

## AMERICAN STUDIES 310:

## CYBORG AMERICANS

## INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN STUDIES

**Course Information****Unique numbers****Time and Location**

TTH 75 mins

**Professor Info**

Jeannette Vaught, PhD

**TA Info****Introduction**

This broad survey course introduces you to the dynamic field of American Studies. By giving you a sense of what materials, questions, and topics we investigate in American Studies, I hope to generate interest in the major, but even if you do not set foot in another American Studies classroom, this course aims to ground you in a way of thinking about the world you live in that is interdisciplinary, wide-ranging, and open to various points of view — all hallmarks of work in this discipline.

American Studies is a scholarly area of cultural history, but the tools it provides for engaging critically with American culture apply widely to the task of live-living in the twenty-first century.

In order to experiment with the breadth of the field, we'll turn to a powerful figure to guide our explorations: the cyborg. The cyborg is by definition a boundary-crosser, which makes them useful as boundary identifiers. In this class, cyborgs that cross the boundaries between human, animal, and machine will do two things: first, help us learn the fundamental American Studies concept that "American" identity is fluid, contested, and constructed; and second, by virtue of their own boundary-crossing, they will help us learn how to approach interdisciplinary cultural history. This course proceeds chronologically and thematically through the 19th and twentieth centuries to explore various intersections between humans, natures, and technologies. This is an interdisciplinary cultural history course that carries a **Cultural Diversity Flag**. As such, it will draw primary material from fields as

## Course Website

Information for this course can be found through its Canvas page, which you log into with your EID at [canvas.utexas.edu](https://canvas.utexas.edu).

On this page, you will find:

- A calendar of important course dates
- Required readings
- Important communication between me and you through Announcements
- Full descriptions of your assignments
- Lecture slides, videos, some assigned readings, and other course documents under Files
- Your grades

## Materials

### Required:

Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler, eds., *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, 2nd ed.  
ISBN 0814708013

\*Note: *Keywords* has a companion website, [keywords.nyupress.org](http://keywords.nyupress.org), where some of your essays are located. Noted on course schedule.

### Optional:

Lectures Online through the UT Store

diverse as photography, anthropology, the history of science, and film, among others. Cultural Diversity courses are designed to increase your familiarity with the variety and richness of the American cultural experience. You should therefore expect a substantial part of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one U.S. cultural group that has experienced persistent marginalization.

## Expected Outcomes

By following cyborgs through American history, you will **gain confidence in the field of American Studies**, and **increase your understanding of the diversity of American cultural history**, including ways in which the nation has been legally, culturally, and socially culpable in perpetuating exclusion. You will learn to **analyze primary and secondary historical sources in order to interpret historical change** by understanding the relationship between source material and its broader context. You will demonstrate your mastery of these expected outcomes by making **clear written arguments and supporting them with evidence** from course materials. You will learn to rethink history by **questioning familiar narratives of invention and progress**, instead learning new ways of understanding constructions such as **race, gender, class, and sexuality**.



Image credit: Lombroso composites, Creative Commons

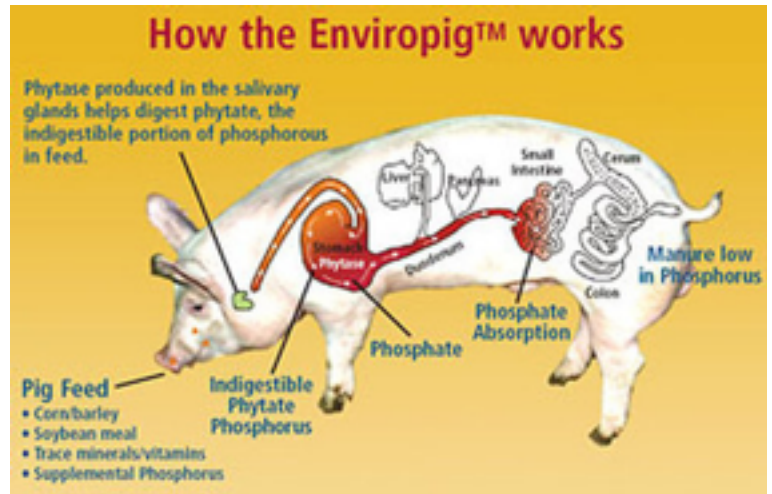


Image credits: (L) Harry Ransom Center; (R) [enviropigsgmo.weebly.com](http://enviropigsgmo.weebly.com)

## Course Requirements More information on all requirements can be found on Canvas

### Attendance (10%)

TA will take attendance every day via a sign up sheet. You may miss two class periods without penalty. Every unexcused absence after these two will lower your attendance grade. On the other hand, if you attend every class, three points will be added to your final exam grade.

### Participation (15%)

Any in-class exercise counts towards your participation, and will be assessed by the quality of your work.

