

**San José State University**  
**American Studies Program/Department of Humanities**  
**AMS1A: American Cultures to 1877**  
**[Seminar – Section 10] Fall 2020**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Ari Cushner
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<b>Office Hours:</b>	Online by appointment
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	M/W 10:30-11:45
<b>Classroom:</b>	N/A
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Concurrent enrollment in AMS1A Section 09 (Lecture)

**Course Description**

This seminar explores “American Cultures” from the pre-Columbian age to 1877. It examines the creation of American culture(s) and society during the colonial period; the founding of the United States; the expansion of the republic; and the Civil War era. Course themes include: contact and conquest; race and slavery; politics and democracy; capitalism, class, and economy; ethnic difference and diversity; gender and sexuality; aesthetic expression; conflict and social change.

**Learning Goals**

Students will acquire knowledge and develop skills through dialogue, debate, and critical analysis of texts (fiction and non-fiction literature) as well as other cultural artifacts. Success is dependent on completing each day’s assigned reading while being prepared to engage in discussion and other activities. This Seminar serves in part as a space to further interpret concepts and events discussed in the AMS1A Lecture and readings; but it is a separate 3-unit course and must be treated accordingly.

**Books/ Readings**

Levine, Robert S. et al. (ed). *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* Volumes A & B (9th edition) ISBNs: 978-0393935714 and 978-0393264470. ***Digital texts recommended.***

Sources from linked and/or embedded pdfs and internet sites on the Canvas Course Schedule.

## Classroom Protocol

**Civility:** *Come to class on time, having read and being ready to participate.* Students are expected to arrive promptly and not leave early, except in the case of a pre-approved arrangement or emergency. Be ready to not sit passively or quietly, as you will be expected to interact with your classmates and instructor regularly during discussions and activities. *Respectful disagreements, when expressed with civility, are healthy; speech and/or behavior that is in any way hateful, hurtful, or disrespectful will not be tolerated.*

## General Standards

Each assignment will have specific requirements. Otherwise, the following general standards apply:

Students producing “A” (90-100%) work demonstrate mastery of the material, i.e., working knowledge of key information, the ability to apply and use knowledge gained in class critically. Those doing “C” (70-79%) work demonstrate an acceptable level of retention with a lower level of familiarity of key concepts and facts, and may struggle to apply or use their knowledge; there is room for improvement, but are doing well enough. A “B” (80-89%) student falls somewhere in between. Those producing “D” or “F” work have serious problems with accuracy, skills, retention, and application.

## Late Policy

If you cannot complete an assignment on time, you have a two-week grace period, during which you may turn in the assignment for a one-grade reduction. After the two-week grace period, the assignment will not be accepted without prior approval.

## Academic Integrity

Students must be aware of the SJSU **Academic Integrity Policy**, available online. Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University’s integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development: **plagiarism is never acceptable.**