



Master Course Syllabus

For additional course information, including prerequisites, corequisites, and course fees, please refer to the Catalog: <https://catalog.uvu.edu/>

Semester: Spring

Course Prefix: AMST

Course Title: Introduction to American Studies HH

Year: 2025

Course and Section #: AMST 2000-001

Credits: 3

Course Description

Introduces students to the interdisciplinary study of American culture. Employs insights and approaches from literature, history, art, sociology, anthropology, and political science. Analyzes a variety of texts and artifacts. Explores selected themes and issues central to American Studies.

Course Attributes

This course has the following attributes:

- Gener** **Course Requirements**
- Globa** **Course Description, Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy**
- Writing** **English Communication Requirements**
- Discipline Core Requirements in Program**
- Elective Core Requirements in Program**
- Open Elective**

Other: *Click here to enter text.*

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Agustin Diaz

Student Learning Outcomes

Identify different disciplinary approaches to culture

- Recognize different methods of cultural analysis
 - Engage in critical reading practices for American cultural productions
 - Interpret cultural products and practices in terms of race and ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, and social power
-

Course Materials and Texts

No textbook. Texts are from a variety of sources.

Course Requirements

Course Description, Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy



Welcome to Introduction to American Studies! This course deals with the cultural, social, and intellectual lives of Americans and the idea of "America." It asks: who are Americans, and what is "America"? These questions matter because our answers to them impact the ways we think about rights, privileges, and our obligations to one another. This course will overview topics that under- gird Americans' past and present conceptions of themselves and their nation.

American Studies is by definition interdisciplinary, which means that it draws from a variety of methods and approaches to examine how Americans make meaning out of their lives, and how individuals make meaning out of "America." We'll talk about history, literature, culture, philosophy, politics, and economics. We'll use close reading, distant reading, analysis, interpretation, and critical thinking in the course. By the end of the course, you will have identified a topic to engage related to your own career aspirations.

COURSE INFORMATION

M, W, F 10:00-10:50

GT 618E

INSTRUCTOR

Agustin "Tino" Diaz

Agustin.tino.diaz@gmail.com

Adiaz@uvu.edu

Appointment - contact first

Accessibility Services

Students who need accommodations because of a disability may contact the UVU Accessibility Services Department (ASD), located on the Orem Campus in LC 312. To schedule an appointment or to speak with a counselor, call the ASD office at 801-863-8747, or email them at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu.

Names and Personal Pronouns

If you prefer to use a name other than the name the University officially uses, please let me know. Likewise, if you have a preferred personal pronoun, please let me know.

Date	Topic	Text
1/6	Syllabus Q&A	Reviewing syllabus
1/8	Systems Thinking	<u>Thinking in Systems by Donella Meadows</u> <u>Stuart Halls and the Rise of Cultural Studies</u>
1/10	Balance - Systems & Individual Behavior	<u>Debunking the Systems & Individual Binary</u>
1/13	Mapping Systems	<u>Iceberg Model</u>
1/15	Mapping Systems	Free Write & <u>Mind Mapping</u>
1/17	Mapping Systems	Presentations
1/20	MLK Holiday (No Class)	Individualism Texts
1/22	Individualism - Western Enlightenment	<u>What is the enlightenment?</u> <u>US Individualism #1</u> <u>Hyper-Independence</u>
1/24	Transforming Western Society	<u>Individualism Transforming Western Society</u>
1/27	Rainbow Coalition	<u>The Rainbow Coalition</u> <u>It's a Class Struggle, Godamnit!</u>
1/29	Modern Community	<u>The Rise of Individualism: Why Community is Dead?</u> <u>Indigenous kinship</u> <u>How to be not lonely?</u>
1/31	Individuality & Collectivity – Striking a Balance	Discussion & Systems Mapping
2/3	The 2024 Election - Results & Impact	
2/5	the Blue Mirage & the Red Wave	
2/7	Third Party Politics	
2/10	Rural vs Urban	<u>Pew Research Report</u> <u>Urban-Rural Divide Explained</u> <u>University of Utah Report</u>

