx populations in the United States: migration patterns, cultural interaction, community and cultural formation; and racial formations. We will also examine relations among Latinx and European immigrants, and consider the affects of US intervention and imperialism in Latin America on US Latinx communities. Lectures, readings, and films will explore connections between the past and the present and provide students a forum to express their own viewpoints on the legacy of this history. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

Prerequisite(s): Six hours of Humanities and/or Social Sciences courses or permission of instructor.

Writing

**AMS318 Amusement and Tourism in America**

Hours 3

This course explores the centrality of amusement and tourism in defining the American pursuit of happiness. The course examines varied forms of leisure culture that emerged in the 19th century and exploded in popularity throughout the 20th century. By asserting connections between a wide range of amusement and tourist activities, the course provides a framework for understanding how Americans at play participate in a vibrant component of American social, economic, and aesthetic history.

Prerequisite(s): Six hours of Humanities and/or Social Sciences courses or permission of instructor.

**AMS320 American Popular Humor**

Hours 3

This course explores major writers, performers, works, and themes of American humor that have achieved enduring popularity among mass audiences. It examines the social and historical contexts that reverberate in humor produced in the United States and focuses on three persistently popular mediums: prose and performance; film; and the television situation comedy.

Prerequisite(s): Six hours of Humanities and/or Social Sciences courses or permission of instructor.

**AMS321 African American Folk Art**

W

Hours 3

An examination of the objects created by African Americans variously classified as "folk," "self-taught," and "outsider" artists. Course material will address the African origins and American transformations of traditional arts and crafts (architecture, pottery, iron work, and quilting) as well as the work of selected 20th-century artists in such media as painting, sculpture, and assemblage. Key concerns will include not only analysis and cultural/historical contextualization of these artists and their works but also political and theoretical debates with respect to issues of collection, modes of exhibition, and use of the above-listed classifications. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course. One of the written assignments will be graded and returned before the mid-term.

Prerequisite(s): Six hours of Humanities and/or Social Sciences courses or permission of instructor.

Writing

**AMS323 Into the Wild: Nature and American Popular Imagination**

Hours 3

This course examines the often contentious and always passionate American relationship with "nature," an idea as much as a physical reality. Students consider the varying ways that nature has been imagined over a wide range of time periods and through the lenses of various forms of creative expression and cultural practices. The course explores how our complex relationship with "nature" has influenced American culture at large, its history and mainstream values.

Prerequisite(s): Six hours of Humanities and/or Social Sciences courses or permission of instructor.

**AMS325 America West And 19th Century**

Hours 3

Few things remained so central to the 19th American century experience as the West, a region to be explored, inhabited, and incorporated into an expanding urban-industrial society. From Lewis and Clark to Buffalo Bill, this lecture/discussion course examines the relationship between America and the West as it developed throughout the 19th century.

Prerequisite(s): Six hours of Humanities and/or Social Sciences courses or permission of instructor.

**AMS326 The Modern West**

Hours 3

This lecture/discussion course examines the growth of the American West during the 20th century as both the embodiment of modernity and, as mythic imagination, an escape from the very modernity it represents.

Prerequisite(s): Six hours of Humanities and/or Social Sciences courses or permission of instructor.

**AMS330 The Great Depression**

Hours 3

This course explores the Great Depression, the single most important economic event of the 20th Century. We will focus on the causes, events, policies, movements, personalities, and human tragedy and triumph of this era through an interdisciplinary historical perspective that will examine aspects of this twentieth century crisis. As an American Studies course, we will use films, TV shows, written narratives, and music to explore the era.

**AMS334 Science Fiction: Borders of Identity**

W

Hours 3

This course looks at science fiction through literature, film, and television. We'll explore how futuristic settings reflected anxieties of the all-too-real present. These included the impact of new technology, changing notions of race, gender, sexuality, and class, threats to life such as the Cold War, and the general sense of constant, rapid change in modern life. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

Prerequisite(s): 6 credit hours of HU or SB courses.

Writing

**AMS336 Rock, Soul, Hip-Hop and Country**

W

Hours 3

After 1965, rock and roll became rock, representing the counterculture; rhythm and blues became soul, representing Black Power; and country music became the emotional voice of the post-Civil Rights white South. This class contrasts these three dominant American popular music genres, with particular emphasis on how race, but also gender, class, and region, came to invest certain sounds with charged social significance. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

Prerequisite(s): Students must have completed at least 6 credit hours of AMS or other SB/HU courses.

Writing

**AMS340 Women in the South**

W

Hours 3

What insights into American experience are afforded by reading nineteenth- and twentieth-century texts in which Southern women engage questions of gender, class, race, labor, and region? This class will explore fictional and nonfictional prose by and about Southern women in order to examine how historical, cultural, and sociopolitical factors have shaped the lives and writings of women in the South. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

Prerequisite(s): To enroll, a student must have completed six credit hours in AMS courses.

