STETSON UNIVERSITY

Program in American Studies and Department of History

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Office Hours: MWF 10-12 , TuTh 1-3 Spring 2016

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**American Cultural Traditions**

a course about paths to the present and an introduction to the upper-division offerings in American Studies…

a Culture and Belief (B), Historical Inquiry (H), and Africana Studies (AFST) course…

and a Writing Intensive (WI) course

*The historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence.*

-T. S. Eliot (1917), quoted in Michael Kammen, Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture (New York: Knopf, 1991), 5.

Goals of the Course

This course is an opportunity to learn about American culture through focus on a few topics. We will approach this learning goal in three ways: with learning about the facts of this history, with students developing their own interpretations about these facts, and with assignments designed to facilitate each student’s ability to explain facts and interpretations in oral and written work. I summarize these goals with three key words: information, agency, and explanation.

A major purpose for the study of the American past is for the illumination of our present life in the USA and in the world. “The past is prologue,” as Thomas Carlyle said, because it shows the paths we have taken (and not taken) to the present world; it can inspire about how change has happened (and how it has met resistance); and it can display patterns that have emerged (and that still circulate) within the culture. This course will provide students with a sampling of significant and enduring cultural traditions as they emerged in key periods of the American past and as they still operate in recent times. In a sense, this is a course about memory: what happened back then, and how do Americans remember and respond to patterns emerging from the past? Comparing earlier and current manifestations of a sampling of topics will provide contexts for students to gain a depth of understanding about the contemporary world—and for learning to work with it and live in it. The material of the course will draw from the past and our contemporary world; many contemporary ideologies are rooted in the stories and precedents of the past.

This course serves as an introduction to the upper-division thinking and course offerings in American Studies and American History, in particular with its focus on five topics: contested presidential elections, Florida history, women and childbirth, evangelicals, and African American responses to injustice. In addition, because of the range of topics covered, and the focus on illuminating and contextualizing the present, the course will also serve as a useful supplement for students in many other majors, and a potential contribution to preparation for diverse future careers. One or another American social or intellectual tradition is at the core of almost every discipline in the university, and a course examining their roots and current manifestation will complement the disciplinary work of students many majors; of course, it also serves as a piece of the interdisciplinary work for American Studies majors and minors.

Through your work with books and other texts, library research, films, class projects, lectures, and discussion, the course will emphasize your development of thinking, reading, writing, and speaking skills. Please fill out a card so I can begin to get to know your academic interests right away.

Course Requirements and Grading at a glance—and see next paragraphs for specifics:

-Participation: Attendance, daily Talking Points, }

 10 One-Paragraph Posts, and 5 One-Paragraph } 20% of final grade

 Responses, EXPs, and class involvement }

-Research Project 20%

-Two Midterm Exams 20% each

-Final Exam 20%

Extra Credit

-Attend related campus and community events, write a One-Page essay, and briefly report your experiences to class.

-Write an article for publication on a topic related to class work in a local outlet (The Reporter, The Beacon, …) or further afield, geographically or digitally: go beyond reading other people’s journalism by producing your own! See my publications for examples of public intellectual writing (citizen response to cultural and political issues using academic insight to shed light on public questions), on PubClassroom.com.

 One-Page Essays will also be *a way to make up for any excused absence*, by *adding* an essay dealing with the missed class day (please keep these distinct from the One-Paragraph Posts and Responses).

*I assume academic honesty.* Anything less will be taken seriously at the department and university levels. Your work for this class must be your own, with quotations or references to the work of others clearly cited. On this topic and for ways to improve writing, you have resources from this class (see the *American Studies Web Page* cited below), and at the Writing Center, Leigh Ann Dunning, Director, ldunning@stetson.edu; <http://www.stetson.edu/other/writing-center/>; M-Th 12-10pm, F 12-3pm, Su 3-6pm, 822-7714, located in the library, first floor, east side; and the Academic Success Center, Stacy Collins, Director, asc@stetson.edu; scollin1@stetson.edu, 822-7127, second floor of library; [www.stetson.edu/asc](https://email.ad.stetson.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=LOzg4kq9YUeoouGnIeuSkHmbN83pZ9AIsIIdn-lws3g0xY2w7craGAyPvmMH--Rq2ENOyTzdRfc.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.stetson.edu%2fasc).

