

# AMST 5001 Spring 2015\*

## Research Methods

T 6pm-9pm, F212



---

**Instructor:** Dr. Kristin J. Jacobson

**Office phone:** (609) 626-5581

**Email:** Please use our Blackboard email

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:45pm-2:15pm & by appointment

**Office Location:** F243

**Mailbox:** Arts and Humanities, K150

---

**Course Description:** This seminar provides students with the analytical tools they will need to do interdisciplinary research in American studies. We will examine a variety of approaches, methods, and theoretical perspectives, such as archival research, textual analysis, oral history, cultural studies, and theories of gender, race, ethnicity and sexuality. Students may miss no more than 2 classes without penalty.

**Learning Outcomes:** Students in this course will learn to:

- *Analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view, specifically students will*
  - Identify, locate, and describe objects of study;
  - Locate, identify, and understand secondary sources;
  - Understand debates among scholars; and
  - Become familiar with a range of methodologies appropriate to American studies.
- *Develop skills in expressing oneself orally and in writing, specifically students will*
  - Develop and defend an argument;
  - Design an interdisciplinary research project that contributes to the field of American studies.

**Required Texts:**

- Russ Castronovo and Susan Gillman, eds. *States of Emergency: The Object of American Studies*. U of North Carolina P (2009) ISBN: 978080785985 (**C&G**)
  - Lucy Maddox, ed. *Locating American Studies: The Evolution of a Discipline*. The Johns Hopkins UP (1999) ISBN: 9780801860560 (**Maddox**)
  - Thomas Mann. *The Oxford Guide to Library Research*. Oxford UP, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (2005) ISBN: 9780195189988 (**Mann**)
  - Paula Saukko. *Doing Research in Cultural Studies: An Introduction to Classical and New Methodological Approaches*. Sage Publications (2003) ISBN: 9780761965053 (**Saukko**)
- 

**Accommodation for Students with Special Needs:** The Richard Stockton College complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with documented disabilities who seek accommodations should make their request by contacting the Learning Access Program located in J204 or by calling 609-652-4988. In order to make sure that there is enough time to arrange accommodations, submit the paperwork to the instructor by the end of the second week of the semester or as early as possible to arrange services in this class. Retroactive accommodations will not be granted.

Concerned that you have a disability that will affect your learning in this class, but don't know where to start? Contact Robert Ross, Carol Quinn, or Fran Bottone in the Learning Access Program (J204; 609-652-4988) to learn about your options and the available resources for having your disability assessed. Additional information on the program may be obtained from Stockton website: <http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=61&pageID=5>

**Academic Honesty:** Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students who are found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions and risk failing the course. Other sanctions may also apply and **all** cases will be reported to Academic Affairs. You are responsible for knowing this college policy: <http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=14&pageID=62>. Contact your instructor if you have questions.

---

\* Image Source: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/news/news-images/march-2014/i-love-research-methodology>

**Email and Office Hours:** Please use Blackboard email for all course-related correspondence. I usually check email every day in the morning. While I often check for messages more frequently and respond immediately, allow a twenty-four hour time frame for my reply. Always visit my office hours (or arrange an appointment) when you have specific questions about course material. If you were absent, contact a classmate with questions about missed material and then visit office hours or schedule an appointment if you still have questions. Visit instructor office hours or schedule an appointment to discuss grades. No grades will be discussed via email, including final grades.

Think of my office as an extension of the classroom and use my office hours and scheduled appointments to discuss any aspect of the reading and material covered during class: come chat with me about class projects, writing, questions about the reading or discussion, ideas you wish to develop, reading and interpretive strategies you'd like to try, thesis ideas, career plans, and so on.

