

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

NOTE: ANY CHANGES TO A CSD MUST GO THROUGH ALL OF THE RELEVANT APPROVAL PROCESSES, INCLUDING LTFC.

Academic School/Department: Communications, Arts and Social Sciences

Programme: American Studies

FHEQ Level: 3

Course Title: Foundations of American Studies

Course Code: AMS 3100

Course Leader: Professor Alex Seago

Student Engagement Hours: 120

Lectures: 22.5

Seminar / Tutorials: 22.5

Independent / Guided Learning : 75

Semester: FALL and/or SPRING and/or SUMMER

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 in relation to other American regions and other continents. To gain experience of using a wide range of source materials, including primary, secondary, literary and visual materials, and learn to synthesise this information into a coherent whole. To enhance historical, sociological and transferable skills (written and oral) through seminars, group discussion, presentations, exams, and research papers based upon a critical understanding of various documents (primary and secondary) and other media.

Programme Outcomes:

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

3A(i); 3B(i); 3C(i); 3D(i)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification.
This is located at the Departmental page of the portal.

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 Richmond University Standard Assessment Norms approved at Academic Council on June 28, 2012.

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| Test | 20% |
| Midterm Exam | 25% |
| Paper | 25% |
| Final Exam | 30% |

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.

Bibliography:

- Taylor, A Colonial America (2012)

