

AMST3223: Theories & Methods of American Studies

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Course Description

This course surveys the history, theory, and methods of the discipline known as American Studies. Unlike your other American Studies courses, this one requires you to think consciously about the ways you undertake the analysis of cultural and social phenomena. We will address such questions as: What is American Studies? What is its history? What is the proper subject matter of American Studies? How should we look at or engage with that subject matter? What methods of analysis might help us understand this thing called "America" or "American culture and society?" How do these methods enable us to turn mere "information" into meaningful "knowledge?" Finally, what could or should we do with this "knowledge" once we have it? **This course is required to Major or Minor in American Studies and will be offered in a hybrid format (half online, half face-to-face) to accommodate students on both campuses.**

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Recognize and recall key authors, ideas, methods, and movements in the American Studies field over its history.
- Ask compelling questions about American culture, questions that go well beyond the "who, what, where" of reportage into the "how, why and what for" of critical thinking.
- Analyze, evaluate and use primary source materials to build arguments.
- Find, evaluate, and use secondary source materials to build arguments, including online sources
- Negotiate differing academic opinions about a subject.
- Integrate and cite source materials using proper technique.

Required Texts

J.A. Vance, *Hillbilly Elegy*

George Lipsitz, *Footsteps in the Dark The Hidden Histories of Popular Music*

Colson Whitehead, *The Underground Railroad*

A selection of readings on the course D2L.