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**Introduction to American Studies, 1865-present**

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本科生    本科生    硕士生    硕士生

Undergraduate    Undergraduate    Master    Master

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English

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Basic knowledge of the history

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Lectures and discussions

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Attendance and participation 20%  
assignment and mini-papers 80%

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2 credits

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Dr. Brian Black is Professor of History and Environmental Studies at Penn State Altoona, where he currently serves as Head of Arts and Humanities.  Recognized as a global expert on petroleum history, his research emphasis is on the landscape and environmental history of North America, particularly in relation to the application and use of energy and technology. He is the author of several books, including the award-winning Petrolia: The Landscape of America's First Oil Boom (Johns Hopkins, 2003) andCrude Reality: Petroleum in World History (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).  He has contributed essays to more than twenty books and is the editor of a number of others, including Nature’s Entrepot: Philadelphia's Urban Sphere and its Environmental Thresholds (University of Pittsburgh, 2012) and Climate Change, a four-volume encyclopedia (ABC-Clio, 2012).  He also served as co-editor of the special issue of the Journal of American History on “Oil in American Life,” which was inspired by the 2010 Gulf Oil Spill and he is a former editor of Pennsylvania History.

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This course is designed to introduce students to the development of American culture from the Civil War to the present.  It differs from ordinary survey courses in American history in two ways: 1) in addition to standard political and institutional sources used in many history courses, it concentrates on a wide variety of cultural expressions, including fiction, folklore, satire, art, poetry, music, maps, journals, trial transcripts, material culture, mass media, etc.,; and 2) it is episodic rather than comprehensive--that is, it focuses on representative events which are symbolic of the larger patterns of American national development.  
 The thematic emphasis of the course will be on the term "culture"--both how a culture is perceived by others and how a culture perceives itself.  The assumption is that American culture, like any culture, is multi-faceted and many-layered.  Therefore, the assignments are designed to encourage an understanding of the "deep structure" of American life.  To this end, a basic portion of the course is documentary analysis. The document analysis will be used as a foundation for Professor Black's lectures, so students will be able to compare their hypotheses with the themes developed in class.  Students will not be judged on the degree to which they anticipate Professor Black's connections but on their ability to present plausible theories about the relatedness of the documents.  
 In addition to these brief weekly document analyses, students are expected to attend class, to participate in discussion, to write two short papers (3-5 pages each), and to take a midterm exam and a final exam.   Overall, the organization of the course will follow the chronology of American history, 1865-present.

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Chapter 1  American Culture and History  
1:1INTRODUCTION: Culture and American Identity  
1:2 CIVIL WAR   
1:3Why study Popular culture?    
Questions andassignment:  
1) How do we study the past?  
2) Why does the past matter?  
3) What is the significance of Civil War in American history?  
  
Chapter 2  Industrialization and Global Expansion in the early 20th Century  
2:1Western Expansion,Modernization and the White City  
2:2Amusing the Million:  WW I and 1920s  
2:3Harlem Renaissance and the Roaring 20s   
2:4New Deal   
Questions andassignment:  
1) How do new technologies change industrial America?  
2) When do consumers become an important driver in American history?  
3) How do ideas of race and ethnicity influence American culture?  
  
Chapter3: World War II Shapes the Consumer Nation  
3:1 WW II &Conspicuous Consumption  
3:21950s:Romantic Escapes and TV Narrative  
3:3Electronic Hearth  
3:4From Elvis to Woodstock to Hip Hopto Beyonce  
Questions andassignment:  
1) Do ideas of gender and diversity change in American life?  
2) What is the significance of middle class growth?  
3) How are supplies of energy integral to this cultural change?  
  
Chapter 4 Shifting Eras  
4:11970s:  Vietnam and Energy Crisis  
4:2Breaking Barriers  
4:3Globalization and Beyond  
Questions andassignment:  
1) How do crisis of 1970s influence American ideas  
2) What contributes to the growth of environmental thought?  
3) How does the role of the U.S. in the world change?  
  
Chapter 5Information Age:Reading Culture  
5:1 Postmodern America and the election of Obama  
5:2 Pop Culture Nation?:Reality TV and BeyondThe Information Age  
5:2 Information technology and personal identity  
Questions andassignment:  
1) What does Obama’s election mean to America?   
2) How do American politics change as a result?  
3) How does the role of the U.S. in the world change?

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课程文件的pdf文档  
Printout of PPT files for all the lectures will be made available in the very beginning of class.  
  
1) Norton, People and a Nation, Vol. 2, 8th Edition  
2) Addams, Twenty Years at Hull House  
3) Bates, Long Shadow of Little Rock  
4) Kovic, Born on the Fourth of July

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