

American Studies 468: Research Methods in American Culture  
Spring 2016  
Instructor: Dr. Robert T. Hayashi  
Office: Morgan 302  
Office Hours: Tuesday 1-4pm and by appointment  
Phone: 542-5346  
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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to interdisciplinary research, a nuts-and-bolts class to prepare American Studies students, in particular, for independent research in the major. However, any student interested in developing research skills, especially in the humanities and social sciences, is encouraged to enroll. We will study a range of materials—visual, literary, print, digital, audio—that investigate a central theme, place in American culture. We will also read and discuss works that present the history, methods, and debates within American Studies to ground students in the tradition of American Studies praxis. Class sessions will entail seminar discussions, library training, archival research, museum visits and workshops. Students will select and pursue a semester-long research topic that they will present at a public conference on campus.

### REQUIRED TEXTS

Dolores Hayden: *Building Suburbia*  
Michael Lesy: *Wisconsin Death Trip*  
Leo Marx: *The Machine in the Garden*  
David Roderick: *Blue Colonial*  
José David Saldívar: *Border Matters*  
Leah Schmalzbauer, *The Last Best Place*  
Julie Sze, *Noxious New York*

Also materials on ereserve, access via the library webpage @ <https://www.amherst.edu/library>

\*All books available at Amherst Books, 8 Main Street. Please support this local and independent bookstore.

### COURSEWORK

I will distribute handouts detailing the specific requirements and grading criteria for the assignments listed below. Please note that changes may be made to the reading schedule during the course of the semester.

Discussion leader (10%)  
Short assignments (50%)  
Attendance/participation (20%)  
Final research presentation, including draft w/bibliography (20%)

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## SCHEDULE

- January 28      “This Land is Your Land” performed by Woodie Guthrie; Seeger, Rodriguez, and Springsteen; by Sharon Jones; and The Melodians
- Richard P. Horowitz, “American Studies: Approaches and Concepts”  
<http://myweb.uiowa.edu/rhorwitz/asconcepts.htm>
- Philip J. Deloria, “Broadway and Main: Crossroads, Ghost Roads, and Paths to an American Studies Future.” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (March 2009) pp. 1-25.
- DUE: Analysis “This Land is Your Land” (3p)**
- February 4      INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH LIBRARIANS/RESEARCH
- David Roderick, *Blue Colonial*
- Leo Marx, “American Studies. A Defense of an Unscientific Method.” *New Literary History*, Vol. 1, No. 1, *New and Old History* (Oct., 1969), pp. 75-90.
- R. Gordon Kelley, “Literature and the Historian.” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (May, 1974), pp. 141-159
- DUE: Close *historical* reading of poem from *Blue Colonial* (3p)  
Research narrative**
- February 11      USING NEWSPAPERS/PERIODICALS
- Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden*
- DUE: List of three sources relevant to research question  
Set of research questions via email, cc/librarian Missy Roser**
- February 18      LIBRARY SESSION
- Benedict Anderson, “Census, Map, Museum” from *Imagined Communities*
- Allen Guttman, “American Studies at Amherst.” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Part 2 (Summer, 1970), pp. 433-4
- DUE: 19<sup>th</sup> century newspaper article writeup (2p)  
Research Proposal**

- February 25 José David Saldivar: *Border Matters*
- Karen Halttunen, "Groundwork: American Studies in Place." *American Quarterly*, Volume 58, Number 1, March 2006, pp. 1-15
- David Stephens, "Making Sense of Maps"  
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/maps/>
- DUE: Map analysis (4p)**
- March 3 MEAD MUSEUM SESSION
- Sylvan Barnett, "Analytic Thinking" from *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*
- Henry Glassie, "Meaningful Things and Appropriate Myths: The Artifacts Place in American Studies" from ed. Robert Blair St. George, *Material Life in America*
- DUE: Literature search revised in consultation w/librarian**
- March 10 Michael Lesy, *Wisconsin Death Trip*
- Hayden White, "The History Text as Literary Artifact"
- John Berger, "Uses of Photography" from *About Looking*
- DUE: Photograph analysis from *Wisconsin Death Trip* (3p)  
 Material analysis from Mead (due 3/16)**
- March 17 SPRING BREAK
- DUE: Review *The Consecrated Eminence***  
<https://consecratedeminence.wordpress.com/>
- March 31 ARCHIVES SESSION
- Jules David Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory" from *Material Life in America*.
- DUE: annotated bibliography, cc/librarian  
 Material analysis from Archives (4/1)**
- April 7 ORAL HISTORY/ETHNOGRAPHY
- Leah Schmalzbauer, *The Last Best Place*
- [http://dohistory.org/on\\_your\\_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html](http://dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html)
- DUE: Revised proposal  
 List of relevant archives**
- April 14 LEGAL RESEARCH

Julie Sze, *Noxious New York*

**DUE: Review essay (5p)**

April 21 Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia*

**Due: Oral interview writeup (3p)**

April 28 **WORKSHOP DRAFTS**

**DUE: Presentation Drafts**

Week May 5 **CLASS CONFERENCE**