**Course Requirements:** In this course, expect to:

- (1) **Attend class:** you are allotted 2 absences without penalty for fatigue, illness, cocktail flu, personal reasons, malfunctioning clocks, doctor's appointments, work/family conflicts, etc. Note: I do not distinguish between excused or unexcused absences. If you miss two days and then get the flu and miss another day, you will lose 50 points (1/2 letter grade) for the third absence. **Students entering class after the instructor records attendance, who leave before class ends, or who disappear for a substantial part of any class will be considered absent.** Students that miss 4 classes will automatically earn a "D" for the class. Students that miss 5 or more classes will automatically earn an "F" for the class. Regular, spirited class attendance is a crucial component to passing this course. I will not give incompletes at the end of the semester unless arrangements are made in advance and you have the appropriate reasons outlined by College policy;
- (2) **Attend class meetings prepared:** this means bring the appropriate text(s) and **DO THE READING WITH GUSTO.** All students are expected to do the assigned reading for every class, prior to class, as preparation for class discussions. We will be very text-based in our approach to this material, and you should have access to the assigned reading. Expect to devote a minimum of ten hours per week completing the reading, research, and writing. Unless otherwise indicated, there will be a reading and writing assignment for every class. **Prepare at least one discussion topic, passage to discuss, or question for each class period;**
- (3) **Discuss and Listen Actively:** I expect class to be highly participatory, with everyone contributing comments, questions, and insights based on the assigned readings and interpreted through prior and emerging knowledge and experience. I will generally lead discussion at the beginning of the semester and will gradually turn over responsibility to students as the semester progresses;
- (4) **Complete all assignments:** Passing the course requires timely completion of ALL assignments, long and short, in-class and out-of-class. No late/incomplete assignments will be accepted after the last day of class;
- (5) **Unplug:** Silence cell phones, cease text messaging, and do not check email during class. An inability to use technology appropriately will negatively impact your final grade. All disruptive behavior (e.g., sleeping in class, inappropriate language directed at students/instructor, perpetual lateness/leaving early, etc.) constitutes grounds for grade reduction and/or dismissal from class.

#### Grades

• Weekly Reading Responses (10 total, 20 points each, 2 typed pages each)	<b>200</b>
• Discussion Facilitation	<b>50</b>
• Class Note Taking	<b>50</b>
• American Studies Journals Zotero Annotation	<b>200</b>
• Secondary Source Analysis (3-4 pages)	<b>100</b>
• Final Project	<b>400</b>
	<b>Total 1000</b>

#### Grading Scale

100-95: A	89.9-87: B+	79.9-77: C+	69.9-67: D+
94.9-90: A-	86.9-83: B	76.9-73: C	66.9-63: D
	82.9-80: B-	72.9-70: C-	62.9-60: D-
			59.9 & below: F

---

## Assignments

**Weekly Reading Responses** (10 two-page typed papers; 20 points each; 200 points total): There are eleven reading response opportunities: select and complete ten. At a minimum the responses should accomplish #1 and #2. Aim to also tackle #3 or #4. Weekly due dates noted below. *During class discussion students may add handwritten notes and/or corrections to their printed, typed response papers to correct or clarify content before submitting the response at the end of class for a grade.*

Required Content: address this content first to synthesize all assigned reading:

1. Make sense of the readings: make connections between the readings and synthesize their arguments. What is the main argument? Do the day's readings address similar questions or topics? Do they come to different or similar conclusions? What methods or kinds of evidence are used to develop and support the argument? What is the object of study? Discuss all assigned readings: focus on a key thread that runs through them all or note how each essay addresses a key topic/theme in different/similar ways. If you have trouble synthesizing an argument that applies to all the assigned readings, identify their distinct arguments/objects of study.
2. Relate the theory/scholarship to objects of study: how does the reading help us to understand a particular object of study (a text, performance, idea, event, etc.)? (If it isn't useful, explain why.)

Optional Content:

3. Make broader connections: relate the assigned reading to issues in the course or in American studies. Do they relate to other readings we've discussed this term or that you've read in another class during this or a previous term?
4. Make connections to your final project: how would the research method(s) apply to your object of study? What kinds of objects of study related to your research question does this method/approach inspire? How could you use the readings to frame questions about or design your project?

**American Studies Journals Zotero Annotation** (10 journals with annotations, 200 points: Due Feb 17): You are assigned 10 American studies journals in our Zotero group, "AMST Journals:" [https://www.zotero.org/groups/amst\\_journals](https://www.zotero.org/groups/amst_journals). For this assignment you will create a Zotero account (if you do not already have one), join our group, and then annotate each of your 10 assigned journals and write a separate introduction (2-3 typed, double-spaced pages) to your annotations that reflects on the information you collected. The reflection should address your overall impression or observations about the field of American studies garnered from looking closely at a wide range of scholarship, generated over a long period of time.

