



DEPARTMENT OF
AMERICAN STUDIES

Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

AMST 1110.002: Intro to Envir & Social Justice

Offered: Full Term, Online

Instructor: Matthew MacDermant 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 1110.006: Intro to Envir & Social Justice

Offered: Full Term, MW 5:00-6:15 p.m.

Instructor: Sarah Knopp 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 1120.002: Intro to Gender, Sex & Empire

Offered: Full Term, TR 2:00-3:15 p.m.

Instructor: Kara Roanhorse roanhorse@unm.edu

Description forthcoming.

AMST 1130.002: Intro to Politics in Pop Culture

Offered: Full Term, Online

Instructor: Shebati Sengupta 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 1140.002: Crit Race & Indigenous Studies

Offered: Full Term, TR 12:30-1:45 p.m.

Instructor: Tania Garcia tpg22@unm.edu

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 1140.003: Crit Race & Indigenous Studies

Offered: Full Term, Online

Instructor: Jasmine Montoya jmontoya2@unm.edu

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 1140.004: Crit Race & Indigenous Studies**Offered: Full Term, TR 3:30-4:45 p.m.****Instructor:** Joselin Castillo joscastillo@unm.edu

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 1150.002: Intro Southwest Studies**Offered: Second Half, Online****Instructor:** Michael Trujillo mltruj@unm.edu

This course introduces the complex histories, social issues, and cultural experiences of peoples of the southwestern United States. Course materials and discussions also demonstrate the possibilities of interdisciplinary study of regional American culture. It is multicultural in content and multidisciplinary in methodology. We will examine cross-cultural relationships among the peoples of the Southwest within the framework of their expressions and experiences in art, culture, religion, social and political economy.

AMST 1150.003: Intro Southwest Studies**Offered: Full Term, Online****Instructor:** Francisco Galarte galarte@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 309.001: T: Prison, Schools, Detention**Offered: Full Term, W 4:00-6:30 p.m.****Instructor:** Alexander Pearl apearl00@unm.edu

In political struggles and debates across the history and geography of the United States, prisons and schools are pitched as moral binaries: polar opposites, good and evil. Ideas about the freedom of study and unfreedom of incarceration are so historically entangled with one another as to almost be bound together. This course explores the intersections of these institutions and the practices, theories, and social movements undergirding them. How have prisons shaped schools in the U.S., and vice-versa? Where and how have these institutions and practices converged and diverged on the basis of race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability, and power more broadly? What lessons (and counter-lessons) might the history of prisons provide for teaching and learning today? And how might critical pedagogies open up or foreclose on various possible abolitionist or carceral futures?

From theories of discipline and punishment, through the early colonial university and (territorial) penitentiary, to boarding and mission schools, into the radical study of 1960s and 1970s, to the expansion of college and prison for the so-called “masses,” we will eventually analyze the overlapping discourses of and proposed solutions to crises of “mass incarceration” and public education today.

AMST 331.001: Politics of Sex**Offered: Full Term, TR 11:00-12:15 p.m.****Instructor:** Daisy Atterbury daisyatterbury@unm.edu

“Let’s Talk About Sex, Baby”: What is “sex” and is it always political? How do our inherited and changing notions of sex influence social life—from the Senate floor to the closet? With a queer and feminist framework, this course will discuss topics from sex scandals in U.S. politics, to sexual orientation and 20th/21st Century U.S. marriage laws. We’ll think about sex work, #MeToo, pornography and pop culture (from Madonna to Janelle Monáe to Lil Nas X), often drawing on LGBTQIA+ theory, film, music, poetry and media. This course will feature several guest speakers.

AMST 370.001: Indigenous Horror**Offered: Second Half, MW 12:00-2:30 p.m.****Instructor:** Jennifer Denetdale jdenet@unm.edu

This course explores how Indigenous writers, poets, theorists and filmmakers take up horror as a genre. Drawing upon storytelling as method, horror is used to examine the conditions of Indigenous life. Since the content focuses on horror, gore, and violence, students may find the material unsettling and emotionally charged.