If anyone anticipates barriers related to the format or requirements of the course, she or he should meet with me (same for any of your instructors) to discuss ways to ensure full participation. If disability-related accommodations are necessary, please register with the Academic Success Center and notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. I can work with you and the Center to plan how best to coordinate accommodations.

 Small class sizes are rare in this world. How can you make use of this resource? Because so much of this course involves exchange of ideas in class and consideration of subtle values, your *attendance and participation* are crucial parts of your learning and make up a significant part of your grade. There are many forms of participation, as listed above, and these also include careful listening, reviewing notes after class, and especially questions and discussion in class (as facilitated by all of the above). Much of class time will build on your reading and will link to in-class projects and films. More than three unexcused absences will be reported to the administration and put your grade in jeopardy.

Etiquette is a word for the *rules of courtesy* in social settings. They are simple; for some, they are assumed; operating without them in class can undercut the learning environment for you and for the whole group. Everyone may be late once in a while or need to step out during class time occasionally, but please plan ahead and keep these to a minimum. Cell phones and texting may be necessary for the rare emergency, but otherwise, they have no role in class. Computers and other technology can be useful for academic purposes, especially for taking notes, but please avoid classroom use of these powerful tools for any non-academic purpose. Attention is a precious commodity, especially in the modern world with its abundance of information; and attention is a fundamental key to learning. Cultivation and refinement of your attention is yet another way that class is preparation for the work world. Small classes allow, in effect, maximum use and development of attention. In addition to these general observations, more than a few of these burdens on our learning environment will be counted as an absence.

 The *Talking Points* are daily in-class assignments, based on each day of reading. Prepare for class by preparing an idea to talk about in seminar discussion, based on a three-part goal, summarized as the QTQ, a *Quotation*, a reference to the *Theme* of the reading, and your *Question* for further analysis, reflection, or exploration. In other words, *Q, Quotation*: identify a part of the reading that you find particularly significant, and specify the page and portion of the page where you found it (so all seminar participants can follow your references!); *T, Theme*: explain how these words express a significant point about the reading as a whole; and *Q, Question*: consider what other ideas these references and thoughts suggest in comparison with your own experience or other reading. Please use the “technology” that works for you to have your Talking Point ready every day: notes in your notebook or on a 3x5 card, digital text on your computer or alert on your smart phone, or other platform for carrying these daily, brief, oral assignments, and making them ready for use.

 The *One-Paragraph Posts* are places for you to capture your thoughts, practice writing, and prepare for class or later writing. It is good to write, even if only briefly, every time you do some work for the class (before or after class, after reading, or after a project—use your agency to find the study technique that works for you!). In addition to this general advice, there are *five One-Paragraph Posts* as part of your participation grade due by Thursday’s class every other week to cover an aspect of the material of that week; *Paragraphs posted late will contribute to a lower Participation grade.* Please post your Paragraph on Blackboard: At the home page for this course, go to Discussions link, which opens a page called Discussion Board. Each week, click on the identifying date of the Forum, and once there, 1-click on the Create Thread button to write your Post, and 2-click on the Subscribe button to receive email alerts about new Posts. For help, go to Home for this course, and click on Help, or go directly to <https://en-us.help.blackboard.com/Learn/9.1_2014_04/Student>, or contact Terry Grieb, TGrieb@stetson.edu, 822-7193. To write your post, please follow the advice under Talking Points above, and in this paragraph, which is a unit of explanation, elaborate on your point, based on what you have read, on class time, and on feedback on your thoughts.

The *One-Paragraph Responses* are places for interactive learning. Please respond to someone else’s Post three times, by the middle of February, March, and April. *Responses posted late will contribute to a lower Participation grade.* Please post your Response on Blackboard: As with the other Posts, go to the Discussion Board; click on date of the Forum, then click on the thread; choose a Post, click on Collect, then Reply, and write your reply.

 The class-time *Explorations* (EXPs) will be student-led presentations for review of course readings, leadership of discussions, and pursuit of further insights; they are also exercises in the skill of oral communication, and contributions to the learning experience of all course members. The format will vary with the material involved, and with your thoughtful suggestions; in general, please choose small groups for each EXP, choose key readings of about 20 pages (from the common readings or related material) for your fellow students, present an overview with your theme(s) about the material, plan discussion questions, and be prepared for seminar interaction. Members of each EXP group should meet with each other to plan this course material, and inform the class at least 24 hours before the presentation; and each EXP presenter should make your One-Paragraph Post a summary of your goal for the day. For more information, see Blackboard > Information, Preparation for EXPs.

