

**AMERICAN STUDIES 3310G**  
**Advanced American Studies: Being American**

**Winter 2020-21**  
**Tuesdays 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.**

**Instructor: Professor Aldona Sendzikas**

Office Hours: TBA  
 Department of History, Office: Lawson Hall 1222  
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Images courtesy of amplifier.org

**This is a draft syllabus. Please see your course OWL site for the final syllabus.**

Lectures will take place in a virtual, synchronous format - on-line and at a dedicated time

The University is investigating a blend of online and live course delivery, and is being guided by recommendations from health authorities and the provincial and federal governments. The Department of History is committed to providing a superior learning experience for all students, and our faculty members are reimagining their course offerings to take advantage of the best new technologies and practices available in

online teaching and learning. Please monitor the department website for course information - we will post updates as soon as they are available.

**PLEASE NOTE:** *It is anticipated that the weekly seminars for this course will be conducted online using Zoom, and that assignments and exams will be submitted online via the OWL course website. If circumstances change and we are able to hold seminars in person, the amended syllabus will be posted as soon as possible. (Assignments and marks distribution would remain the same.) Please feel free to contact the instructor via e-mail should you have any questions or concerns.*

### **Course Description:**

What defines being “American”? How is the American identity constructed, and how and why is it frequently contested? This course employs an interdisciplinary approach to explore the meaning(s) and definition(s) of American identity from multiple viewpoints, and within the context of US history, politics, regions, values, and culture.

### **Prerequisite(s):**

1.0 History course at the 2200 level or above or enrolment in an American Studies module.

Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

### **Antirequisite(s):**

History 3310F/G.

### **Course Syllabus:**

#### **Course Content and Objectives:**

In this course, we will engage in the “doing” of American Studies by bringing together sources from a variety of disciplines—including History, English, Political Science, Popular Culture, *etc.*—as well as current events, in order to explore and examine a variety of topics, in an attempt to answer the question: What defines being “American”? Who determines this definition? What unites Americans, and what divides them? How is the American identity constructed, how has it evolved, and how and why is it frequently contested? How and why has the definition of “being American” changed? Who has been excluded from “being American,” and why?

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

In this course, students will:

- Practice applying an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the United States.
- Use both primary and secondary sources, drawn from a range of disciplines, to interpret and analyze issues in American history and society.
- Learn to situate contemporary issues in the context of historical events, as well as in the broader context of American Studies.

- Develop a research question and answer it in a written assignment, integrating both primary and secondary sources, and employing an interdisciplinary approach, in formulating the argument.
- Develop improved essay writing and research skills.
- Develop improved presentation and communication skills through class discussion.

### Course Materials:

- *A New Literary History of America*, edited by Greil Marcus and Werner Sollors (Cambridge, MA and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009). **This book will be available for online purchase through the Western Bookstore.**
- Additional weekly online readings, which will be posted on the OWL course website or will be otherwise accessible online.

### Methods of Evaluation:

#### Grading:

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| • Class participation   | 20%           |
| • Two short written assignments* (3-5 pp. each)                   | 10% x 2 = 20% |
| • Leading class discussion on one of the readings                 | 10%           |
| • Midterm exam (during class, February 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2020)   | 20%           |
| • Essay proposal  | 5%            |
| • Research essay (10-12 pages) (due April 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2020) | 25%           |

\*The first short written assignment will be due on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020. The second short written assignment will be due on the date that you choose to lead a class discussion on an assigned reading from the textbook (or by 7 days from that date). This written assignment will be on the topic of that particular reading.

#### Written assignments

Written assignments must be submitted at the specified time on the due date, in electronic form via the submission link on the OWL course website. (By using the submission link on the course website, your paper will automatically be submitted to Turnitin.com.)

Further instructions regarding the above assignments will be provided during class.

Late assignments: A late penalty of 5% for the first day, and 2% for each day after the first day (including Saturdays and Sundays) will be incurred for all written work submitted after the due date and time. Papers submitted on the due date but after the due time will be considered late and will be penalized 2%. Keep a copy of each of your written assignments until you receive the grade for it.

Please note that AS3310G is an essay course. According to Western's Academic Handbook, an essay course "...must be so structured that the student is required to demonstrate competence in essay writing to pass the course."

In this class, that means that all of the written assignments (including the midterm exam) must be completed and submitted in order for a student to pass the course.

***Expectations:***

- Regular attendance. (Absences will affect your participation mark.)
- Completion of all assigned readings and active, informed participation in class discussion, based on those readings.
- Courtesy and respect towards other members of the class.
- Be present: avoid distractions during the seminar, and try to engage with the class!

**Accommodation for missed midterms with a Self-Reported Absence (SRA):**

Students with an approved absence from an in-class test will be required to write a makeup test on one of the two time slots available in each term:

**Winter Term**

- Tests scheduled before February 13 – the makeup will take place Monday, February 22 at 9:30am.
- Tests scheduled between February 22 and April 1 – the makeup will take place Friday, April 2 at 12:30pm

No other make-up opportunities will be provided. Students who fail to write a makeup test in the designated time slots will receive a grade of zero.

Students in online courses will write the make-up test through OWL over a 24-hour period beginning at the time noted above.

Students should be aware that course professors may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup test slots.

**Accommodation for missed assignment deadlines with a Self-Reported Absence (SRA):**

If a student reports a SRA for an assignment (*i.e.* an essay) the new due date will be 48 hours after the SRA was submitted. For example, if you complete a SRA on March 19 at 3pm, your new due date will be March 21 at 3pm.

**Additional Statements**

***Academic Offences:***

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is

subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com ( <http://www.turnitin.com> ).

### ***Accessibility Options:***

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Student Accessibility Services at 519 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website:

[www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated\\_exams.html](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html)

### ***Medical Issues***

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Please go to:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_illness.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf)

to read about the University's policy on medical accommodation. In the event of illness, you should contact Academic Counselling as soon as possible. The Academic Counsellors will determine, in consultation with the student, whether or not accommodation should be requested. They will subsequently contact the instructors in the relevant courses about the accommodation. Once the instructor has made a decision about whether to grant an accommodation, the student should contact his/her instructors to determine a new due date for tests, assignments, and exams.

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation.

Please visit [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic\\_policies/index.html](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/index.html) to view all updated academic policies regarding medical accommodations.

### ***Plagiarism:***

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Students are expected to retain all research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, your instructor may ask you to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against you.

The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of publication and page number. Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writer's ideas, you must acknowledge that they are another writers ideas.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in "A" above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source; these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in "A" above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction, your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases, in their suspension from the University.

### ***Scholastic Offences***

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website:

[www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### ***Copyright***

Lectures and course materials, including power point presentations, outlines, and similar materials, are protected by copyright. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own educational use. You may not record lectures, reproduce (or allow others to reproduce), post or distribute lecture notes, wiki material, and other course materials publicly and/or for commercial purposes without my written consent.

### ***Health and Wellness***

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

### ***Use of Electronic Devices***

The midterm exam in this course will be based on the course readings and discussions. You may NOT use any non-course content—*i.e.*, material taken from outside of course materials, including material on the internet, in writing your exam. Your exam will be submitted to Turnitin.com. Any material identified as being taken from outside of course materials will NOT receive any credit.

You may not work together with other students in writing the exam, or receive any assistance from any other individuals. You will be asked to agree to an Honour Pledge before writing the exam.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Student Accessibility Services at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact, Heidi Van Galen, Administrative Officer, Department of History, 519-661-2111 x84963 or e-mail [vangalen@uwo.ca](mailto:vangalen@uwo.ca).

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