

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School/Department:	Social Sciences and Humanities
Programme:	American Studies International History
FHEQ Level:	3
Course Title:	Discovering America: Foundations of American Studies
Course Code:	AMS 3100
Total Hours:	120
Timetabled Hours:	45
Guided Learning Hours:	0
Independent Learning Hours:	75
Credits:	12 UK CATS credits 6 ECTS credits 3 US credits

Course Description:

The course serves as a broad introduction to the interdisciplinary field of American Studies. The course aims to give the student a general understanding of key aspects of American history, politics and culture – stressing differences between the history, politics and culture of the United States and the rest of the Americas. Specific attention will be paid to the evolution of American Studies as a discipline.

Pre-requisites:

None

Aims and Objectives:

- To gain an understanding of how the interaction of culture, geography, politics and religion shaped the United States of America
- in relation to other American regions and other continents
- To provide a framework for critical understanding of key comparative themes in social, political and economic history, including culture, gender and ethnicity
- To provide a background for eventual careers in fields which require articulate, clear thinking individuals with a grasp of American Studies
- To foster the acquisition, development and consolidation of a variety of inter-disciplinary and transferable skills through the study of particular themes in American Studies
- To promote critical engagement with a wide range of primary and secondary historical sources, and the development of both a succinct writing style and the ability to present complex arguments orally

Programme Outcomes:

American Studies: A3(I), B3(I), C3(I), D3(I)

International History: A3(I), B3(I), C3(I), D3(I)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification.

This is located at the archive maintained by Registry Services and found at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following learning outcomes.

- Have a critical understanding of some of the ways in which pre-colonial American cultures developed and were transformed by colonialism.
- Have a critical understanding of the ways in which the cultures of colonists & immigrants influenced the development of the cultures of the Americas.
- Have developed a critical understanding of the processes which have led to the United States' rise as a global power.
- Demonstrate the ability to gather, organise and deploy abstract ideas and detailed information, including basic sociological and historiographical skills, in order to formulate arguments cogently, and express them effectively in written, oral or other forms.
- Demonstrate an intercultural awareness of the US's role in the world.

Indicative Content:

- Historical overview of the pre-colonial Americas
- Historical overview of colonial cultural transformation of the Americas
- Development of cultural creolization in the Americas
- Development of United States as a symbol of modernity in 19th & 20th centuries
- Historical & sociological overview of development of American Studies as a discipline

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

The course will be taught through a combination of lectures and seminar classes. Lectures are primarily designed to give an overview of the issues and problems on a particular topic, and thereby provide guidance for seminar discussion. Seminars will be used for debates and group/sub-group discussion, and are intended to provide an interactive and participatory learning environment. Students are expected to do the set readings for each week, and to be prepared to contribute to class discussion and discussion sub-groups. The general approach to classes is informal, and discussion is viewed as an essential part of learning.

Indicative Texts:

Boyer, P.S. *American History: A Very Short Introduction*. OUP, 2012.

Duncan, R. and J. Goddard, *Contemporary United States*. 5th ed. Bloomsbury, 2018.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott *The Great Gatsby*. 1925. Any Edition.

Please Note: The core and the reference texts will be reviewed at the time of designing the semester syllabus

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or LTPC)	Change Actioned by Academic Registry
Various updates as part of the UG programme review	AB Jan 2022	
Revision – Annual Update	May 2023	
Total Hours Updated	April 2024	