Course Description:

AMST 601 is the initial course of a two-course sequence introducing graduate students to some of the literature -- from the field, the discipline, and beyond -- that has shaped and reshaped Americans' Studies over time. In this course, we focus on the theories and paradigms, or conceptual frameworks, evident in scholarly work through the mid-1990s. By concentrating on the historiography of Americans' Studies and on the theoretical directions and assumptions of scholars, this course should help you to understand the making of theories in American Studies and, of course, the making of American Studies before the turn of the century. Reading and thinking about this "early" scholarship should also prepare you for the contemporary theories and literature that are the focus of AMST 603 (Current Approaches to American Studies).

This is a reading-intensive course, and I am well aware of the tension between "too much" (reading) and "too little" (depth of treatment) that will undoubtedly emerge as we proceed with considerable speed through many texts. One means of limiting this tension is for everyone to read and contribute both comments and questions in class discussions. At all times please feel free to think aloud, to challenge, to critique, and to offer alternative ways of looking and thinking. One point of any seminar is to think more broadly and differently about the material as the discussion proceeds. If any of us is not challenged to think differently, we shall all have fallen short of the possibilities.

Course Schedule:

Sept. 12 – Introductions, Theoretical Trajectories, Building to Critique

And
Americans on America Before American Studies

Francis Higginson, "A Short and True Description of New England" (1629) 

Ben Franklin, *Autobiography* (1791), pp. 5-23 (top), 77 (begin at Passy) – 92 

Phillis Wheatley, “Poems,” which follow a memoir by Margaretta Odell 
http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/wheatley/wheatley.html

Judith Sargent Murray, "On the Equality of the Sexes (1790); 
http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/murray/equality/equality.html

J. Hector St. Jean de Crevecoeur, Letter III: "What is an American?," from *Letters From An American Farmer* (1782) 
http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/CREV/contents.html

William Craft, "Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom" (1860) 


Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893) 

"The Lives of The Freedmen of Indian Territory: The Slave Narratives of Indian Territory" 
– Freedmen = Estelusti 
http://www.african-nativeamerican.com/estelusti.htm

Liliuokalani, "Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen" (1898) 
http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/liliuokalani/hawaii/hawaii.html


Eugene V. Debs, "The Martyred Apostles of Labor" (1898) & "Speech at Conference for Progressive Political Action" (1925) 
http://www.marxists.org/archive/debs/works/1898/martyred.htm
http://www.marxists.org/archive/debs/works/1925/cppa.htm

Carl Sandburg, "Chicago," and others of the *Chicago Poems* (1916) 
http://www.carl-sandburg.com/POEMS.htm and 
Emma Goldman, "A New Declaration of Independence" (1909) & "Was My Life Worth Living?" (1934)
http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Goldman/Writings/Essays/independence.html
http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Goldman/Writings/Essays/lifework.html

Alain Locke, "The New Negro" (1925)
http://books.google.com/books?id=kuiSuqS4J38C&printsec=frontcover&dq=%22The+New+Negro%22+Locke&source=bl&ots=gGwdxpZPGc&sig=RhNzunwmNW9IydlqRzNS5bm2jeY4&hl=en&ei=LR95TMrLAcLflge9yWvCg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=8&ved=0CDgQ6AEwBw#v=onepage&q&f=false

"Dear Miss Breed: Letters from Camp..." (1942-44), esp. "Life in Camp"
http://www.janm.org/breed/title.htm

All read:

Sept. 19 --
Part 1: It Was (N)Ever Thus: Locating Early American Studies

All read:

The Faradays:
Henry Nash Smith, "Can 'American Studies' Develop a Method?" (1957) -- in Maddox, ed.

Other:

**The Mollys:**

**The Faradays:**

Sept. 26 --

Part 1: Broadening the Discipline: External Academic Influences

**The Mollys:**

Part 2: Theoretical Turns, Multiple Methods, & "Others"

**The Faradays:**


George Lipsitz, "Listening to Learn and Learning to Listen: Popular Culture, Cultural Theory, and American Studies" (1990) – in Maddox, ed.


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**Oct. 3-10 – Marxisms From the Sources**

**Karl Marx** -- All read for Oct. 3:

*The German Ideology* (1845) – just chapter 1

http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/abstract.htm

*Theses on Feuerbach* (1845)

http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/theses/index.htm

*Wage Labour and Capital* (1847)

http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/wage-labour/index.htm

*Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859)

http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/preface.htm

*Value, Price and Profit* (1869)

http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1865/value-price-profit/index.htm

Recommended at some point:

*Capital, vol. 1*

http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/index.htm

*Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1847)

http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/index.htm


**Antonio Gramsci** -- All read for Oct. 10

The Faradays:
"The State and Civil Society," in Quinton Hoare & Geoffrey N. Smith, eds.,