Your annotations will answer the following questions in the "notes" section of Zotero for your assigned journals:

1. **What is the journal's mission or focus?** In your description, note when the journal was started and when the most recent issue was published or is forthcoming. Cite clearly in your response, whether you quote directly or paraphrase the journal's mission/focus.
2. **Who is the sponsoring organization/publisher?** Note where you found or how you determined this answer.
3. **What kinds of articles does the journal publish? Who reads/publishes in the journal?** Consider the full range of the journal's publication history. Note how you determined this answer: in your description cite specific examples/titles to support your claims.
4. **What are some of the sources/objects of study represented in the journal?** Be sure to consider the full range of the journal's publication history when responding to this question. Note how you determined this answer: in your description cite specific examples/titles to support your claims.
5. **What methods and disciplinary approaches are used?** Consider the full range of the journal's publication history. Note how you determined this answer: in your description cite specific examples/titles to support your claims.
6. **What is the citation style (MLA, Chicago, APA)? Why might the journal use that form?** In other words, does the citation style fit the mandate of the journal? How so? Why not? How did you find/determine this answer?

Additionally, provide at least three "tags" for each journal. The tags might identify key methods the journal features (feminism, Marxism, ecocriticism, transnational approaches, etc.), specific objects of study (literature, history, archives, popular culture), and/or other aspects of the journal's scope that would be helpful to know, such as a focus on a specific time period or group.

**Secondary Source Analysis** (3-4 pages, submit to Blackboard, 100 points: Due April 7): This paper will demonstrate your skill in understanding and evaluating secondary sources in the field. Full assignment description and related materials in Blackboard.

**Facilitators/Note takers** (100 points total): Each student will facilitate the discussion of one reading (article/book chapter) that he or she has selected related to his/her final project (50 points) and be responsible for taking and posting class notes on Blackboard for one class session (50 points). Facilitator-selected readings must be electronically submitted to Blackboard by 6pm of the previous week. Notes must be posted to Blackboard prior to the next class period. Dates noted in syllabus below.

**Final Project Thought Experiment/Research Portfolio (with annotated bibliography)** (400 points: Due April 28): The final project asks you to conceptualize and design an American studies project, using Castronovo and Gillman's questions as a starting point:

Imagine that you have an object and that you want to study it. The object could be anything, an artifact drawn from popular culture, a text culled from the archive, even something that is more of a moving target because of its location across and between cultures. In the pluralist ethos that characterizes the field, your object could be lowbrow or highbrow, material of virtual, national or transnational ... Now that you have your object, which methodologies will contextualize and explain your selection? ... what goal do you have in studying, recovering, or critiquing your object? (Castronovo and Gillman, *States of Emergency*, 3-4)

While you will not actually complete the project, you will be using the readings and activities of the course to compare and contrast possible research methods, to consider the kinds of questions particular approaches might encourage, and the kinds of opportunities different approaches might allow. As you consider these issues, you will be developing a set of resources that could be used to bring such a project to fruition, including (but not limited to):

- an annotated list of journals and databases related to the topic;
- a description of primary sources, archives or collections related to the topic;
- a discussion of the scholarly conversation and bibliography of the major works of scholarship that already exist in relation to the topic; and
- a reflection on how this topic might contribute to the field of American studies.

You will provide two progress reports (Due March 5 and March 24) as well as a final paper/research portfolio and presentation. Additional details about the progress reports and final paper/research portfolio are posted on Blackboard.

### **Late Assignment and Revision Policy:**

I understand that life is full of surprises and sometimes those surprises influence your coursework and your ability to complete assignments. As a community of learners, we also recognize that we have a responsibility to the group, to our instructor, and to ourselves. We understand that every action has a consequence—even when circumstance may limit our power to act. To balance individual and community needs, we have the following guidelines for late assignments.

**Assignments:** *Papers and other assignments are due at the beginning of class.* Late papers/assignments will be docked 5 percentage points per day late. So, if an A (95%) paper due on Tuesday at 6pm is submitted one day late, the recorded grade would be A- (90%). If it is passed in on Thursday (2 days late), the paper would earn a 85%. And so on and so forth. If you are unable to attend a class when an assignment is due, submit the assignment electronically to your instructor before the deadline or have a classmate submit the assignment for you.

**Extensions:** Any student who asks the instructor **prior to** the due date may receive a 2-day extension from the due date listed on the syllabus for the following assignments: American Studies Journals Zotero Annotation and the Secondary Source Analysis. **The other assignments in the class are not eligible for extensions.** After 2 days the late paper penalty will go into effect. No exceptions.

Of course, the extension policy will only help students who have drafted a paper/assignment and follow the expected practice of backing up documents/data. Back up all your files and you will be a much happier and successful individual. You may not be happy when your computer explodes or disk crashes, but at least you will not be despondent. You may consider using Dropbox (<https://db.tt/WG1vfhY>) or GoogleDrive (<https://www.google.com/drive/>), both free services. Additionally, using such cloud-based services will help assure you never incur late penalties as a result of forgetting an assignment at home.

