



DEPARTMENT OF  
AMERICAN STUDIES

## Fall 2023 Course Descriptions

### **AMST 1110.001 – Introduction to Environmental & Social Justice**

**Offered: Full Semester Online**

**Instructor: Matthew MacDermant** [mmacdermant@unm.edu](mailto:mmacdermant@unm.edu)

This class provides an introduction to the theories of the environment, theories of justice in the context of environmental policy and planning, and to histories of poor peoples' struggles around the unequal distribution of toxic waste. We will focus on the ways race, class, gender, sexuality, region, eco-colonialism and their intersections shape environmental and political struggles over natural resource use. Students will learn to examine the ways in which socially constructed representations of Nature shape our interactions with natural environments and shape our perceptions of environmental problems and solutions.

### **AMST 1110.002 – Introduction to Environmental & Social Justice**

**Offered: Full Semester Online**

**Instructor: Sarah Knopp** [slknopp@unm.edu](mailto:slknopp@unm.edu)

This class provides an introduction to the theories of the environment, theories of justice in the context of environmental policy and planning, and to histories of poor peoples' struggles around the unequal distribution of toxic waste. We will focus on the ways race, class, gender, sexuality, region, eco-colonialism and their intersections shape environmental and political struggles over natural resource use. Students will learn to examine the ways in which socially constructed representations of Nature shape our interactions with natural environments and shape our perceptions of environmental problems and solutions.

### **AMST 1110.003 – Introduction to Environmental & Social Justice**

**Offered: Second Half Online**

**Instructor: David Correia** [dcorreia@unm.edu](mailto:dcorreia@unm.edu)

This class provides an introduction to the theories of the environment, theories of justice in the context of environmental policy and planning, and to histories of poor peoples' struggles around the unequal distribution of toxic waste. We will focus on the ways race, class, gender, sexuality, region, eco-colonialism and their intersections shape environmental and political struggles over natural resource use. Students will learn to examine the ways in which socially constructed representations of Nature shape

our interactions with natural environments and shape our perceptions of environmental problems and solutions.

**AMST 1130.001 – Introduction to Politics in Pop Culture**

**Offered: Full Semester Online**

**Instructor: Shebati Sengupta [ssengupta@unm.edu](mailto:ssengupta@unm.edu)**

What is popular culture? How do we use it to understand the world? How does it reflect the world we live in? In this course, we will consider a range of theoretical approaches to the study of popular culture. Drawing from concepts and debates in popular culture studies, cultural studies, feminist theory, and media studies, we will explore the relationships between popular culture and the formation of social determinants such as race, gender, class, and sexuality.

The goal of this course is to provide students with a critical vocabulary to make sense of the broader significance and relevance of popular culture. In other words, how and why does popular culture matter? Importantly, we will also consider how popular culture serves as a site of ongoing political struggle. To do so, we will investigate several expressive forms, including music videos, award shows, comedy, branding, fandom, Indigenous performance, animated television shows, and poetry. Students are encouraged to bring their passion for their favorite cultural productions and an openness to critically analyze the media we interact with every day.

**AMST 1140.001 – Critical Race & Indigenous Studies**

**Offered: Full Semester, MWF 10:00-10:50am**

**Instructor: Staff**

This course introduces students to the historical and contemporary significance of race and Indigenous sovereignty in the context of what is currently the United States from the interdisciplinary perspective of American Studies. Beginning with the formative role of slavery and colonialism in the making of modern understandings of race and racial difference, this course focuses on race, class, ethnicity, and gender as key organizing categories of U.S. social, legal, cultural, and political life. Throughout the course we will consider the interdependent, intersectional, and relational dynamics of race, class, and ethnicity rather than approach each as discrete or stand-alone categories. We likewise examine how capitalism is a historically specific racialized and gendered social relation of inequality. Although our primary concern is the U.S. context, the course situates this context within the broader framework of global history and geopolitics in order to show how and why the U.S. cannot be studied and understood in isolation from the rest of the world. Course readings provide an analytic and historical basis for addressing questions of power, inequality, identity, collective struggle, and social movements.

**AMST 1140.005 – Critical Race & Indigenous Studies**

**Offered: Second Half Online**

**Instructor: Alyosha Goldstein [agoldste@unm.edu](mailto:agoldste@unm.edu)**

This course introduces students to the historical and contemporary politics of race and Indigenous self-determination in the context of what is currently the United States from the interdisciplinary perspective of American Studies. Beginning with the formative role of slavery and colonialism in the making of modern understandings of race and racial difference, this course focuses on race and

colonialism as key organizing categories of U.S. social, legal, cultural, and political life. Throughout the course we will consider the interdependent, intersectional, and relational dynamics of social identities. We likewise examine how capitalism is a historically specific racialized and gendered social relation of inequality. Although our primary concern is the U.S. context, the course situates this context within the broader framework of global history and geopolitics in order to show how and why the U.S. cannot be studied and understood in isolation from the rest of the world. Course readings provide an analytic and historical basis for addressing questions of power, inequality, identity, collective struggle, and social movements.

