
AMS1A

American Civilization I

Spring 2021

Tuesday – Thursday, 3:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Instructor: Jorge M. Gonzalez

E-Mail: jorge.m.gonzalez@sjsu.edu

Phone: (408) 924-1264

Office: CL412F

Office Hours: Th. 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm

(Via Zoom)

GE/SJSU Studies Category:

American Studies 1A/1B is a **two-semester package**. When a student completes **ALL 12 units**, the following requirements have been met:

• Core GE: Area C1 Arts, Area C2 Letters, Third Area C course, Area D2 Comparative Systems, Area D3 Social Issues. When these areas are satisfied by individual course at SJSU, 15 units are earned. Since these areas are covered in this two-course sequence with 12 units, an

additional 3-unit GE course of a student's choosing needs to be taken to complete the required 39 units of GE in the lower division.

• American Institutions: U.S. History, U.S. Constitution, California Government graduation requirements are all also covered by completing this course sequence.

Online Resources

Students must acquire access to Canvas for assignments, occasional required and optional readings, collaboration, and communication with the Instructors. Please note that there are two Canvas shells, The Lecture section shell will have all documents related to the course, common assignments, and general Announcements; the Seminar section shell will have seminar-related activities, assignments, and participation grades.

Canvas (<https://sjsu.instructure.com>); Spartan App Portal (<https://one.sjsu.edu>) [username & password required]

Course Description

This seminar examines American Studies topics and themes through dialogue, debate, and critical analysis in both written and oral form. It is a discussion-based class that critically engages a diverse range of cultural texts, including novels, shorts stories, plays, poetry, film, television, music, photography, etc. Seminar serves as a space meant to expand upon and question concepts and events discussed during lectures and in readings. Consistent with the interdisciplinary tradition of American Studies, students are trained to read texts historically and invited to consider how the past informs the present. The class places emphasis on appreciating the artistic qualities of texts, as well apprehending their socio-cultural meaning. The overarching prompts we are considering throughout the class are: “What is American culture?” and “What does it mean be American?”

Course Format

Technology Intensive, Online Courses

This is an online course that will require intensive technology engagement. You will need a computer with video and audio capabilities, reliable internet connectivity, and access to the Canvas for a regular weekly interaction.

We will screen a number of films that will require you to stream from select streaming services, such as Kanopy and Amazon video rentals to watch on your own time or via professor scheduled watch parties. Additionally, I highly recommend that students adopt Overdrive, an app that makes available eBooks from San Jose's and other local public libraries. Several of the selected readings can be borrowed in eBook format through this app service.

Seminar Goals and Student Learning Objectives

Our goal is to develop your ability to discuss, analyze, and critique the history, construction, and social interaction within "American" culture(s) from 1865-contemporary era, including politics and democracy; capitalism, class and economy; ethnic difference and diversity; gender and sexuality, aesthetic expression, and conflict and social change.

Students will develop a knowledge base and a set of critical thinking skills through analysis of primary texts and objects from the period under investigation.

Classroom Protocol

Online Tools—Students must acquire access to Canvas for assignments, required and optional readings, collaboration, and communication with the instructors. Please note that there are TWO canvas shells, the Lecture section shell will have all documents related to the course and general announcements; the Seminar section shell will have all graded materials and seminar-related activities and assignments. <http://sjsu.instructure.com/>

Class Preparation and Participation

Note on the formation of a Community of Inquiry (COI):

In seminar we will actively be constructing and taking part in a "community of inquiry." A COI is a group of people/students who question, read, think, perceive and feel together by closely reading texts, examining areas of knowledge, and exploring the contemporary world they are situated in. Respect for your fellow classmates is critical to creating a healthy, collegial COI learning atmosphere.

Class preparation includes coming to seminar ready engage each other. You must come to class having read the assigned material and with some ideas or questions you want to further develop during our discussions. We can engage each other through statements of observation, pointing out key ideas, questions of clarity or conceptual questions. The instructor will reserve the right to use the Socratic method to keep the conversation going but we will use diverse methods (including small groups) to engage. Be prepared to volunteer your participation or be asked direct questions.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures, as well as current deadlines and penalties, for adding and dropping classes. See the website for Academic Advising and Retention Services (<http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/>) for information, including the late drop policy.

