

American Studies 500.001
American Culture Studies
Fall 1998, Monday 2:00-4:45
Ortega Hall 313

Professor Ruth Salvaggio

Office Hours: Tuesday 3:00-3:45, Thursday 2:00-3:15,
and by appointment.
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Professor James Treat

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 3:30-4:30,
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The American Culture Studies (ACS) pro-seminar introduces students to current theories and methods in the field, to the history of American Studies nationally and at UNM, and to the faculty in the department. It is the required, introductory seminar for all American Studies graduate students and is open only for those who have been accepted into the MA or PhD programs. This pro-seminar is based on the departmental graduate reading list, "1996 American Culture Studies: Selected Interdisciplinary Perspectives and Paradigms," and is geared toward the fall 1999 ACS exams, which will be administered and graded by the instructors of this seminar. Each week whenever possible, American Studies faculty members will visit class for an hour or so to discuss their perspectives on certain aspects of the assigned and paired reading list books.

Texts:

All of these texts are available in the UNM Bookstore. Like all the reading list books, these are on permanent (3-day) reserve in Zimmerman Library, under American Studies 500.001 and cross-listed under Norwood on the professor list. If you have trouble with any reading list, syllabus, and reserve matters, contact the instructors.

Clifford, James, THE PREDICAMENT OF CULTURE: TWENTIETH-CENTURY ETHNOGRAPHY, LITERATURE, AND ART (1988)

Cronon, William, CHANGES IN THE LAND: INDIANS, COLONISTS, AND THE ECOLOGY OF NEW ENGLAND (1983)

Deloria, Vine, Jr., GOD IS RED (1973)

Doty, Alexander, MAKING THINGS PERFECTLY QUEER: INTERPRETING MASS CULTURE (1993)

Enloe, Cynthia, BANANAS, BEACHES, AND BASES: MAKING FEMINIST SENSE OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS (1989)

Fregoso, Rosa, THE BRONZE SCREEN: CHICANA AND CHICANO FILM CULTURE (1993)

Limerick, Patricia, THE LEGACY OF CONQUEST: THE UNBROKEN PAST OF THE AMERICAN WEST (1987)

Lippard, Lucy, MIXED BLESSINGS: NEW ART IN A MULTICULTURAL AMERICA (1990)

Marcus, Laura, AUTO/BIOGRAPHICAL DISCOURSES: THEORY, CRITICISM, AND PRACTICE (1994)

Sarris, Greg, KEEPING SLUG WOMAN ALIVE: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO AMERICAN INDIAN TEXTS (1993)

Trinh T. Minh-ha, WOMAN, NATIVE, OTHER: WRITING POSTCOLONIALITY AND FEMINISM (1989)

Williams, Patricia, THE ALCHEMY OF RACE AND RIGHTS (1991)

Articles and Other Readings:

Three xeroxed copies of each article listed in the schedule below are also on reserve in Zimmerman Library under American Studies 500.001 and Norwood.

Requirements:

A. Participation (20 points of the final grade, 10 points available for the first eight weeks and 10 points for the second eight weeks)

1) Regular attendance. Except for medical and family emergencies, only one excused absence will be allowed, and that must be cleared in advance with one of the instructors.

2) Consistent, prepared, appropriate in-class discussion of readings and topics.

3) Brief, occasional presentations, e.g. presenting one of the optional or assigned books or articles.

B. Two Book Dialogues (40 points of the final grade, 20 points each)

Each paper 5-7 pp. only. Make enough copies so that each member of the seminar and both instructors will have a copy by the start of class on the assigned day.

One Book Dialogue will be based on a text assigned to each seminar student at the start of the semester. These books are paired with our readings throughout the semester and will be due on the date the "paired text" is listed on the syllabus. For the other Book Dialogue, each class member is free to choose from any other book on the reading list, but not included in the syllabus. Students should choose their text by the 2nd week of the semester, when we will assign the presentation of these "free choice" texts on the days when we are discussing related material.

For each of the Book Dialogues, find at least one scholarly review of the book. Discuss the book and the review in terms appropriate to American culture studies as they are developed in the seminar. The "paired text" should be related directly to the assigned reading. The "free choice" text should be related to the relevant texts and readings covered up to the date of the class presentation.

C. Final Paper (40 points of final grade)

15-20 pp. only (append a list of the readings and book dialogues actually cited). Due at the start of class--December 7. Extensions and incompletes will be given for family and medical emergencies only. **Hand in two copies; one will be graded and returned, the other retained in the course files.**

Choose either (a) or (b) below. In whichever case, your domain of discourse is basically all the readings and discussions from this fall's pro-seminar, the two book dialogues you presented, and any other students' book dialogues that you regard as fit or fitting. If you wish to refer to other books from the readings list, you may do so, but this too is optional and likely not to raise your grade substantially.

(a) In The Predicament of Culture, James Clifford writes: "Or, as I have also suggested, one may also read against the grain of the text's dominant voice, seeking out other half-hidden authorities, reinterpreting the descriptions, texts, and quotations gathered together by the writer. With the recent questioning of colonial styles of representation, with the expansion of literacy and ethnographic consciousness, new possibilities for reading (and thus for writing) cultural descriptions are emerging" (p. 53). Review the disputes over critical "truth" in American culture studies today, taking into account debates about evidence, method, voice, and subject position (implicit in Clifford's observation) and assess how emerging scholarship in American Studies often results from reading and writing "against the grain" of ostensible authors and authorities.