2/12	Political Pluriverse	
2/14	Class Take on US Politics	Discussion & Systems Mapping
2/17	President's Day Holiday (No Class)	Settler Colonialism
2/19	Settler Colonialism	What is Settler Colonialism? How Settler Colonialism Shows Up Hawaii & Settler Colonialism
2/21	Standing Rock & Bears Ears	Standing Rock Timeline RISE Part II Optional: https://www.bearscoalition.org/
2/24	Palestine	Timeline The Jewish Voice for Peace - AntiZionism Gaza & the Views of Young People Optional: Zionism as a settler colonial project
2/26	Decolonize Sex & Land Back	All my Relations (Transcript & Podcast) Decolonization is not a Metaphor (Not Linked)
2/28	Class Take on Settler Colonialism	Discussion & Systems Mapping
3/3	Relationships & Love	A "Fresh" Perspective on Modern Love and Dating The times they are a changing Utah Dating Scene
3/5	Masculinity & Love	The Urgent Need for Compassion Modern Dating: Choosing Connection Over Attention
3/7	Class Take on Relationship & Love	Discussion & Systems Mapping
3/10	SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)	
3/12	SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)	
3/14	SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)	
3/17	Social Media Impact	Pew Research Report Social Media & Mental Health
3/19	Mormonism & Popular Media	Secret Lives of Mormon Wives Piece Capitalizing on Mormon Culture

3/21	Music & Media: Evolution of HipHop	Hip-Hop Turns 50 Not like Us / Doechii Tiny Desk
3/24	Politics & Media	Trump & Social Media TikTok & Democracy
3/26	Censorship & Book Bans	2024 Book Ban Data Raza Studies Ban Wicked Post
3/28	Class Take on Popular Media	Discussion & Systems Mapping
3/31	Nativism & Nationalism	A Piece on Nationalism What is Nativism?
4/2	Fear of the Other – An American Legacy	Gangs of NY (disclaimer on language) The Great Replacement Theory Optional: Racist Nativism
4/4	America is Immigration	
4/7	No Human is Illegal – Undocumented Student Struggle	The I Word Pushing Back on the Dreamer Myths of the Undocumented
4/9	'Merica – When we Were Great	US Daily News REPORTS The Data
4/11	Religion in the US	Gallup Report The Loss of Religion in the US
4/14	Christian Nationalism	Texas Victory The Dangers of Christian Nationalism Praise Be – A Warning
4/16	Religion, Spirituality & Everything in Between	We Are Lady Parts – Muslim Punk Rock
4/18	Class Take on Nationalism & Nativism	Discussion & Systems Mapping
4/21	Finals Prep	Finals Prep
4/23	Classes End	Classes End
4/25	Exams	Exams
4/28	Exams	Exams
4/30		

Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes

- Identify different disciplinary approaches to culture
- Recognize different methods of cultural analysis
- Engage in critical reading practices for American cultural productions
- Interpret cultural products and practices in terms of race and ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, and social power

Textbook

- None required (readings and material are posted as links on syllabus or shared as files on Canvas)

Attendance

- Attendance will be taken randomly throughout the course. Students are allowed 2 excused absences with notice and/or documentation.
- 2 unexcused absences will be a half-grade dropped. An additional unexcused absence will be another half-grade dropped totaling a full grade. Further additional unexcused absences could lead to failing the course.

Grading & Assignments

- Assignments will be graded with a competency model (pass/fail basis); however, everything will be provided with feedback. I am not strict about the technical details of your assignment, but I will be looking to see if your work achieves the assignments instructions and if your work can be understood. Simple.

Weekly Responses 50% (280 points)

[Mind/Systems Maps – 50% (140 points)]

- Every week, class members will group up and utilize systems mapping and mind mapping techniques to prompts designed to capture the material and discussions of the week. This practice will allow students to improve their ability to map out complex discussions and creatively generate innovative ideas with the intent of better sharing information. These will be exercises done at the end of every week. Participation will be noted in group (no more than 3) or individual projects and can be uploaded on Canvas.
- Criteria
 - Clarity and Simplicity:
 - Focus: Does the map clearly define the system's boundaries and focus on the most essential elements?
 - Accuracy and Completeness:
 - Data Sources: Is the information presented accurate and supported by credible sources?
 - Key Components: Does it include all the major components of the system and their interrelationships?
 - Missing Links: Are there any critical connections or feedback loops that are missing?
 - Actionability:
 - Leverage Points: Does the map identify potential leverage points – places within the system where interventions can have the greatest impact?
 - Communication: Does it effectively communicate the system's dynamics to stakeholders and facilitate collaboration?
 - Usability and Maintainability:

- Accessibility: Is the map accessible to different audiences (e.g., decision-makers, community members)?