Assignments and Grading Policy

Workload Notice: Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of forty- five hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practice. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus." (Senate Policy Recommendation S12-3, May 2012)

AMS1A (lecture and seminar) is a 6-credit course: 6 hours class time + 12 hours preparation = 18 hours per week. Below is the approximate out-of-class time allocation for the **average student** per week:

2-3 hours for Lecture Reading
4-5 hours for Seminar Reading
4 hours for assignments & study
TOTAL: 10-12 hours/week outside of class

SEE AMS 1A LECTURE SYLLABUS FOR A FULL ASSIGNMENT BREAKDOWN

It's important to remember that your Seminar grade will be averaged with your Lecture grade to arrive at the final grade for the sequence. Your seminar grade largely depends on your participation in seminar. I will calculate your grade for Seminar as follows:

Assessments

(55%) Weekly Discussion Forum (due every Monday by 9:00 a.m. for the prior week, unless otherwise noted on the calendar)

Discussion Forums have two functions: 1) to help you stay on top of the weekly ready material by asking you to consider it critically and thoughtfully and 2.) engage each other on a consistent basis to create a learning community where we share insight, clarify ideas, and support each other's understanding of topics we cover. Discussion Forum prompts will be posted Mondays (before Noon) and responses will be due Wednesdays (by Midnight).

To avoid monotonous engagement, we will alternate from three kinds of response formats, which I will select according to the topics and themes presented in the material we encounter.

Prompt Response: For these, the prompt will underscore a set of ideas for you to consider and respond to via open ended questions. You are to write at minimum two-three paragraphs addressing the prompt. Your answers must strive for formality in these responses. These responses must include support, making concrete references to the readings to show the extent to which you are understanding and engaging the readings. I will offer an instruction and rubric sheet to give you a better idea of the expectation.

Answer/Pivot Question Bridge: This discussion board exercise is meant to add an element of chance while assessing reading completion and reading comprehension. The goal is to create a discussion thread that's a chain of answers and/or questions that bridges the class's limit of understanding with its insight. You can answer or pivot. If you pivot you must propose a new topic and explain why it's of significance before going on to accompany that topic with a relating question.

Rules:

- 1. address latest response you see*
- 2. answer and contribute a question (2 paragraphs to answer, formal language, well supported claims with textual support. So, 1 quote per paragraph even if it's a question. 1 paragraph for the question and it must correspond/ make reference to topics/themes/texts.)*
- 3. or pivot by articulating a new topic and contributing a corresponding question (2 paragraphs articulating the new topic and why its significant, formal language, well supported claims with textual support. So, 1 quote per paragraph even if it's a question. Question must correspond/ make reference to topics/themes/texts.)*

Commonplace Book Post:

Commonplace Book posts, while less formal, will require a measure of creative thinking from you. Most of you might not be familiar with commonplace books as it's a lost art, however, this old practice is useful for readers because it helps them retain words, phrases, quotes, passages and images. Since I am adapting this exercise for the class, common place posts will reflect the interests of the class, the meaning you are generating from key words, passages, or key moments in the texts we encounter. I will come up with a heading and a short prompt related to the week's material to prompt your mind in a particular direction. You will be free to post something that speaks to the heading/prompt. You can be literary, scientific, or visually oriented in your replies, which can include transcribed key passages, memes, gifs, illustrations, photographs, sections of podcasts, songs, graphs of data, links to relevant, thought provoking websites, excerpts from news stories (type out excerpts or hand write them, take a pic and post them), excerpts from videos, etc. The limits of your creativity are bound to what can be posted to a Canvas discussion so get familiar with the tools available on that portal. When you use a non-verbal visual medium to make a point you must include a brief written explanation to make sure we don't miss the point you are trying to make.

“A Brief Guide to Keeping a Common Place Book”

[\(https://notebookofghosts.com/2018/02/25/a-brief-guide-to-keeping-a-commonplace-book/\)](https://notebookofghosts.com/2018/02/25/a-brief-guide-to-keeping-a-commonplace-book/)

Online Discussion Forum Completion Percentage (25% of seminar participation)

I have weighed the participation grade to reflect the importance of your online presence in the course. Your participation grade is based upon your contributions and involvement with the class. This includes but is not limited to the following: contributing to the class through written involvement with discussion forums (i.e. asking questions or answering mine) as well as the preparation and submission of additional materials and/or assignments as requested (“question of the week,” pop quizzes, et al.). Through your interaction with the class via the discussion forum I expect you to engage critically with the course, using the discussions and readings to inform your work. As the purpose of this is to get you thinking critically about course material as you develop your personal writing voice, I encourage you to push your analysis and engage in in-depth interpretations. For further details refer to the section above explaining the structuring of and expectations for discussion forum usage. For accessibility you should post your comments directly in our discussion forum or write in a word doc and paste in the discussion forum. Evidence of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will result in a loss of points for the forum; subsequent violations may result in failure.