(b) Write an ASA presidential address for delivery at an annual meeting whose theme you name. The theme would not be the same as the title and text of your address, but the two should be related.

D. Grading Curve:

A range: 91-100 points

B to B+: 84-90 points

C to B-: 75-83 points

Students earning less than a B (or less than 84 points) must retake the pro-seminar.

Schedule:

Note on Individual Presentations scheduled for the first two classes, August 24 and 31: Everyone should read all the articles, but each student will be assigned a specific article (or several short articles) as noted below. You will have 5 minutes (and only 5 minutes) to present the important points of the article(s) and relate them to Wise (first class) or Davis (second class). You should hand out a one paragraph synopsis for each member of the class and each professor. Thus, each article should be summarized to characterize each author's conception of the methods, materials, and interpretive stance appropriate to American Studies, and each article should be evaluated and characterized in the context of Wise or Davis. Also note that the pieces from Wise and Mechling are part of the American Quarterly retrospective issue (vol. 31, 1979). Gene Wise served as Guest Editor for this 30th anniversary issue of AQ.

August 24: Introductory Matters, Key Themes in American Studies

American Studies Graduate Handbook, 1998-99.

Susan Kilgore, "American Studies UNM Centennial History: 1944-1989," from The College of Arts and Sciences Centennial History: 1889-1990, pp. 46-63. (**Betts**)

Michael Cowan, "Boundary as Center: Inventing American Studies Culture," Prospects: An Annual of American Culture Studies 4 (1979): 59-77. (**Donnelly**)

Gene Wise, "The American Studies Movement: A Thirty-Year Retrospective" (includes Wise's Introduction (289-90), ASA President Introduction (291-92), and Wise's "Paradigm Dramas in American Studies: A Cultural and Institutional History of the Movement" (293-337)). (**Duran**)

Jay Mechling, ed. "Some Voices in and around American Studies." (**Hockett, 338-77**) (**Marquez, 377-406**)

Wise, "An American Studies Calendar" (407-47)

August 31: The Historical/Political/Organizational

Allen F. Davis, "The Politics of American Studies, AQ 42 (1990): 354-74. [1989 ASA Presidential Address] (**Messinger**)

Alice Kessler-Harris, "Cultural Locations: Positioning American Studies in the Great Debate," AQ 44 (1992): 299-312. [1991 Presidential Address] (**Timm-Bottos**)

Cathy Davidson, "Loose Change," AQ 46 (1994): 123-38. [1993 Presidential Address] (**Wilks**)

Paul Lauter, "Visions of Nashville, Visions of American Studies," AQ 47 (1995): 185-203. [1994 Presidential Address] (**Martin**)

Elaine Tyler May, "The Radical Roots of American Studies," AQ 48 (1996): 179-200. [1995 Presidential Address] (**Sanchez**)

Patricia Nelson Limerick, "Insiders and Outsiders: The Borders of the USA and the Limits of the ASA," AQ 49 (1997): 449-69. [1996 Presidential Address] (**Soule**)

Mary Helen Washington, "Disturbing the Peace: What Happens to American Studies If You Put African American Studies at the Center?" AQ 50 (1998): 1-23. [1997 Presidential Address] (**Wiggins**)

September 7: Labor Day, no class

September 14:

Cronon, CHANGES IN THE LAND

Guest: Prof. Vera Norwood

Haraway, SIMIANS, CYBORGS, AND WOMEN (paired text) **Messinger**

September 21:

Deloria, GOD IS RED

Prof. Treat

West, RACE MATTERS (paired text) **Betts**

September 28:

Limerick, LEGACY OF CONQUEST
Prof. Treat
Smith, VIRGIN LAND (paired text) **Soule**

October 5:

Enloe, BANANAS, BEACHES, AND BASES
Prof. Salvaggio
Davis, CITY OF QUARTZ (paired text) **Donnelly**

October 12:

Fregoso, THE BRONZE SCREEN
Prof. Salvaggio
Turner, I HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE (paired text) **Timm-Bottos**

October 19:

Doty, MAKING THINGS PERFECTLY QUEER
Guest: Prof. Beth Bailey
Roscoe, THE ZUNI MAN-WOMAN (paired text) **Martin**

October 26:

Lippard, MIXED BLESSINGS
Guest: Prof. Bazan Romero
Whisnant, ALL THAT IS NATIVE AND FINE (paired text) **Hockett**

November 2:

Clifford, THE PREDICAMENT OF CULTURE
Guest: Prof. M. Jane Young
Foucault, HISTORY OF SEXUALITY, VOL. I (paired text) **Wilks**

November 9:

Sarris, KEEPING SLUG WOMAN ALIVE

Prof. Treat

Anzaldua, BORDERLANDS / LA FRONTERA (paired text) **Duran**

November 16:

Trinh, WOMAN, NATIVE, OTHER

Prof. Salvaggio

Jones, BAD BLOOD (paired text) **Wiggins**

November 23:

Williams, ALCHEMY OF RACE AND RIGHTS

Guest: Prof. Eric Porter

Keller, REFLECTIONS ON GENDER AND SCIENCE (paired text) **Marquez**

November 30:

Marcus, AUTO/BIOGRAPHICAL DISCOURSES

Guest: Prof. A. Gabriel Melendez

Paredes, "WITH HIS PISTOL IN HIS HAND" (paired text) **Sanchez**

December 7:

Paper presentations

December 14:

Paper presentations and final discussions