I will evaluate your Participation with *comments* designed to help your improvement, based on the guides to learning and writing (see the *American Studies Web Page* cited below), and with a *Preliminary Participation Grade* about week 3-4 of the semester. The short oral and writing assignment are designed to help you practice your arts of explanation before putting them to work for the longer writing assignments later in the semester

 The work of the *Research Project* will grow during the semester, and these *Writing Steps* on your own research project are separate from the ten One-Paragraph Posts and Responses on the shared course material; see *due dates for these Steps* in the Schedule below:

-*Step 1*, *One Key Book*: During the first month, think of topics and questions related to the course and that you consider interesting; you may find a live issue in relation to your life, coursework, major, career goals, or avocational interests; and some ideas can emerge from browsing in the library, on the web, and/or on pages I provide on Blackboard. In history, cultural studies, and related fields, books are the premier cultural products for good quality research and evaluation; find an authoritative book on your topic, one that will help you answer your questions. *Turn in the citation of your book, with a one-paragraph explanation about why you find it interesting, how it relates to the course, what it discusses (its topic), and what it is arguing (its theme).* In a sense, this is an assignment for starting to answer your questions, by exploring it using a model in the art of explanation.

-*Step 2*, *The Book in Relation to More Sources*: In the next few weeks, use the library and other resources to consult more related texts, including primary and secondary sources, to supplement your book; find *at least two* of the following: book reviews, journal articles, encyclopedia entries, government documents, web pages, newspapers and magazines, audio-visual material, and/or interviews; for different topics, different sources will be most valuable. *Turn in a one-paragraph statement of the relation of these sources to your book, and how they illuminate your own paper’s topic and emerging theme*. In other words, How has your topic evolved with more research, and what is your current expression of theme about your questions?

-*Step 3, Seminar Roundtable*: With a completed draft of your research paper, present a brief report of your topic, your theme, and its significance for understanding modern American history. *These brief oral presentations can be a way for you to hear your own work to alert yourself about what reporting or explaining you might still need*. This step gives you some final practice with your topic and theme before submitting your paper.

-*Step 4,* *The Final Paper*: After researching about your topic in at least 6 sources (your book and five more sources), write a paper that explains your theme. In addition to reporting on your topic, be sure to evaluate your sources with expression of your interpretive point of view, using facts and explanations to support your interpretation. With this paper, you will be answering your questions. At the end of the semester, *turn in your final written Research Paper of* *15 typed pages*—earlier is welcome!

The *Midterms* will be sets of essay questions for you to answer with explanations about the material of the course. The *Final Exam* will also be in essay format; one part of it will be a *“Second Mid-Term”* (on the second half of the semester) and the other will be *Comprehensive* (on the whole semester).

 Turning in previous papers with your next papers will help me gear my comments to the development of your writing—and help you get a better grade! In grading oral and written work, I emphasize your understanding of the material, the persuasiveness of your argument, and your clarity of presentation (again, see *American Studies Web Page*). When printing, use used or two-sided paper and turn in your work with a paperclip, but without any folders or binders.

All the assignments involve careful thinking and writing. Please see the *American Studies Web Page*, <http://www.stetson.edu/artsci/american-studies/>, for many posts designed to help you do your best work in the course and in life in general. In particular, click on Faculty > my name > Teaching > Guides to Learning, or go directly to <http://www.stetson.edu/artsci/american-studies/pcteaching.php>, for the guides to learning, research, writing, discussing, speaking, and grading. On the same Program web page, at the Learning By Doing link > Work to Learn/Learn to Work, or go directly to <http://www.stetson.edu/artsci/american-studies/worktolearn.php>, see tips on ways to use your Stetson education in preparation for later life and career, and see the American Bar Association’s Guide to Legal Education with suggestions about use of an undergraduate education in getting ready for law school, with ideas that also apply to other post-graduate training and job settings.