Note: Your forum completion percentage scores are different from the points you will receive for each weekly “Discussion Forum” response you post. Each weekly response will be graded for quality

of response and I will calculate your forum completion percentage score based upon the points earned out of total points possible on Canvas and convert this number to apply to the respective assignment group and your overall grade.

Webinars: attend 4 of 5 live synchronous Zoom meetings (20% of seminar grade)

Throughout this coming semester I am beta-testing a videocast/webinar option, to complement the weekly forum discussions. **It is my expectation that you will participate in at least four of the five sessions I will offer.** These are worth points to encourage your attendance. Since the class is listed as synchronous, I will hold these meeting during seminar scheduled days: Tuesdays or Thursdays. They will typically run 45 minutes (3:00pm – 3:45pm). See calendar below to see webinar schedule.

Grading Standards and Evaluation of Work

Each assignment and activity will have specific grading criteria. This grading range will be used as general rule of thumb:

(90-100%) A

Demonstrates working knowledge of key information, the ability to apply and use knowledge gained in class critically.

(80-90 %) B

Work falls between excellent working knowledge and minimal level of familiar with it. The work is inconsistent and there is some room for improvement toward desired retention and applicability of knowledge.

(70-80) C

Demonstrates an acceptable level of retention with minimal level of familiarity of key concepts and facts, and may struggle to apply or use their knowledge. There is much room for improvement here but the student is well enough along to advance to the next stage of their education.

(60-70%) D

Demonstrates serious problems of accuracy, skills, retentions, and application but it is evident that an effort was made for improvement.

(0-59%) F

Demonstrates serious problems of accuracy, skills, retentions, and application but no serious attempt for improvement was demonstrated.

Evaluation Standards for Prepared Comments & Seminar Participation

“A” Range (Proficient/Very Good / Mastery)

- Collegial behavior throughout semester
- Brings theory from relevant texts, other class material, or from another class to bear on ideas being discussed in class
- Contributes a new idea or a fruitful question based on solid understanding of the text and on good analysis
- Comments indicate some original synthesis across texts and discussions
- Listens carefully, summarizes ideas, and makes connections between them
- Disagrees when necessary, but always with respect for others
- Expresses ideas clearly and succinctly
- Consistently shows responsibility for own learning

“B” Range (Good/ Meets requirements / Growing towards proficiency)

- Provides some analysis of texts(s)
- Tests understanding of a theory in the text by explaining it
- Provides evidence from the text for ideas presented
- Listens to other students and builds on their ideas
- Asks for clarification or explanation of major points
- Most ideas and comments are clear and well explained

“C” Range (Beginning/ Minimal/ Developing)

- Agrees or disagrees (engages) minimally with authors or other students
- Asks a question or makes a comments which indicated superficial reading of the text
- Participation varies widely from seminar to seminar (inconsistent)
- Contributions are not always clearly stated or fully developed
- May be silent during seminar, but learning is evident in other forms

Late Assignment Policy

Assignments must be turned in on time. If you cannot complete an assignment on time, you have a two-week grace period, during which you may turn in the assignment for one grade reduction per week that it's not turned in. After the two-week grace period, the assignment will no longer be accepted.

Please note that the grace period disappears at the end of the semester when the last day of instruction becomes a hard deadline.

Academic Integrity

All work submitted must be original and should reflect your own unique ideas developed through direct engagement with course texts; written assignments should never include generic summaries or analyses obtained from websites such as Wikipedia.com. When an assignment calls for using sources other than a course text, these should always be academic sources, which typically means a book published by a university press or a peer-reviewed scholarly article, as can be found through the King Library's web portal: <https://library.sjsu.edu/search-find/search-find>.

"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 course work" (for more on official policies regarding plagiarism, see: <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/> - AcademicIntegrity). The bottom line is that cheating is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Required Readings for Seminar

*All required readings for seminar are also compiled in lecture syllabus and calendar.

- Octavia Butler. *Kindred* (Edition 1). Boston: Beacon Press, 2004. ISBN- 9780807083697 **[Required]**
- The United State Constitution: A Graphic Adaptation. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2008. ISBN- 9780809094707 **[Required]**

Other Required Materials

Miscellaneous Videos, Images, Poems, and Internet Links will be required for select lectures and seminars (see our course Calendar and/or Canvas)

- PDF files made available via Canvas, see Files shell and find the Course Readings folder.