AMST 485.001: Senior Seminar**Offered: Full Term, M 4:00-6:30 p.m.****Instructor:** Alyosha Goldstein agoldste@unm.edu

This is the capstone course for the American Studies major. It is meant to give students an opportunity to synthesize what they have learned in your American Studies courses and related classes. It is also a chance for students to do their own, original work on a topic that matters to them. We will work together to develop and strengthen skills in research, analysis, and writing, but the major part of the seminar is the work students will do to produce a 20-page original senior thesis.

AMST 510.001: T: Marxism & Culture**Offered: Full Term, W 2:00-4:30 p.m.****Instructor:** Michael Trujillo mltruj@unm.edu

This course explores the development of Western Marxism and Marxist cultural interpretation through the reading of key Marxist, post-Marxist, and Latinx Marxist texts. We will critically entertain the questions “What relevance does Marxist cultural critique hold for current scholarship?” and “Was Marx right?” Course readings will illustrate Marxist understandings of capitalism and modernity as well as Marxist perspectives on cultural production, domination/resistance, and aesthetic experience. In the second half of the course, discussion will increasingly focus on works that contest, reveal the limitations of, or seek to expand Marxist thought in terms of race, gender, sexuality, and decolonial politics.

AMST 516.001: Religion, Race, Revolution**Offered: Full Term, T 12:30-3:00 p.m.****Instructor:** Kathleen Holscher kholscher@unm.edu

In this seminar we interrogate how religion has formed white supremacy and colonialism in the context of the United States, as well as globally. We also consider religious institutions, identities, theologies, and practices as locations of resistance to and revolution against racist and colonialist structures. The seminar moves in four parts: during the first two units we survey “state of the field” scholarship exploring both the categorical relationships and lived intersections of religion with race and empire. During the second unit we look back across the second half of the twentieth century, to consider anti-racist and anti-colonial critiques of Christianity that emerged during that period, and new liberation theologies that activated a Christian mandate to overturn unjust—or in the Christian imagining-- sinful social structures. In the final unit we center radical movements and their actors, and examine the role of religion in their work. Here we will interrogate differences between religious and secular models of imagining and acting for revolutionary change. Overall, this seminar is an opportunity for us to rigorously and collectively engage a selection of historical commentaries by religious voices and their critics, alongside a collection of contemporary scholarship that straddles the fields of religious studies and American studies, so that participants may develop their own informed positions within this important conversation.

AMST 520.001: Planetary Futures**Offered: Full Term, T 4:00-6:30****Instructor:** Alyosha Goldstein agoldste@unm.edu

This graduate seminar examines how, historically and in the present, racialized, colonized, and otherwise dispossessed or impoverished peoples have contested colonial-capitalist economies of accumulation and created possibilities for collective life through and beyond climate catastrophe. Studying how formations of climate imperialism and colonial occupation, fossil fuel economies and other regimes of capitalist extraction, and global militarism and toxic wastelanding have unevenly shaped the human and more-than-human world and distributed violence and violation across the planet, the seminar emphasizes collective and coalitional initiatives that build on and exceed movements for “environmental justice” in order to envision and enact livable futures. Readings include texts by Andrew Curley, Myrriah Gómez, Kristen Simmons, Amitav Ghosh, Alice Mah, Salar Mameni, Max Liboiron, Traci Brynne Voyles, Neel Ahuja, Kathryn Yusoff, Thea Riofrancos, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, Mel Chen, and Olúfemi O. Táíwò.

AMST 530 002: T: Fem Queer Transgend Methods

Offered: Full Term, M 4:00-6:30 p.m.

Instructor: Daisy Atterbury daisyatterbury@unm.edu

This course discusses feminist, queer and trans* approaches to methods (research strategies) and methodologies (approaches to knowledge production) across the humanities. We will explore what it means "to queer" writing and research, using transdisciplinary perspectives to identify debates and tensions in conceptualizing, conducting, analyzing, writing, and disseminating scholarship within and beyond the academy. Our inquiry will focus on how interlocking systems of power related to gender, race, sexuality and coloniality impact the production of knowledge, thinking about the potential efficacies (and limitations) of research in facilitating the disruption of normative social systems. This is an applied course that emphasizes skills-building and workshop facilitation, supporting graduate students in both the sustenance of present, ongoing writing projects and the development of early research programs incorporating queer and feminist methods. Readings draw on a range of thinkers, from José Esteban Muñoz to Maria Lugones, Amin Ghaziani, Amber Musser, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Heather Love and Billy-Ray Belcourt.