Blackboard: This computerized bulletin board will be a place to post course information, including bibliography, *the Class Use page for material used in class*, assignments, recent updates, and more; see “Information” for general information and “Content” for particular readings and assignments, and see Schedule below with indication of readings available on Blackboard (Bd), with extra copies in my office (Oc) for lending or putting on reserve:

John Ferling, Adams and Jefferson, and the Tumultuous Election of 1800, Bd/Oc

Newspaper and Magazine articles on the 2000 election (paper copy stapled with DeHaven-Smith), Bd/Oc

DeHaven-Smith, The Battle for Florida, through ch 1 (paper copy stapled with articles on the election), Bd/Oc

John and Mary Lou Missall, The Seminole Wars, Foreword, Preface, chs. 2, 3, 5, and 6; and maps, Bd/Oc

Alice Walker, “In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens,” Ms. Magazine, 1975, Bd

David Headon, “Beginning to See Things Really: The Politics of Zora Neale Hurston,” in Glassman and Seidel, Zora in Florida (Orlando: University of Central Florida press, 1991), Bd

Schedule of the 2016 Zora Neale Hurston Festival, Bd and http://zorafestival.org/full-schedule/

Judith Pence Rooks, Midwifery and Childbirth, through ch 1 and pp. 17-33, 82-90, 111-116, and 364-92, Bd/Oc

Karen Kennedy Tyus’s midwifery information, Bd/Oc

Michael D’Orso, Like Judgment Day, Prologue and Part I, Bd/Oc

Malcolm X: The Last Speeches, pp. 83-89, Bd/Oc

Books for Purchase; with recommended purchases, we will be reading a portion of the books (available on Blackboard), with more parts recommended, as indicated by REC in the Schedule below:

John Ferling, Adams and Jefferson, and the Tumultuous Election of 1800

John and Mary Lou Missall, The Seminole Wars, recommended

Ulrich, A Midwife’s Tale, with extra copy in my office for lending or putting on reserve

Judith Pence Rooks, Midwifery and Childbirth, through ch 1 and pp. 17-33, 82-90, 111-116, and 364-92, Bd/Oc

Charles Grandison Finney, How to Experience Revival, also on Web

Dave Gustaveson, The Lost Diary, with extra copy in my office for lending or putting on reserve

On the Web:

Zora Neale Hurston, Mules and Men, <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MA01/Grand-Jean/Hurston/Chapters/index.html>, Preface, Introduction, and Chapters 1, 2, and 5

Charles Grandison Finney, Revival Lectures: <http://www.whatsaiththescripture.com/Voice/Revival.Lectures.html> (which is fairly close to the text Finney available for purchase: How to Experience Revival)

Rosewood readings: **1.** Rick Badie, “Remembering Rosewood…” Orlando Sentinel, January 5, 1997: <http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1997-01-05/news/9701020492_1_rosewood-posse-black>; **2.** Michael D’Orso, “… and Reliving Rosewood,” Orlando Sentinel, January 5, 1997: <http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1997-01-05/news/9701020493_1_james-taylor-rosewood-mill>; **3.** Gary Moore, “A Tragedy Retold As Myth ,” Orlando Sentinel, March 16, 1997: <http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1997-03-16/news/9703141658_1_rosewood-survivors-ruth-davis>; and **4.** Thomas Dye, “Rosewood: Destruction of an African American Community,” The Historian 58 (1996): 605-622, [http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/davidson/arch%20of%20aa%20life%20and%20culture/Week%2011-14/Dye,%20Historian%20Vol%2058(3)%20Spring%201996.pdf](http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/davidson/arch%20of%20aa%20life%20and%20culture/Week%2011-14/Dye%2C%20Historian%20Vol%2058%283%29%20Spring%201996.pdf)

Field Trips and Events:

Zora Neale Huston Festival of the Arts and Humanities, the 27th Annual, January 24-29, 2015: <http://zorafestival.org/>, 407-647-3307

African American events, see African American Experiences file on Bd, and see events on campus

Tour of Jackson Walker’s paintings at the old Court House, west of Woodland Boulevard between Indiana and New York Avenues: <http://jacksonwalkerstudio.com/>

Karen Kennedy Tyus, midwife visiting class: gratefulmidwife@aol.com, (386)258-5400; [www.agapemidwiferyservices.org](https://email.ad.stetson.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=vtheizZYf0qSbDD3OH-1lzao5eQS7NAInOzy0hy4g32JooAZLkZZEsIdFkaovIdjbXcyMPVBwzA.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.agapemidwiferyservices.org)