Seminar Section 12 Calendar

Week	Month	FORUM OPENS	DUE BY	Topic / Reading Assignment/ Webinar Dates
0	Aug.	1/28	Your Post by following <u>Monday</u> Response by following <u>Wednesday</u>	<p>Webinar 0 (Thursday, 1/28): Welcome, Syllabus Review, Expectations Live on Zoom 3:00pm – 4:15pm (see Canvas Seminar Module 1 for invitation)</p> <p><i>Forums will go “live”—be available—by the date indicated (if not earlier). Unless otherwise indicated, you will then have until the following <u>Monday</u> at midnight to post your initial response AND through the following <u>Wednesday</u> at midnight to respond to, comment, or in some cases simply “like” one or more of your peers’ posts. Weekly discussion prompts will cover two topics per week. I read everything as it is posted, although I might not comment/respond/grade immediately. Typically, I will comment/respond/grade on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.</i></p> <p><i>Besides the weekly topic readings listed below, you also need to stay current with your reading of Orange’s “There/There,” which is central to your periodic literary exploration essays and your summative literary analysis term paper.</i></p> <p>NOTE: begin reading Butler, <i>Kindred</i></p>
1		2/2	1/8 (post) 1/10 (respond)	<p>Topic 1: Indigenous accounts of invasion read selections from <i>Broken Spears</i> [16th Century Mexico] (PDF); <i>“The March to Cingapacinga and the Return to Cempoala”</i> [16th Century Mexico] (PDF)</p> <p>Topic 2: Native American Orature/Creation Stories “Iriquois Creation Story” • “Navajo Creation Story” • “The Winnebago Trickster Cycle” • “Native American Oral Poetry” (all PDFs)</p> <p>Butler, <i>Kindred</i>, “Prologue”</p>
2	Sep.	2/9	2/15 (post) 2/17 (respond)	<p>Topic 1: Chesapeake Colonies and the Invention of Race in North America Equiano, Ch. 1 from <i>Narrative of the Life of Olaudo Equiano</i> [1789]</p> <p>Topic 2: Captivity Narratives Mary Rowlandson, excerpts from <i>The Sovereignty and Goodness of God</i> [1682]</p> <p>Butler, <i>Kindred</i>, “The River”</p>

3		2/16	2/22 (post) 2/24 (respond)	<p>Webinar 2 (Tuesday, 2/16) Live on Zoom 3:00pm - 3:45pm (see Canvas Seminar Module 3 for invitation)</p> <p>Topic 1: Desire & Gender in the “New World” Bradstreet, selected poetry (see Canvas)</p> <p>Topic 2: The American Enlightenment Thomas Paine “Common Sense” [1776]; Madison, Federalist No. 10; Franklin, “Way to Wealth” (PDF)</p> <p>Butler, <i>Kindred</i>, “The Fire”</p>
4		2/23	3/1 (post) 3/3 (respond)	<p>Topic 1: The Roots of American Eurocentrism [France, Natural Science] “<i>The race from which we are descended has been called Caucasian.... the handsomest on earth,</i>” Georges Léopold Cuvier (1797) (PDF); [U.S., Politics] “<i>The Differce is fixed in nature,</i>” excerpt from Notes on the State of Virginia (1787) Thomas Jefferson (PDF); [Germany, Philosophy] “<i>Colonialism in the Internal Logic of Capitalist Modernity,</i>” excerpts from Lectues on Philosophy of World History, G.W. Friederich Hegel (1822) (PDF); recommeded “<i>Geographical Basis of World History</i>” excerpts from Lectues on Philosophy of World History, G.W. Friederich Hegel (1822) (PDF)</p> <p>Topic 2: Democratic Institutions 1 Hennessey & McConnell, <i>The United States Constitution: A Graphic Adaptation</i>, pp. 1-148</p>
5		3/2	3/8 (post) 3/10 (respond)	<p>Topic 1: Democratic Institutions 1 Hennessey & McConnell, <i>The United States Constitution: A Graphic Adaptation</i>, pp. 78-149</p> <p>Topic 2: Republican Motherhood, Women and Nationhood Judith Sargent Murray, “On the Equality of the Sexes” [1790]• Lydia Maria Child “The Quadroons” [1842]</p> <p>Butler, <i>Kindred</i>, “The Fall”; Democracy & the U.S. Founding Assignment available</p>
6		3/9	3/15 (post) 3/17 (respond)	<p>Webinar 3 (Thursday, 3/11): American Institutions and the Specters of Race & Class Live on Zoom 3:00pm - 3:45pm (see Canvas Seminar Module 6 for invitation)</p> <p>Topic 1: Imagining the World Without Slavery Thoreau, “Ch. 2: Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” and “Conclusion” from Walden [1854] (PDF)</p> <p>Topic 2: American Romantics (Dark Romantics) Herman Melville, “Bartleby the Scrivener” [1853]</p>