You can greatly improve your participation grade by taking bonus reading quizzes through Canvas. For every Keyword and secondary reading that is assigned, I will post a quiz on Canvas. If you complete a quiz one hour before class time (when it closes), you will receive an extra participation point. If you take multiple quizzes, this gives you the opportunity to exceed 100% on your participation grade, and boost your overall grade.

### HRC Primary Source Analysis (20%)

During one class day this semester, you will take a field trip to the Harry Ransom Center to investigate archival materials related to course themes. You will complete an assignment while in the archive, and then build on that work to create a blog post linking your object to course material.

#### Grading Breakdown at a Glance

Attendance: 10%      Midterm Exam: 25%  
 Participation: 15%      Final Exam: 30%  
 HRC Primary Source Analysis: 20%

#### American Studies Grading Scale:

A 93-100; A- 90-92; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D+ 67-69; D 63-66; D- 60-62; F 0-59

## Course Requirements, continued

### Midterm (25%) and Final (30%) Exams

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These two major take-home exams constitute the majority of your grade. You may use notes, readings, posted slides, and other course materials, but **no outside research**. The point of this exam format is to develop your ability to synthesize course material and practice interdisciplinary thinking, not to test you on your recall. If you do not practice developing connections over time between the various cultural artifacts you encounter in class, you will struggle with these.

## Q & A Course Policies

### Question

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*I have a question about an assignment, course material, a grade, or setting up an excused absence. Who should I contact and how?*

*I missed class. What should I do?*

*Can I use my laptop in class?*

*Can I turn work in late or make up work?*

### Answer

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TA is in charge of communication for this class. For most questions, contact TA first by email. If you have an emergency, a private matter, or she tells you to contact me, then email me at [jvaught@utexas.edu](mailto:jvaught@utexas.edu) or through Canvas. If you want to contact your classmates to set up study groups or share materials, Canvas is a great place to start.

You are responsible for all material covered in class. Ask a fellow classmate to share notes, visit your TAs or me in office hours, and check Canvas for the lecture slides. Keep in mind that some in-class activities can be made up outside of class, but others depend on being in the classroom.

Be prepared to take handwritten notes in class. There will be times where laptops will be in use during class for collaborative and workshop activities, but otherwise I expect them to be closed and put away. Cell phones will not go off or be surreptitiously used. My philosophy about this policy is summed up here: [https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2016/08/19/another-argument-against-laptops-classroom-essay?utm\\_source=Inside](https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2016/08/19/another-argument-against-laptops-classroom-essay?utm_source=Inside)

Late work is not accepted in this course. We can talk about extensions under extraordinary circumstances or if you give **ample** advance notice. **Make-up exams will not be granted except in extreme situations. If you cannot make an exam date because of extraordinary circumstances, you need to make arrangements with me in advance.**

# Course Policies, continued

## Question

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*How does the new campus carry law affect classroom policy?*

## Answer

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Students and faculty are permitted by law to carry concealed handguns, but they must remain invisible at all times. As per University policy, "The open carry of handguns is not allowed on the campus. Therefore, **if you ever see a gun, do not attempt to question or approach the carrier, but immediately CALL 911.** Police are trained to handle this situation."

*Someone in class is behaving strangely or making me uncomfortable. What should I do?*

If you are worried or feel unsafe, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

*What if I need an accommodation because of a disability?*

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 512-471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video). Faculty are not required to provide accommodations without an official letter from SSD.

*What are the evacuation procedures for this classroom?*

Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Evacuation procedures can be found at [utexas.edu/emergency](http://utexas.edu/emergency).

*Are there opportunities for extra credit?*

Beyond the bonus reading quizzes, I encourage you to attend various lectures happening on UT campus. On Canvas you will find information on where to find out about these lectures and what to write for credit. You must clear the lecture with me before you write it up; unapproved lectures will not receive credit. For each approved lecture write-up you do, you will receive one point added to your midterm or final exam grade.

**What do I need to do to do well in this class? In short:**

- Complete readings on the day they are assigned in the schedule
- Come to class every day and take notes
- Ask questions during lecture
- Participate in class discussions and activities
- Visit TAs and Dr. Vaught in office hours with questions
- Get together with fellow students to compare notes and discuss class topics
- Keep up with Announcements on Canvas

**Class Schedule** (Changes to this schedule may be made as necessary)

Topic	Date	What to Read	Special Info
		<b>Welcome!</b>	
Introductions	Week 1 Thursday, Aug 25	No reading due	Student advice from last Fall Things to note: my Ppt style; need to speak up in lecture!; how to read a keyword; how to do class well
	Weeks 2, 3, 4	<b>Unit 1, 1860-1920: Science, Body, Power</b>	
Truth And/OR Knowledge	Week 2 Tuesday, Aug 30	Keyword: Science	Keyword on <a href="http://keywords.nyupress.org">keywords.nyupress.org</a> Bonus Quiz on Canvas
Making a New Man: Civil War Prostheses	Week 2 Thursday, Sept 1	Jennifer Davis McDaid, "How a One-Legged Rebel Lives: Confederate Veterans and Artificial Limbs in Virginia"	McDaid on Canvas Bonus Quiz on Canvas
Photography As Power: Crime	Week 3 Tuesday, Sept 6	Keyword: Technology Selection from Shawn Michelle Smith, "Superficial Depths"	Smith on Canvas Bonus Quiz on Canvas
Photography As Power: Expansion	Week 3 Thursday, Sept 8	Selection from James Faris, <i>Navajo and Photography</i>	Faris on Canvas Bonus Quiz on Canvas