Not required but helpful discussions and additional theorists:
- Marxists Internet Archive http://www.marxists.org/
- International Gramsci Society http://www.internationalgramscisociety.org/
- C. L. R. James internet archive:
http://www.marxists.org/archive/james-clr/index.htm
  esp. “Dialectical Materialism and the Fate of Humanity”
http://www.marxists.org/archive/james-clr/works/diamat/diamat47.htm
  Black Power (1967)

Oct. 10 -- The Frankfurt School and Emergent Critical Theory

All read for Oct. 10:
  Theodor W. Adorno & Max Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” (1944)
http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/adorno.htm

The Molloys:
http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm


Not required but helpful:
Theodor W. Adorno, "The Culture Industry Reconsidered" (1991)
http://www.icce.rug.nl/~soundscapes/DATABASES/SWA/Culture_industry_reconsidered.shtml

Douglas Kellner, "Critical Theory Today: Revisiting the Classics"
http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/ -- then on right, click essays
http://gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/essays/criticaltheorycrisisofsocialtheory.pdf
Idem., "The Frankfurt School"
http://gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/essays/frankfurschool2.pdf

See, also:
http://filer.case.edu/~ngb2/Pages/Intro.html
and
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/habermas/

Oct. 17 -- Historical/Cultural Materialism & Hegemony

The Faradays.

The Mollys:

**Oct. 24-31 - Poststructuralism & Postmodernism**

**Oct. 24 -- All read:**
http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/saussure.htm

http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/levistra.htm

Claude Levi-Strauss, “The Structural Study of Myth,” chp 11 from SA

http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/barthes.htm

idem., “The Death of the Author” (1967-8).
http://evans-experientialism.freewebspace.com/barthes06.htm

http://hydra.humanities.uci.edu/derrida/sign-play.html

**Oct. 31**

**The Mollys:**

**The Faradays:**
http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/foucault.htm


See, also:


John Lye, “Elements of Structuralism,” “Some Post-Structural Assumptions,” “Some Factors Affecting/Effecting the Reading of Texts,” “Différance”

Roger Jones, “Post Structuralism”

http://www.philosopher.org.uk/poststr.htm

Daniel Chandler, “Intertextuality,” in Semiotics for Beginners

Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, excerpts from Postmodern Theory. Critical Interrogations.


Nov. 7 - Emergent Cultural Studies

All read:


Douglas Kellner, "Cultural Marxism and Cultural Studies” pdf

The Faradays:


Transitioners (from BCS):


The Mollys:

Paul Gilroy, The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness


Nov. 14 - Feminisms

The Faradays:

The Mollys

SPECIAL NOTE -- For the final weeks, please think about, in addition to content, the following questions:
- How did the authors theorize/frame a given concept?
- What were the likely theoretical influences on their work; what were their intellectual connections to prior theories?
- "How far" from prior framings in Americans' Studies had they moved, and "how far" from our contemporary framings do they appear to be?

Nov. 21 -- (Re)Theorizing Race & Ethnicity

The Mollys:
The Faradays:

All read:

Nov. 28 -- (Re)Theorizing Gender & Sexuality

The Faradays:

The Mollys:


Suzanna Danuta Walters, "From Here to Queer: Radical Feminism, Postmodernism, and the Lesbian Menace . . .," *Signs* (Summer 1996): 830-69.

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**Dec. 5 -- (Re)Theorizing Class & Culture**

**The Mollys:**


**The Faradays:**


Robin D. G. Kelley, “‘We Are Not What We Seem’: Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South,” *Journal of American History* 80 (June 1993): 75-112.


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**Dec. 12 -- Recap, Remaining Questions, Sharing**
**Additional notes on readings:**


In addition to the citations on this syllabus, a helpful website, with many links, is TV Reed’s "Theory and Method in American/Cultural Studies: A Bibliographic Essay,” which has been transformed into “**Interdisciplinary Cultural Theory**.”

**Course Requirements:**

1. Lead one week's discussion (exploration of main points, critique, raising significant questions) of the readings. (20%)

2. Substantive critiques (to include brief summary of main points) of the readings, using the template uploaded to our course page. Each person will be responsible for completing the template for 3 books, as well as 9 articles across other sessions. For this assignment, do not count the work you do for the week in which you are leading the discussion. Readings templates need to be uploaded to the course website by noon the day before each class. Your choices of books & articles need to be synchronized with those of other students so that the readings are covered. (30%)

3. Weekly, insightful participation in and contribution to the discussions, based on your weekly readings, whether or not it’s your week to read or you have done a book or article critique. (20%)

4. A final synthetic essay that focuses on ways in which/how/why the theoretical perspectives, approaches, assumptions, questions, etc. that we discuss might bear on your research interests. Consequently, from day 1, consider what might be useful, helpful, etc. from a given week's readings, as well as how and why some readings will not as meaningful. (30%, c. 15-18 pages, minimum; due 12/16/11).