[Reflections – 50% (140 points)]

- Every week, a generative AI reflection will be due that will ask the following (single space, at least one page):
 - o 1-2 paragraphs summarizing the material covered during the week
 - o 1-2 paragraphs offering a personal reflection on what you learned or didn't, what you (dis)agreed with, and the personal impact or lack of with the material.
 - o Pose the prompts used to generate your reflection
 - o Generative AI Statement: Use ChatGPT as a learning assistant, not as a crutch. If you use it, cite your prompt. You are responsible to make sure that any content does what it is supposed to do and says what you want it to say. Don't accept anything it generates at face value without checking it critically. These days potential employers will expect you to know how to use tools like ChatGPT, Gemini and other generative AI models to generate content, so it is a skill we need to teach you. If it helps you learn some things faster, GREAT because we can spend class time on more interesting topics. Just remember: If you REALLY want to be good, work for it.

Mid-Term 25% (140 points)

- The mid-term is a phase 1 or prototype of your final. It's a chance for myself and your peers to provide feedback on your project and for you to improve and build on your work.

Final 25% (140 points)

- The final will not be a universal test that assumes everyone learns the same way and that everyone benefits from one standard of measurement. The final will depend on what you need and how. It will be broken down into buckets of learning opportunity that you can choose and if something does not fit your need, you can propose another way to measure your understanding of the course material. The final is organized in the following way:
 - o Mapping the system
 - Utilizing a systems-thinking/mapping approach where students take a specific issue and utilizing a type of software (Miro, Canva, Lucid, etc...) to map out the systemic nature of that issue. This will be presented as a slide deck with a reflection piece (1-5 pages single space) and works cited list at the end.
 - o Design Sprint
 - Utilizing design methods, students will work to produce a slide deck and reflection piece that documents their selected issue, provides context/background of the issue, demonstrates data (quant., qual., etc...), showcases iteration sessions as well as the prototype and final analysis. A one to five page reflection must be provided (single space) with works cited as well.
 - o Academic paper
 - 5K to 7K word count academic paper with MLA or APA formatting. Must include the following:
 - Title page
 - Abstract
 - o Must include a journal you are submitting to
 - Introduction

- Literature Review
 - Theoretical Framework
 - Methodology (unless conceptual paper)
 - Discussion/Analysis
 - Conclusion
 - Works Cited
- Conference proposal
 - Identify 2 specific conferences you are seeking to attend and draft a proposal for both. Include the conference material you will use to present (slide deck, posters, etc...) and include a 3-5 page reflection (single space) of the issues that the proposal seeks to introduce or address while writing on the process leading to the proposal and outcome as well as a works cited list.
 - Program proposal
 - Provide a program or praxis proposal for a program within a specific space (community program, higher ed department, private industry, non-profit, etc...). It must address the following:
 - The issue
 - Background of the issue
 - Data that demonstrates need
 - Approaches
 - Framework and methodologies to assess approaches
 - Program outline
 - Conclusion/pitch
 - Works cited
 - A 3-5 page reflection (single space) must complement the proposal that answers WHY and reflects on the process of the final.
 - Dashboard build/data proposal
 - Create a mock-up of a dashboard that collects, measures, and organizes data for analysis. You must provide an excel sheet that shows the systems by which the dashboard is built. For example, the framework you are applying, the methodology by which data is collected and analyzed, the questions that drive the dashboard along with the data collection points that the dashboard will process. This must include a final visualization of data collected and demonstrated with a 3 to 5 page analysis (single space). This assignment will also require a 1 to 5 page reflection of the final (single space).
 - Other (requires meeting)
 - examples: a body of art such as a painting, sculpture, music; podcast medium and first episode; a research proposal or poster presentation; film; slideshow; book chapter; a work project; etc...
 - The instructor will meet with you and together you will co-design an agreement for this final.

