

UMBC UGC Change in Existing Course: American Studies 300: Approaches in American Studies

Date Submitted: September 13, 2018

Proposed Effective Date: July 1, 2019

	Name	Email	Phone	Dept
Dept Chair or UPD	Nicole King	nking@umbc.edu	5-1457	AMST
Other Contact				

COURSE INFORMATION: (please provide all information in the “current” column, and only the information changing in the “proposed” column)

change		current	proposed
	Course Number(s)	AMST 300	
	Formal Title	Approaches in American Studies	
	Transcript Title (≤30c)	Approaches in American Studies	
	Recommended Course Preparation	NA	Earned at least a 'C' in one 100 or 200 level SS or AH course.
	Prerequisite NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, a prerequisite is assumed to be passed with a “D” or better.	You must complete AMST 100 or AMST 200 with a grade of "C" or better.	NA
	# of Credits Must adhere to the UMBC Credit Hour Policy	3	
	Repeatable?	Yes	Yes

	Max. Total Credits	3	Max. Total Credits: This should be equal to the number of credits for courses that cannot be repeated for credit. For courses that may be repeated for credit, enter the maximum total number of credits a student can receive from this course. E.g., enter 6 credits for a 3 credit course that may be taken a second time for credit, but not for a third time. Please note that this does NOT refer to how many times a class may be retaken for a higher grade.
	Grading Method(s)	Reg (A-F)	Reg (A-F)

CURRENT CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

This course introduces students to the interdisciplinary methodological approaches, research practices, and conceptual frameworks of the field of American Studies. The course will examine the historical development of theories and methods in the field, and survey selected interdisciplinary methods and research practices. Students will engage in research and writing exercises designed to develop practical research skills and the ability to apply a range of methods and concepts to the study of American society and culture.

PROPOSED CATALOG DESCRIPTION (Approximately 75 words in length. Please use full sentences):
leave blank if no changes are being proposed to the catalog description. NOTE: information about prerequisites should NOT appear in the catalog description.)

This course introduces students to theories and methods in the field of American studies. Readings focus on methodological approaches and research practices employed both inside academia and in public scholarship. Students will write original research proposals that focus on problem solving. Students are expected to use what they learn in applying approaches in American studies to a specific problem/social issue and developing an original research proposal for a research paper or a public facing project.

RATIONALE FOR CHANGE:

For the past three years the Department of American Studies has successfully opened AMST 300 to students outside of the majors. This has been in support of interdisciplinary inquiry and original student research across the programs/departments in CAHSS. AMST 300 also counts towards the department's new minor in Asian American Studies and the proposal for the new

collaborative minor in public humanities. In addition, AMST approved project-based public humanities projects as fulfilling our senior seminar research capstone (AMST 490). This was in direct response to the diverse job and graduate school interests of our students that move beyond the traditional 25-page research paper capstone during our last APR (2016). Our students have completed project such as such as exhibitions, walking tours, public dialogues, and various multimedia projects (accompanied by a brief 10-page paper contextualizing the work and its significance). Revising the AMST research core (AMST 300, which included a literature review and proposal for an original research project, and AMST 490, where students complete the research project) makes sure that all of our students complete original research and use the skills of critical analysis and synthesis while completing the major in American Studies as well as opening this option to our various minors (American Studies, Asian American Studies, and public humanities). Since we have opened the course to non-majors, we have had students majoring in Psychology, English, Global Studies, Economics, Statistics, Media & Communications, and Interdisciplinary Studies take the course.