**AMST 1150.001 – Introduction to Southwest Studies**

**Offered: Full Semester, TR 3:30-4:45pm**

**Instructor: Joselin Castillo [joscastillo@unm.edu](mailto:joscastillo@unm.edu)**

This course provides both an introduction to the complex history and culture of the southwestern United States and a demonstration of the possibilities of the interdisciplinary study of regional American culture. It is multicultural in content and multidisciplinary in methodology. It examines cross-cultural relationships among the peoples of the Southwest within the framework of their expressions and experiences in art, culture, religion, and social and political economy. More specifically, this course will consider: What is this place we call the Southwest? How is it defined- geographically, politically, and culturally? Who are the people that live there? How have their lives been transformed by social and historical forces into the cultures we see today? At the same time, how have these same groups retained their traditions, customs, and beliefs in response to change? This course will explore contemporary Southwestern cultures, their multiple voices and culture expressions, using an interdisciplinary approach that draws from geography, anthropology, history, literature, and the arts.

**AMST 303.001 – Law, Violence, & Empire**

**Offered: Full Semester, M 1:00-3:45pm**

**Instructor: David Correia [dcorreia@unm.edu](mailto:dcorreia@unm.edu)**

This class examines law's relationship to violence and its role in shaping the practices of settler colonialism. Law claims to make sense of the world. Making the world legible (and "orderly") is both a central imperative of law and, seemingly, its effect. The idea that law objectively transforms the unruliness of social life into an ordered legibility is perhaps law's most important accomplishment. This is how law disguises its role in producing this unruliness it promises to resolve. Through violence (whether police violence, military violence, the violence of the death penalty, mass incarceration, etc.), the world is made legible to the state, to its police and courts, to all its institutions. This class examines the history and practice of law's violence, law's role in the making the colonial world, and law's legacies of ongoing and violent struggles over empire.

**AMST 310.001 – T: Breaking Bad TV Race & Gender**

**Offered: Full Semester, TR 9:30-10:45am**

**Instructor: Michael Trujillo [mltruj@unm.edu](mailto:mltruj@unm.edu)**

Description Forthcoming.

**AMST 350.001 – T: Opioid Crisis NM & Beyond****Offered: Full Semester, TR 2:00-3:15pm****Instructor: Nathan Leach [nleach@unm.edu](mailto:nleach@unm.edu)**

This course examines the historical and contemporary formation of what has become known as the “opioid crisis” in the United States. In this course students will consider the role of capitalism and its intersection with gender, race, ability, and class that impact how the opioid crisis has taken shape. Throughout the semester students will explore what social, cultural, and economic formations have come to create the material conditions in which opioid use and overdose have impacted the everyday life for millions of Americans. Further, students will explore the various responses to the opioid crisis by public health policy, policing and carceral institutions, pharmaceutical companies, and political activists. Although this course provides perspectives attributed to the US more broadly, this course will also look at the unique formation of the opioid crisis within the New Mexico context including the intersection of drug use, culture, dispossession, colonialism and state and tribal responses.

**AMST 385.002 – The Problem of America****Offered: Full Semester, M 4:00-6:30pm****Instructor: Alexander Pearl [apearl00@unm.edu](mailto:apearl00@unm.edu)**

This seminar introduces students to interdisciplinary theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of “America.” We will focus on how ideas about race, ethnicity, class, indigeneity, gender, sexuality, region, disability, and nationality have shaped contests over the meaning of citizenship and belonging. Further, through close analysis and classroom discussion of various research methodologies that employ primary source material such as historical documents, literature, ethnography, and visual and popular culture, this course gives students the tools to create their own interdisciplinary work.

The seminar will be framed around the following questions: What is distinct about interdisciplinary scholarship? What kinds of questions do interdisciplinary scholars ask and why? What does a comparative framework require and offer in terms of methodology?

**Theory:** an underlying explanatory principle, perspective, or model. Theory is an analytic structure designed for understanding and explaining a given subject matter; a set of ideas intended to make something comprehensible, or which offers an explanation of how something works or why something happens.

**Method:** the means to analysis. A method is the procedures, principles, and techniques characteristic of a particular discipline or field of knowledge; a specific set of established practices, a way of going about research and scholarly investigation.

**AMST 500.001 – American Culture Study Seminar****Offered: Full Semester, T 10:00-12:30pm****Instructor: Alyosha Goldstein [agoldste@unm.edu](mailto:agoldste@unm.edu)**

The proseminar introduces graduate students the field of American Studies. This course is limited to American Studies graduate students in their first or second year of coursework. Over the course of the

semester, we work to develop a shared frame of reference for the multiple ways in which American Studies scholars and scholars from adjacent fields utilize, reimagine, and/or challenge an interdisciplinary range of theories, methods, and academic literatures. The proseminar introduces students to the intellectual questions and problems that have shaped the field historically, as well as providing an opportunity to engage recent innovative texts that extend and/or critically rethink aspects of American Studies and related scholarship. Readings and course discussion are intended to provide students with knowledge of the multiple disciplinary perspectives and thematic fields most relevant to the specific formation of American Studies at UNM.

**AMST 530.001 – T: Writing Queer Ethnic Study**

**Offered: Full Semester, W 4:00-6:45**

**Instructor: Francisco Galarte [galarte@unm.edu](mailto:galarte@unm.edu)**

Description Forthcoming.

**AMST 570.001 – T: Indigenous Memoir & Story**

**Offered: Full Semester, M 10:00-12:30pm**

**Instructor: Jennifer Denetdale [jdenet@unm.edu](mailto:jdenet@unm.edu)**

Description Forthcoming.