Grading

A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D+	67-69%
D	63-66%
D-	60-62%
E	Below 60%

Required or Recommended Reading Assignments

None. Recommended reading assignments posted on syllabus section for assignments.

General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion

Descriptions are posted in the syllabus section for each assignment in the assignment column.

Required Course Syllabus Statements

Generative AI

Shared in assignment section

Using Remote Testing Software

This course does not use remote testing software.

This course uses remote testing software. Remote test-takers may choose their remote testing locations. Please note, however, that the testing software used for this may conduct a brief scan of remote test-takers' immediate surroundings, may require use of a webcam while taking an exam, may require the microphone be on while taking an exam, or may require other practices to confirm academic honesty. Test-takers therefore shall have no expectation of privacy in their test-taking location during, or immediately preceding, remote testing. If a student strongly objects to using test-taking software, the student should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to determine whether alternative testing arrangements are feasible. Alternatives are not guaranteed.

Late Assignments and Revisions

Assignments are due by midnight on the scheduled dates. Unless special arrangements are made ahead of time, all late assignments will receive an automatic fail as part of the competency model. If you are concerned, or have something going on in your life, please contact me. I believe in revisions as a part of writing. You will have the opportunity to revise your writing assignments after receiving comments from me. Final revisions will be due Apr. 23rd. Opportunities to make up work are possible but will require case by case consultation. Please contact me if such is needed so we can arrange a plan.

Required University Syllabus Statements

Accommodations/Students with Disabilities

Students needing accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may contact UVU [Accessibility Services](#) at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu or 801-863-8747.

Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in BA 110.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing students requesting ASL interpreters or transcribers can contact Accessibility Services to set up accommodations. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services can be contacted at DHHservices@uvu.edu

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

Policies

Addressing Sexual Misconduct:

Title IX states that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. Students who believe they have been excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or discriminated against because of their sex may contact the EO/AA office to make a report, ask questions, or share concerns by email at: titleix@uvu.edu, in-person at BA-203, or by phone at: (801) 863-7999. To learn more about the Equity and Title IX office please visit us online at: <https://www.uvu.edu/equityandtitleix/>.

Wellness:

All of us have a need to maintain mental health and benefit from the assistance of professionals to do so. UVU offers mental health services at very low cost (some are free). While there may be a wait list for individual counseling, group counseling may be available in some circumstances. Student Health Services is located in SC 221, telephone 801-863-8876 <https://www.uvu.edu/studenthealth/psych/>. The following community resources are available 24/7- the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255 and the Safe UT Crisis Chat & Tip Line <https://safeut.med.utah.edu/>. You may also access the Crisis Text Line 741-741 or call 9-1-1. If an emergency is happening on campus, call campus police 801-863-5555.

Basic Needs:

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to visit [UVU Care Hub](#) for access to a variety of resources. You may also email care@uvu.edu for assistance.

Academic Integrity

At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. Our goal is to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces scholars of integrity and imaginative thought. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their own original academic work.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the university by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their [rights and responsibilities](#). In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible to clearly state expectations and model best practices.

Further information on what constitutes academic dishonesty is detailed in [UVU Policy 541: Student Code of Conduct](#).

Equity and Title IX

Utah Valley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), disability, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions, citizenship, genetic information, or other basis protected by applicable law, including Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries about nondiscrimination at UVU may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or UVU's Title IX Coordinator at 801-863-7999 – TitleIX@uvu.edu – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

Religious Accommodation

UVU values and acknowledges the array of worldviews, faiths, and religions represented in our student body, and as such provides supportive accommodations for students. Religious belief or conscience broadly includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as well as participation in religious holidays, observances, or activities. Accommodations may include scheduling or due-date modifications or make-up assignments for missed class work.

To seek a religious accommodation, a student must provide written notice to the instructor and the Director of Accessibility Services at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu. If the accommodation relates to a scheduling conflict, the notice should include the date, time, and brief description of the difficulty posed by the conflict. Such requests should be made as soon as the student is aware of the prospective scheduling conflict.

While religious expression is welcome throughout campus, UVU also has a [specially dedicated space](#) for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of religious expression.