SAMPLE SYLLABUS:

American Studies 300: Approaches in American Studies

Spring 2018 – Fine Arts 559 @ 1-2:15pm

Instructor: Nicole King, Ph.D.
Associate Professor & Chair
Department of American Studies
Pronouns: she/her/hers

Email: nking@umbc.edu (*I do not check email after 6pm*)
Office: Fine Arts 545B - Phone: (410) 455-1457 (*email is preferred communication*)
Office hours: M/W 11am-12pm or by appointment (*please email in advance if possible*)

Course Description:

This course introduces students to theories and methods in the field of American studies. Readings focus on methodological approaches and research practices employed both inside academia and in public scholarship—such as exhibitions, walking tours, public dialogues, and multimedia projects. We will engage with specific research practices such as the critical analysis of primary and secondary sources, conducting library and archival research, formulating method statements, literature reviews, and writing original research proposals that focus on problem solving. Throughout the course, students develop an understanding of the many ways the humanities both analyze and influence culture. Students are expected to use what they learn in applying approaches in American studies to a specific problem/social issue and developing an original research proposal for a research paper or a public facing project.

AMST 300 is a reading and writing intensive (WI) course. The proposal you create in AMST 300 can be your research project for AMST 490: Senior Seminar and/or can be part of your Asian American studies or public humanities minor.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the semester, student will be able to...

- Develop an academic vocabulary necessary to critically analyze cultural issues
- Examine a variety of approaches to critical analysis & cultivate the knowledge needed to identify research questions, sources, methodologies, and theories of scholarly writing in American studies and publically engaged scholarship
- Develop library and archival research skills (in both primary and secondary sources)
- Master the skills of research and critical analysis in the process of developing an original research proposal
- Think about how to plan and implement public projects
- This is a Writing Intensive (WI) course. We focus on the importance of revision to becoming a better writer and communicator.

Texts:

AS: Philip J. Deloria and Alexander I. Olson, *American Studies: A User's Guide* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017) - All other readings posted (in pdf format) on Blackboard.

Course Assessment:

Scale: 1 – 100 point scale for each assignment. A = 90-100, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, D = 60 – 69, F = 59 and below. Specific requirements and assessment rubrics for each assignment will be provided.

Essentially, my *grading philosophy* is if you follow all the guidelines and correctly complete each aspect of the paper assignment you earn a C. To earn a B you must show an especially good (beyond average) grasp of the concepts and an original application. To earn an A your work should express a strong critical understand of the issues in the class. Each assignment will have its own *individual assessment rubric* focused on building critical analysis and writing skills.

Small Assignments/Student Blogs: 25%

Student will keep a public blog reflecting on the course concepts and their own research interests. There will be numerous small assignments throughout the semester. For example, students will sign up to analyze two readings in the first half of the semester. Also, students will attend and reflect on a public research presentations at UMBC or the greater Baltimore area.

Class Participation/Attendance: 25%

Attending class on time, reading the assignments, and participating in discussions are essential to your grade and your success in the course. There may also be pop quizzes and small writing assignments assessing critical reading skills. Missing more than **three classes** will lower your grade by 10 points. Lateness is unacceptable. (2 times late = 1 absence) Students are responsible for materials they miss due to an absence (excused or unexcused) – check Blackboard. If you miss class, do not email me asking if you missed anything. *You get three days absent without any explanation necessary. **You must come see me in my office (in person) to discuss excessive absences. Email is not appropriate.***

Excused Absences: Beyond the three missed classes, excused absences will be based on university guidelines. Please see the student handbook for more information see the website and the student handbook: <https://registrar.umbc.edu/services/registration/Information-About-Withdrawal-and-Absence/>

Proposal Prep: 25% You will draft your research proposal in small pieces during the first part of the semester and then revise and edit the pieces together for the final version. Peer editing and writing/revision groups will be central to your writing process... writing is primarily revision.