Writing

**AMS341 African American Art**

Hours 3

An examination of the work of formally trained 20th century African American painters, sculptors, and photographers in relation to broader currents in the social and cultural history of the United States. Examines ways in which African American art has alternately reflected, shaped, and challenged such important historical events and currents as the Harlem Renaissance, the Great Depression, the Cold War, the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, the Women's Movement, and contemporary identity politics. Also evaluates the contributions of selected artists in relation to such key art movements as Modernism, Social Realism, and Postmodernism.

Prerequisite(s): Six hours of Humanities and/or Social Sciences courses or permission of instructor.

**AMS345 The American War on Drugs through Film**

Hours 3

This course examines the American War on Drugs through film. The course starts with the premise that the content in films, and the events contemporary to the making of the films, should be critically analyzed for their perspectives, biases, reliability, and interpretive choices. In the course, students will examine the ability of film to successfully portray the war on drugs and analyze how present events, cultures and attitudes shape our view of the past. Students will examine how the history of drugs in the U.S and how the war on drugs affects people of different nationalities and of different racial and ethnic groups.

**AMS350 Honors Women in the South**

UH, W

Hours 3

What insights into American experience do we gain by reading texts in which Southern women engage questions of gender, class, race, labor, and region? In this course, students will explore fictional and nonfictional prose by and about Southern women in order to examine how historical, cultural, and sociopolitical factors have shaped the lives and writings of women in the South. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

University Honors, Writing

**AMS380 Imagining the Indian: Native Americans on Page and Screen**

W

Hours 3

Native American imagery is widespread in American culture, from butter packaging to sports mascots and from children's picture books to epic films. These depictions have embedded ideas about American Indians—often romanticized, stereotyped, or just inaccurate ideas—in the imaginations of millions of readers and film-goers. In this course, we will examine representations of Native Americans in art, writing, film, music, and more, ranging from early encounters between Natives and newcomers to contemporary pop culture. We'll consider continuities and changes in how Indians have been imagined by outsiders, while also exploring Native self-representation in the face of cultural appropriation and stereotyping. We'll explore a variety of methods and sources as we reflect on the pervasiveness of ideas about, and images of, Natives in American culture. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

Prerequisite(s): Six hours of Humanities and/or Social Sciences courses or permission of instructor.

Writing

**AMS400 Internship**

Hours 1-3

An internship opportunity that combines independent study and practical fieldwork experience focusing on a particular problem or topic related to American culture and experience. Examples are internships in archival fieldwork, material culture fieldwork, museum management, and sound recordings. Credits earned in this course are applicable to the major and minor in American studies but are not counted in 400-level requirement. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 hours.

**AMS401 Black Intellectual Thought**

Hours 3

An upper level seminar designed to provide students with an in-depth study of major intellectual debates and movements that have shaped the politics, history and identities of the people of African descent in the United States and the African diaspora. The course will combine methodologies and concepts from multiple disciplines including history, political theory, literature, women's studies, sociology, psychology and philosophy.

**AMS402 Special Topics**

SP

Hours 3

Selected African American topics for advanced undergraduate students. May be repeated for a maximum of 12 hours.

Special Topics Course



**AMS403 Honors Research - Ams**

UH

Hours 3

Internship opportunity that combines guided and independent study with on- or off-campus research experience involving a particular methodological approach to American culture and experience. Examples are social science methods, oral history, original manuscript research, and technology.

University Honors

**AMS405 Directed Study**

SP

Hours 1-3

May be repeated for a maximum of 6 hours.

Special Topics Course

**AMS406 Directed Study**

SP

Hours 1-3

Independent study in American Studies.

Special Topics Course

**AMS407 Landscapes of the South**

W

Hours 3

A study of environmental and cultural landscapes of the American South, as altered and used by successive waves of native peoples, explorers, immigrants, laborers, industrialists, and urban builders, addressing historical and contemporary environmental challenges. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

Writing

**AMS412 On The Road**

W

Hours 3

This course examines the American love affair with the open road. It considers the dramatic influence of car culture on the national imagination and the many ways it permeates and defines the United States. Drawing from an array of literary, historical, and cultural sources, the course encourages students to examine how writers, filmmakers, and artists in all mediums demonstrate the pervasiveness of the road in our historical, literary, and cultural imagination. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

Prerequisite(s): 9 SH Humanities/ and or Social Sciences courses or permission of instructor

Writing

**AMS416 American Environmental Thought in a Global Context**

W

Hours 3

Popular conceptions of nature hold extraordinary power in shaping our responses and policies toward both the geophysical world and built environments. This interdisciplinary course examines key concepts and controversies in American thought about nature since before colonization. Using accounts from various regions, the course explores evolving conceptions of nature and justice, competing claims about race and class, and changing institutional responses and remedies to environmental degradation in the context of global change. The course is highly interactive, inviting critical thinking about the human place in the physical world. We read and discuss ecological views as presented in colonial writings, slave narratives, Transcendentalist thought, Gilded Age preservationist and conservationist debates, and the work of Progressive Era occupational health specialists and ecologists. We give specific attention to twentieth century social movements for environmental public health, examining contemporary approaches, including eco-feminism, environmental justice, and sustainability. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

Prerequisite(s): Permission of the instructor.