I also strongly encourage all students to keep a personal copy of every assignment and to keep all returned assignments with my feedback until the end of the term. **No assignments will be accepted after the last class meeting.**

**Revisions:** This course is based on the principle that revisions take place **before** the instructor evaluates an assignment for a grade. To this end, consider dropping in during office hours or other arranged meetings to discuss your assignments in advance of due dates. Drop in at any stage of the process: from your initial brainstorming and research to nailing down those final brass tacks. I will happily read and comment on thesis statements (usually between 1-3 sentences) or other short writing samples (one paragraph) via Blackboard email. If you want me to read longer drafts, drop by my office hours or schedule an appointment.

## AMST 5001—Spring 2015<sup>2</sup>

---

### Week 1 Introduction to Course and Research in AMST

**Jan 20:** *Introduction to course, assignments, students, and instructor. Discussion of assigned reading.*

"Preface" xiii-xx (Mann);

*Electronic Readings:*

"American Studies: An Overview" <http://eas-ref.press.jhu.edu/view?aid=524>;

"American Studies: Approaches and Concepts" <http://eas-ref.press.jhu.edu/view?aid=525>;

"Culture and Cultural Studies" <http://eas-ref.press.jhu.edu/view?aid=41>.

---

### Week 2 Introduction to Methods in American Studies

**Jan 27:** *Zotero assignment overview.*

C&G: "The Study of American Problems" (1-16);

Saukko: "Combining Methodologies in Cultural Studies" (11-35);

Maddox: Henry Nash Smith "Can 'American Studies' Develop a Method?" and commentary by Buell (1-16).

Mann: Browse chapters 4-10 (65-175).

**Reading Response 1. Note Taker 1.**

---

### Week 3 Doing Cultural Studies

**Feb 3:** *Troubleshoot Zotero. Electronic Readings:*

Raymond Williams: "Culture": <http://pubpages.unh.edu/~dml3/880williams.htm>;

"The Cultural Turn and American Studies": [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2RFGE\\_pSsU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2RFGE_pSsU);

Jay Melching: "Some [New] Elementary Axioms for an American Cultur[al] Studies" *American Studies* 38.2 (1997): 9-30 (BB).

**Reading Response 2. Note Taker 2.**

---

### Week 4 Objects and Archives

**Feb 10:** *Guest Speaker: Tom Kinsella. Discuss final project.*

C&G: Rodrigo Lazo "Migrant Archives" (36-54);

*Electronic Readings:*

Tim Sherratt: "It's All About the Stuff: Collections, Interfaces, Power, and People" *Journal of Digital Humanities* 1.1 (2011): <http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/1-1/its-all-about-the-stuff-by-tim-sherratt/>;

Emily B. Todd: "Antebellum Libraries in Richmond and New Orleans and the Search for the Practices and Preferences of 'Real' Readers" *American Studies* 42.3 (2001): 195-209 (BB);

Marilyn F. Motz: "Visual Autobiography: Photograph Albums of Turn-of-the-Century Midwestern Women" *American Quarterly* 41.1 (1989): 63-92 (BB);

*Review Document Analysis Worksheets:* <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/>

**Reading Response 3. Note Taker 3.**

---

*Recommended reading:*

Randall C. Jimerson: "Archives for All: Professional Responsibility and Social Justice" *The American Archivist* 70.2 (2007): 252-281 (BB);

Rodney G.S. Carter: "Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence" *Archivaria* 61 (Spring 2006): 215-233 (BB).

---

<sup>2</sup> Class Schedule subject to changes with notice. Readings and assignments are listed on the day they are due.

---

**Week 5 Mass and Popular Culture**

**Feb 17:** Saukko: "Studying Lived Resistance" and "New Ethnography and Understanding the Other" (39-73).  
Maddox: Janice Radway, "The Utopian Impulse in Popular Literature: Gothic Romances and 'Feminist Protest'" and commentary by Wilson (235-260)

*Electronic Readings:*

Richard Ohmann: "The Origins of Mass Culture" (BB)

Mike Muloy: "From Kid Nation to Caste Nation: Mobility, Privilege, and the Paradox of Class on Reality Television" *Americana* 8.1 (2009): [http://www.americanpopularculture.com/journal/articles/spring\\_2009/meloy.htm](http://www.americanpopularculture.com/journal/articles/spring_2009/meloy.htm)