Bible Baptist Church members preaching downtown, most Fridays 4:30-6, at Woodland and New York Avenues, with our visit: F Mar 11: 872 Glenwood, Pastor John Knox, 736-9274: BibleBaptistChurch@gmail.com; jwknox@JamesKnox.com; [www.jamesknox.com](https://autodiscover.stetson.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=33f481af7f444779949a2cfe822703f9&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.jamesknox.com); Jake “Jake” Jackson, AttorneyJakeJackson@yahoo.com

**Schedule of Topics and Readings, with Requirements for Assignments to Read for that Day**

Date Topics Requirements & recommendations (REC); due dates in *italics*

Tu Jan 12 introductions imagining the past/experiencing the present; Ferling, preface

**I. Contested Elections**

Th Jan 14 friendship and factions Ferling, preface, chs 1 and 2

Tu Jan 19 testing the revolutionary Ferling, chs 7, 12, and 14; film: Adams

 experiment

Th Jan 21 political polarization and newspaper and magazine articles on the 2000 election

 hanging chads (Bd, Oc); film: Karl Rove; *Step 1*: Paragraph on Book

Tu Jan 26 the democratic republic 2.0 DeHaven-Smith (Bd, Oc), through ch 1

Th Jan 28 elections and democracy EXP 1: 1800, 2000, and dealing with large disagreements

**II. Florida Stories: Public Memory and Museums**

\*\*Su Jan 24-Su Jan 30: Hurston Festival; Walker (REC: Headon, Bd)

Tu Feb. 2 terrorism and total war Missal, preface, maps, chs 2 and 5 (REC: ch 4)

Th Feb 4 African-American folk life Hurston, Mules and Men (Web), preface, intro, chs 1, 2, 5

Tu Feb 9: meet in old Court House: Jackson Walker’s “Legendary Florida” paintings; Missal, ch 6

Th Feb 11 Florida in Red, White, and Black EXP 2: Missall, Hurston, & Florida: American Microcosms

**III. Women and Childbirth: Folk Knowledge and Scientific Medicine**

Tu Feb 16 folk knowledge Ulrich, through p. 71 (especially through 35)

Th Feb 18 birth in a time of scientific medicine Rooks (Bd), through ch 1 and pp. 17-33, 82-90

Tu Feb 23 follow the baby Karen Kennedy Tyus; her handouts and Rooks 111-116; *Midterm Exam*

Th Feb. 25 a republic of women film: A Midwife’s Tale; REC: Ulrich, 72-101

\*\*Feb 29-Mar 4: Spring break

Tu Mar 8 Private Sources birth experiences interviews, MD views, REC: Rooks 364-92

Th Mar 10 birthing babies: lessons of history EXP 3: home births or hospitals?

**IV. The Evolution of Evangelical Religion**

\*\*F Mar 11, 4:45-6pm, Woodland and New York (see Field Trips)

Tu Mar 15 born-again psychology Finney, lectures 1-7 (1-11on web); REC: 8-15 (12-22 on web)

Th Mar 17 review and research individual and small-group meetings

Tu Mar 22 an American spirit Balmer film: Mine Eyes have seen the Glory;

 *Step 2:* Paragraph on More Sources

Th Mar. 24 light the world on fire Gustaveson

Tu Mar. 29 souls on fire EXP 4: evangelicals in history and in person

**V. African Americans: Separate, Subordinated, and Searching for Justice**

Th Mar 31 seething … erupts begin Rosewood, the movie

Tu Apr 5 fear shapes facts finish Rosewood, the movie

Th Apr 7 history and Hollywood, Badie, D’Orso, Moore, Dye (Web)

 tragedy and reparation

\*\*Tu Apr 12: Showcase day: experiencing student presentations—and planning for your own

Th Apr 14 righteous anger Malcolm X (Bd, Oc), pp. 82-89; current examples; film: Malcolm X, Make It Plain,

Tu Apr 19 history and community EXP 6: African American legacies (Bd)

Th Apr 21 Seminar Roundtable *Step 3*: Research Presentations

Tu Ap. 26 Seminar Roundtable *Step 3*: Research Presentations; *Step 4*: Research Paper due

May \_\_ a semester of broad inquiry *Final Exam*