Final Research Proposals: 25%

You will come up with an original research proposal idea that you will work on throughout the second half of the semester. *Our two final weeks of class will entail peer editing and then presentation of the research proposals to the public.*

CLASS GUIDELINES:

Blackboard:

Students are required to use Blackboard to keep up with the class schedule, announcements, discussion boards, and other ongoing aspects of the course. *We will also use google docs for editing writing.*

Writing Guidelines:

All assignments must be thoroughly proofread and professionally written. If you are not a strong writer, VISIT THE WRITING CENTER. See information: http://www.umbc.edu/lrc/writing_center.htm

Technology:

No cell phones should ring or be used for text messaging in this classroom. Infractions = poem on the class topic due next class (at least 8 lines and read aloud during the next class). If students want to use a laptop to take notes during class, they *must* talk to me beforehand. This is a humanities course... we will use class time to engage with the other humans in the room :)

Academic Integrity:

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behaviour are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal. To read the full Student Academic Conduct Policy, consult the [UMBC Student Handbook](#), the Faculty Handbook, or the UMBC Policies section of the UMBC Directory. I have a zero tolerance policy for academic dishonesty of any kind.

Respect:

Students will respect the viewpoints of others and present their own viewpoints in a respectful fashion. Neither rudeness nor disrespect will be tolerated. Talking, texting, checking email, etc. when another student or the professor is talking will not be tolerated. The values of inclusion and equity are essential to the field of American studies, UMBC, and this course.

UMBC's Preferred Name/Changing Preferred Name Policy

UMBC recognizes that any student, faculty, or staff member may choose to identify themselves within the University community with a preferred first name that differs from their legal (primary) name. As long as the use of a preferred name is not for the purpose of misrepresentation, the University acknowledges that a preferred name should be used whenever possible in the course of university business and education. *If you would like UMBC to use a preferred name that is different from your legal (primary) name (for example, Bob instead of Robert), you can easily do so on your myUMBC profile page. Note that this will only affect internal university processes, like the Campus Card, class roster or Blackboard, and will not change your legal (primary) name with the University, where the use of the legal (primary) name necessitated by University business or legal requirement.*

Special Needs:

If you have any special needs (learning disabilities, physical accommodations, language needs, etc.), please let me know *as soon as possible* so we can work together to meet those needs. I will respect your privacy and work with you in any way I can to build a good learning environment for all students.

Religious Observations:

Students will not be penalized for missing class due to religious observances and these absences count as excused; however, I should be notified in advance.

Class Schedule

(Subject to change. Check Bb)

PART 1: Histories

Week 1: Introducing the Course

Wed. August 29: Discuss syllabus & research histories and interests
Discuss [The Dissent Mixtape](#)

Week 2: Introducing the Field

Mon. Sept. 3: LABOR DAY (no class)

Wed. Sept. 5: AS: "Introduction: The Object of American Studies" (1-21)
George Lipsitz, "Listening to Learn, Learning to Listen: Popular Culture, Cultural Theory, and American Studies," *American Quarterly* 42 (1990): 615-36. (pdf on Bb)

BLOG: *Who are you as a researcher? What are you curious about? What are your topic ideas and why?*
(bring three working titles to class)

DISCUSS: Topic ideas

Week 3: Listening

Mon. Sept 10:

AS: 1. History and Historiography

Michelle Stefano and Nicole King, "Community-Based Methods for Envisioning Deindustrialization: Mapping Baybrook and Mill Stories Projects of Baltimore, USA" in Onciul, B.A., Stefano, M.L., and Hawke, S., eds. *Engaging Heritage: Engaging Communities* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2017), 119-137. (pdf on Bb)

Listen: [Stories of Deindustrialized Baltimore](#) podcast

DISCUSS: What makes a good interview? What is active listening?

Wed. Sept 12: AS: 2. Four American Studies Mixtapes p. 42 – *writing day*

Blog: Pick an interesting song from the *Dissent* mixtape to analyze. What does it tell us about culture? What is its story and historical period? What are the influences (or current music it influenced)? Use specific examples. **(post by 1pm... read you classmates blogs and comment)**

Week 4: Deep Listening

Mon. Sept. 17: Robin D. G. Kelley, "Kickin' Reality, Kickin' Ballistics: Gangsta Rap and Postindustrial Los Angeles," in *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, ed. William Eric Perkins (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 117-158. (pdf on Bb)

ASSIGN: Baltimore Traces alumni interviewees (due Oct. 3)

Wed. Sept. 19: **PREP ASSIGNMENT 1: Topic, Social/Historical Context, and thesis (Part 1 drafts)**
– post to your blog and bring a hard copy to class à workshoppin’

Part 2: Methods

Week 5: Methods

Mon. Sept. 24: AS: 4. Methods & Methodology p. 115

Janice Radway, "Interpretive Communities and Variable Literacies: The Function of Romance Reading," in *Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies*, ed. Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 465-486.