Writing

**AMS421 Writer & Artist in America**

W

Hours 3

This course offers a comparative examination of responses by 20th century literary and visual artists to perceived social crises and challenges to American cultural values, such as sex in the early 20th century American city, working class struggles during the Great Depression, issues of atomic anxiety during the early years of the Cold War, the ethical dilemmas of the Vietnam War, the perils of the AIDS/HIV crisis, and the flourishing of contemporary consumer culture. The course also introduces several important movements in twentieth century American arts and letters, including Naturalism, Modernism, Social Realism, the Beat movement, Social Surrealism, and Postmodernism. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

Prerequisite(s): 9 SH Humanities/ and or Social Sciences courses or permission of instructor

Writing

**AMS422 Popular Culture in America**

W

Hours 3

A selective survey and analysis of 20th century U.S. popular culture—particularly, comic books, fan culture, television, music, advertising, and sports. Examines ways in which popular culture has reflected and shaped aspects of American society such as gender ideologies, economics, race, class, and regional identity. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

Prerequisite(s): 9 SH Humanities/ and or Social Sciences courses or permission of instructor

Writing

**AMS423 The Roots of American Music**

W

Hours 3

This class surveys American music from ragtime, blues, and hillbilly to Broadway, Hollywood musicals, and swing jazz. Our focus will be on commercial mainstays and democratic audiences – how selling sound led to different identities being expressed through taste and style. Race, gender, class, sexuality, age, technology, and the music business will all factor as we move from blackface minstrelsy in the 1800s to World War II. We will listen closely to several songs each week, connecting music to larger themes through primary and secondary sources, regular writing, and in-class discussion. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

Prerequisite(s): 9 SH Humanities/ and or Social Sciences courses or permission of instructor.

Writing

**AMS430 Special Topics**

SP

Hours 3

Selected American topics for advanced undergraduate majors in American studies, offered by American Studies faculty members or Americanists from related departments. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 hours.

Prerequisite(s): Nine Semester Hours of humanities or social science courses or Instructor's Permission

Special Topics Course

**AMS439 Urban Spaces: The Nature of Cities**

W

Hours 3

This interdisciplinary social science course provides an introduction to the cultural and physical ecology of cities, focusing primarily on urbanization in the United States from the late 19th century to the present. Course readings include classical scholars in urbanism and urban design. Contemporary urban environmental histories explore population shifts and land use along the urban gradient from the suburbs to urban centers, with attention to water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure, pollution, and urban sprawl. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

Writing

**AMS450 (En)gendering Black History: Black Feminist Thought and Action in American History**

Hours 3

In the Zora Neale Hurston classic, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, the protagonist's (Janie) grandmother described the gender and racial norms that dictated their lived experiences as women and racial minorities under the Jim Crow regime. This class places the experiences and expressions of black women like Janie and her grandmother at the center of scholarly and pedagogical explorations of black feminist thought and action. Beginning with black women's responses to legal racialized chattel slavery in the nineteenth century and ending in the early twenty-first century, we will examine how black women in the United States articulate(d) politicized understandings of and responses to interlocking oppressions including racism, sexism, patriarchy, heterosexism, classism, etc. This interdisciplinary course will also examine African American gender and sexual politics, interactions between black women and the state, moments of coalition and conflict between black and white women, as well as the diverse nature of black feminist thought.

**AMS465 Fictions of American Identity**

W

Hours 3

This course explores nineteenth- and twentieth-century American literature and culture. Novels and short stories by Zora Neale Hurston, Henry James, Gish Jen, James Weldon Johnson, Toni Morrison, Vladimir Nabokov, and other writers are studied in the context of debates over slavery, national identity, women's roles, immigration and assimilation, social mobility, sexual mores, consumer culture, and race relations. Paper assignments emphasize close reading techniques and process-oriented writing. Assigned literary critical readings include papers written by students in this class and subsequently published in *The Explicator*, a journal of text-based critical essays. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

Prerequisite(s): 9 SH Humanities/ and or Social Sciences courses or permission of instructor.

Writing

**AMS492 Capstone Research Seminar**

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Hours 3

This capstone seminar explores a specific topic related to American cultural experiences and expressions. No matter what the subject focus will be in any particular year, students will initiate, develop, and complete a major research project using primary and secondary sources and interdisciplinary approaches. Recent topics have included Death in America, Mapping Native Alabama, The American City, The Drug War, Social Protest Movements, Cold War America, Americans Abroad, Folklore, and Science Fiction.

Prerequisite(s): Nine Semester Hours of American Studies Courses or Instructor's Permission

Special Topics Course