7	Oct.	3/16	3/22 (post) 10/24 (respond)	Topic 1: Transcendentalism & Asian Philosophy Emerson, "Self-Reliance" [1841] Topic 2: NO TOPIC (EXAM on 3/18) Butler, <i>Kindred</i> , "The Fight"
8		3/23	3/29 (post) 3/31 (respond)	Topic 1: Romance and Natural Science letter from William Clark to his brother about the expedition [1806] (PDF); selected American landscape paintings from 1810-1865 (Canvas) Topic 2: Trail of Tears William Appes, <i>Son of the Forest</i> Chapters 1 & 2 • "The Women Who Tried to Prevent the Trail of Tears" PDF Butler, <i>Kindred</i> , "The Storm"
SB		3/30		Spring Break
9		4/6	4/12 (post) 4/14 (respond)	Webinar 4 (Thursday, 4/8): Sex and Gender in American Culture Live on Zoom 3:00pm - 3:45pm (see Canvas Seminar Module 9 for invitation) Topic 1: Love, Sex, and Gender in the Early Republic Melville, Ch. IV "The Counterpane" and Ch. X "A Bosom Friend" from <i>Moby Dick</i> Topic 2: Sex and Gender in the Early Republic (These Truths Panel Day)
10	Nov.	4/13	4/19 4/21	Topic 1: Freeing the Black Soul "The Confessions of Nat Turner" [1831] Topic 2: Black Face Minstrelsy, Freakshows, and Middle Class Respectability Stowe, excerpts from <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> [1852] Butler, <i>Kindred</i> , "The Rope"
11		4/20	4/26 (post) 4/28 (respond)	Webinar 5 (Thursday, 4/22): Kindred Live on Zoom 3:00pm - 3:45pm (see Canvas Seminar Module 11 for invitation) Topic 1: Women of Color in a New Nation S. Truth, "Aint I a Woman" [1851]; Jacobs, selections from <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> [1858] (PDF) Topic 2: Slave Narratives and the Quest for a New Nation Ellen and William Craft, <i>Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom</i> excerpt [1860] Butler, <i>Kindred</i> , "Epilogue"; Kindred Literary Analysis available
12		4/27	5/3	Topic 1: Cultures of Enslaved Folk Before the Civil War

			(post) 5/5 (respond)	Hurston, excerpt from <i>Mules and Men</i> [1935]; slave songs (see Canvas); Longfellow, "The Slave Singing at Midnight" [1842] Topic 2: Alta California, War, and Shifting Border selections from "The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo," Articles I-XII, [1848] (PDF); Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government" from <i>On Civil Disobedience</i> [1849] (PDF) work on Kindred Literary Analysis
13		5/4	5/10 (post) 5/12 (respond)	Topic 1: From the Cult of Domesticity to the Occult Emily Dickinson selected poetry (PDF); Henry Ward Beecher, "The Strange Woman"; Edgar Allen Poe "Ligeia" (PDF) Topic 2: Critiques of American Democracy <i>"Adress on Colonization"</i> [1862], A. Lincoln; <i>"What is the 4th of July to the Slave,"</i> F. Douglass (PDF) Kindred Literary Analysis due 5/7 by midnight
14	Dec.	5/11	No Discussions Forum Assignment	Topic 1: Walt Whitman, American Violence, and War <i>Song of Myself</i> 1855 (excerpts); "When Lilacs in Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" (1865); "A Sight in Camp in the Daybreak Gray and Dim" (1865)(All PDFs) Topic 2: At Large Topic (These Truths Panel)
FINAL DUE DATES			Final Part 1 Final Part 2	Exam 2 (covers all materials from Apr 7-May 13) due on or before Thursday, May 20 at 14:30 (per Final Exam schedule for Lecture) Critical Essay: American Cultures before the Civil War (cumulative; covers concepts from the entire semester) due on or before Monday, May 24 at 17:00 (per Final Exam schedule for Seminar)