Wed. Sept. 26: AS: 5. Texts: An Interpretive Toolkit p. 128

PREP ASSIGNMENT 2: Topic, Social/Historical Context, and thesis (Part 1 DUE)

Week 6: Public Humanities... ethics and audience

Mon. Oct. 1: Jay, Gregory, "The Engaged Humanities: Principles and Practices of Public Scholarship and Teaching" (2010). *Imagining America*. 15. <https://surface.syr.edu/ia/15>

[Baltimore Traces](#) podcasts ... public markets & communities in transition

1) [Lexington Market](#), 2015

2) [A Tale of Two Markets](#), 2016

3) [Learning from Lexington](#), 2017

Blog: First analysis of a public research presentation or exhibition... 1. Describe/analyze the talk, etc. in detail 2. Reflect on your personal thoughts and take aways

Wed. Oct. 3: Patricia J. Williams, "The Ethics of Reading and the Professions: The Raw and the Half-Cooked," in Peter Brooks, ed. *The Humanities and Public Life* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014) 75-82 & Responses & Discussion, 92-106.

Blog: *Alumni Interview due*

Week 7: Workshop

Mon. Oct. 8: **ASSIGNMENT 3: Part 1 Revisions due w/ (Part 2 Method DUE)**

AS: 6. Archives: A Curatorial Toolkit

DISCUSS: Methods... what's in your toolkit?

Wed. Oct. 10: Drew Alfgren will visit class to go over library resources

Week 8: Research & Reflection

Mon. Oct. 15: AS: 9. A Few Thoughts on Ideas and Arguments

Wed. Oct. 17: AS: 10. Dispenser: A Case Study

Blog: *What is the intellectual conversation you are entering (key concepts)? What intervention (what's new or original) are you making? What's at stake... why does it matter? (So what?!?) Why would a public audience care? (post by Ipm... read you classmates blogs and comment)*

Part 3: Research, Writing, and Refining YOUR Project

Week 9: Discuss lit reviews

Mon. Oct. 22: Discuss lit reviews (outlines due)

Wed. Oct. 24: Bring in your mixtape... top ten à research influencing your original project

Week 10: Literature Review

Mon. Oct. 29: Lit Review peer editing (drafts due)

Wed. Oct. 31: **ASSIGNMENT 3: Part 1 & 2 Revision w/ Part 3 (Lit Review DUE)** à present

Week 11: Feedback... reflect on revision

Mon. Nov. 5: Individual meetings

Wed. Nov. 7: Full proposal w/ lit review peer editing - (LIT REV due by Friday)

Week 12: Conclusions... writing what you think you will find, public programming, next steps

Mon. Nov. 12: bring drafts

Wed. Nov. 14: NO CLASS – *writing/revision day*

Week 13: Abstracts... based on the URCAD model

Mon. Nov. 19: workshop abstracts – brings drafts

Wed. Nov. 21: **Final proposal draft DUE... posted in google doc (no class)**

Week 14: Individual Meetings

Mon. Nov. 26 à Wed. THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15: Peer Editing (revising drafts)

Mon. Nov 26 & Wed. Nov. 28

Week 16: Presentations

Mon. Dec. 3 (run through) & Wed. Dec 5 (public presentations)

Mon. Dec. 10 (last day of class) edit final booklet of abstracts & reflections on research... discuss URA & URCAD

PROPOSAL DUE on the final exam date = Wed. Dec. 19 by 1pm