Topic	Date	What to Read	Special Info
Turn of the Century Sexual Anxiety	Week 4 Tuesday, Sept 13	Keyword: Culture Selection from Carolyn de la Pena, "The Body Electric"	de la Pena on Canvas Bonus Quiz on Canvas
Where is God in Science?	Week 4 Thursday, Sept 15	Selection from Mary Baker Eddy, "Christian Science: No and Yes"	MBE on Canvas
	Weeks 5, 6, 7	<b>Unit 2: 1920-1950 Labor, Nature, Human</b>	
The Measured Body in the Early 1900s	Week 5 Tuesday, Sept 20	Elsbeth Brown, "The Prosthetics of Management: Motion Study, Photography, and the Industrialized Body in WWI America"	Brown on Canvas Bonus Quiz on Canvas
Energy and History	Week 5 Thursday, Sept 22	Keyword: Environment	Keyword on <a href="http://keywords.nyupress.org">keywords.nyupress.org</a> Bonus Quiz on Canvas
Embodying New Energies	Week 6 Tuesday, Sept 27		HRC Day 1
The Biggest Thing on Earth	Week 6 Thursday, Sept 29	Keyword: Subject White, Introduction	White on Canvas Bonus Quiz on Canvas
Environmental "Mights"	Week 7 Tuesday, Oct 4	Mark Fiege, "Habitat" pgs 42-64	Fiege on Canvas Bonus Quiz on Canvas HRC Day 2
Fish: Flipping the Script	Week 7 Thursday, Oct 6	Fiege, "Habitat," pas 64-80	Fiege on Canvas Bonus Quiz on Canvas Hand out exam 1
	Weeks 8, 9, 10, 11	<b>Unit 3: 1950-1980 Space, Home, Identity</b>	
Feeling the Chill	Week 8 Tuesday, Oct 11	Keyword: Domestic C. L. Moore, "No Woman Born," pgs 1-16	HRC Day 3

Topic	Date	What to Read	Special Info
Containment Culture	Week 8 Thursday, Oct 13	Moore, "No Woman Born," pgs 16-33	
Citizenship and Consumption	Week 9 Tuesday, Oct 18	Keyword: Exceptionalism	Keyword on <a href="http://keywords.nyupress.org">keywords.nyupress.org</a> Bonus Quiz on Canvas HRC Day 4
Laika and the Space Dogs	Week 9 Thursday, Oct 20	Selection from Fudge, <i>Animal</i>	Fudge on Canvas Bonus Quiz
Kitchen Debate: Nixon, Khrushchev, and General Electric	Week 10 Tuesday, Oct 25	Keyword: Civilization Selections of primary documents about the Kitchen Debate	Selections on Canvas under Hamilton and Phillips Bonus Quiz on Canvas HRC Day 5
Kitchen Debate: Postwar domesticity	Week 10 Thursday, Oct 27	Selections of primary documents about Cold War American domestic culture	Selections on Canvas under Hamilton and Phillips
Food as Technology	Week 11 Tuesday, Nov 1		Bonus Quiz on Canvas HRC Day 6
Uncontained Identities	Week 11 Thursday, Nov 3	Keyword: Space	Bonus Quiz on Canvas
	Weeks 12, 13, 14, 15	<b>Unit 4: 1980-2016 Digit, Globe, Disease</b>	
Race, Sex, Synth	Week 12 Tuesday, Nov 8		Keyword on <a href="http://keywords.nyupress.org">keywords.nyupress.org</a>
The Digit in Digital	Week 12 Thursday, Nov 10	Keyword: Globalization	Keyword on <a href="http://keywords.nyupress.org">keywords.nyupress.org</a>
Health in a Global Context I	Week 13 Tuesday, Nov 15	Keyword: Body Selection from Anne Fadiman, <i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down</i>	
Health in a Global Context II	Week 13 Thursday, Nov 17	Selection from Anne Fadiman, <i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down</i>	Bonus Quiz on Canvas



Topic	Date	What to Read	Special Info
Manufacturing Disease	Week 14 Tuesday, Nov 22	Optional but deeply encouraged: Watch <i>Blade Runner</i> (1982)	
The Formation of Information	Week 14 Thursday, Nov 24	No assigned reading	
Wiring Wilderness	Week 15 Tuesday, Nov 29	Bear 71 - pulling from internet lecture (Reading from <i>Wired Wilderness</i> )	Bonus Quiz on Canvas
The Case of the Enviropigs	Week 15 Thursday, Dec 1	Enviropigs/Harbisson No assigned reading	Exam 2