Priscilla Wald: "American Studies and the Politics of Life" *American Quarterly* 64.2 (2012): 185-204 (BB)

**Reading Response 4. Note Taker 4.**

Feb 19: 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Paul Lyons Memorial Lecture: Dr. Priscilla Wald, Professor of English and Women's Studies, Duke University, 6pm, Campus Center Theater

---

**Week 6 Ethnography**

**Feb 24:** Saukko: "Between Experience and Discourse" (74-95)

C&G: Nan Enstad "Toxicity and the Consuming Subject" (55-68)

C&G: Anne McClintock "Paranoid Empire: Specters from Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib" (88-115)

**American Studies Journals Zotero Annotation with Introduction Due. Reading Response 5. Note Taker 5.**

---

**Week 7 Textual Analysis**

**Mar 3:** Saukko: "Reading Ideology" (97-114) and "On Deconstruction and Beyond" (135-152)

*Electronic Reading:*

Houston A. Baker, Jr. "Figurations for a New American Literary History" from *Ideology and Classic American Literature*, ed. Bercovitch and Jehlen: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~drbr/baker.html>

**Reading Response 6. Note Taker 6.**

**Mar 5: Progress Report 1 Due.** Submit via Blackboard. Due by 6pm EST.

---

**Spring Break**

---

**Week 8 Local and Global Contexts**

**Mar 17:** Saukko: "Analysis of 'Reality' and Space" (155-175) and "Studying Multiple Sites and Scapes" (176-197)

Maddox: Kevin J. Mumford "Homosex Changes: Race, Cultural Geography, and the Emergence of the Gay" and commentary by Martin (385-407)

C&G: Kenneth Warren "Taking the Measure of the Black Atlantic" (116-123)

**Reading Response 7. Note Taker 7. Facilitators 1 & 2 Post Articles to BB.**

---

**Week 9 Student Selected Reading and Analysis**

**Mar 24:** *Electronic Readings:* Facilitators 1 & 2 assigned reading

Vorris Nunley: "Overture/Head: We Wear the Mask and the Bit" from *Keepin' It Hushed* Wayne State UP (2011): 1-22.

**Progress Report 2 Due. Reading Response 8. Note Taker 8. Facilitators 3, 4 & 5 Post Articles to BB.**

*Recommended Reading:* Vorris Nunley's two articles in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*,

<http://lareviewofbooks.org/contributor/vorris-l-nunley>

Mar 26: Dr. Vorris Nunley, Associate Professor, UC-Riverside, "Dead Masculinity Walking? *Wingshooters*, *Song of Solomon*, and the Biopolitics of a Black Masculinity of Becoming" 4:30-6pm, L112

---

---

**Week 10 Student Selected Reading and Analysis**

Mar 31: *Electronic Readings*: Facilitators 3, 4 & 5 assigned reading  
**Reading Response 9. Note Taker 9. Facilitators 6, 7 & 8 Post Articles to BB.**

---

**Week 11 Student Selected Reading and Analysis**

April 7: *Electronic Readings*: Facilitators 6, 7 & 8 assigned reading  
**Secondary Source Analysis Due. Reading Response 10. Note Taker 10. Facilitators 9 & 10 Post Articles to BB.**

---

**Week 12 Student Selected Reading and Analysis**

April 14: *Electronic Readings*: Facilitators 9 & 10 assigned reading  
**Reading Response 11. Note Taker 11.**

---

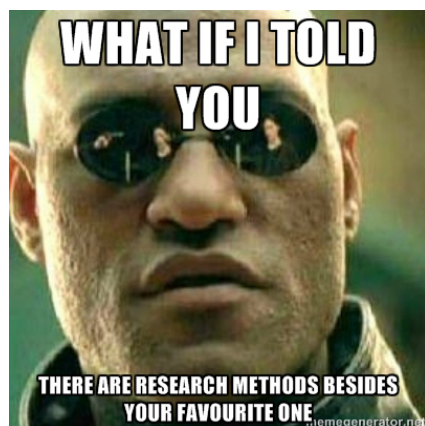
**Week 13 Thought Experiment Roundtable/ Presentations**

April 21: Presentations.

---

**Week 14 Thought Experiment Roundtable/ Presentations**

April 28: Presentations.  
**Final Paper/Project Due.**



Source: [www.memegenerator.net](http://www.memegenerator.net)



Image Source: <http://elon.libguides.com/ams210>



Image Source: <http://www.scoop.it/t/information-literacy-by-fshalibarian>