

AMSTUD 200mg: Introduction to American Studies (10347R)**Spring 2022****T/Th 12:30-1:50 PM; SOS B 44****John Carlos Rowe (johnrowe@usc.edu) : Office Hours: Th, 2-3 PM THH 402E (821-5594) or Zoom (by invitation)****Texts (in course sequence):**

John Carlos Rowe, "Introduction," *A Concise Companion to American Studies*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. **Available on Blackboard.** (Also available online: Blackwell Reference Online collection (<http://www.blackwellreference.com>)).

John Rollin Ridge. *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta* (1854). Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955. ISBN: 0806114290.

José Clemente Orozco, "The Epic of American Civilization" (1932-1934), frescoes in Baker Library Reserve Room, Dartmouth College (images screened in class).

Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Harvard University Press, 1995. ISBN: 0674076060

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*. New York: Penguin Books, 1987. ISBN: 0-452-26446-4

Maxine Hong Kingston. *China Men*. New York: Vintage Books, 1980. ISBN: 0679723285.

Coco Fusco, *English Is Broken Here*. New York: Atheneum, 1995. ISBN: 1565842456

Judith F. Baca, "La Memoria de Nuestra Tierra" (1996), Mural, USC Ronald Tutor Campus Center, The Forum, Fourth Floor

Craig Santos Perez, *From Unincorporated Territory [Saina]*. Richmond, CA: Omnidawn Publishing, 2010. ISBN: 978-1-890650-46-951595

Course Description:

We will study the "new" American Studies, including what it adapts from traditional American Studies and Ethnic Studies, as well as its effort to understand comparatively the many different societies of the Western Hemisphere. The historical focus of the course will be from the 1930s to the present, which is usually understood as the period in which American Studies develops as an academic discipline, but we will look back as far as the sixteenth century to understand how contact between European colonizers and Amerindian peoples shapes the discipline. The principal focus of the course will be on "theories" of American Studies, and we will consider

several creative works as “new” histories and theories, including Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (1987), Maxine Hong Kingston’s *China Men* (1980), and Judith Baca’s mural, “La Memoria de Nuestra Tierra.” The course will also involve some fieldwork outside the classroom, including visits (see below) to Baca’s mural on the USC campus and to the California African American Museum in Exposition Park.

Course Requirements:

Proposal for Term Essay: In Week 5, you will submit a “**proposal**” for the term essay or project; the proposal describes your topic, proposes one or two historical or textual examples (which need not be limited to course assignments), and includes five titles of scholarly works (other than your examples) you think will be important to use in completing the essay or project.

Due: Week 5, Th, February 10

Term Essay: An essay of 10-15 double-spaced pages, including notes and works cited. Ideas for the term essay will be distributed and discussed in **Week 3 (Th, 1/25)** of the semester (see Syllabus). In **Week 5 (Th, 2/10)**, you will submit a proposal (as described above). In **Week 10 (T, 3/22)**, you will submit a **thesis** for the term essay, in which you do a basic draft of the **first 2-3 pages** of the term essay. On **5/2 (M) by 5 PM**, you will submit the completed term essay by attachment to an email to: johnrowe@usc.edu .

Midterm Exam: In **Week 7 (Th., February 24)**, there will be a midterm examination in class. The examination will be essay format and cover all the materials studied through the end of Week 6 (see Syllabus). The exam will be open book, but not open notes. You may bring copies of the course textbooks. The exam will last one hour and fifteen minutes. You will be asked to answer one short (20 minutes) and one long (40 minutes) essay question, each chosen from several choices. The examination will be completed electronically and submitted to me (johnrowe@usc.edu) at the end of the examination period. No internet connection will be permitted during the exam.

Fieldwork Reports: Students will be asked to complete two brief reports (2 pages each) on their visits to two sites discussed in class: the California African American Museum and Judith Baca’s mural, “La Memoria de Nuestra Tierra.” You may make your visits at any time in the semester up to Week 14 (April 19 and 21), which is set aside without class meetings to enable you to make the site visits. In Week 15, we will discuss both sites. Your reports may also be submitted at any time during the semester, although both will benefit from class discussion. The last date for submitting your reports on your fieldwork will be F, 4/29, 5 PM, to johnrowe@usc.edu

Final Exam: The final examination will be a take-home examination. Questions will be distributed in the last day of class (**Th, April 26**) and due back by email attachment: johnrowe@usc.edu by **4 PM, May 11 (F)**. You will be asked to write two essay questions, each

answer approximately 3-4 pages long. Topics for the questions will be taken from the entire course, including your fieldwork.

Grading:

Fieldwork Reports	20 % total (10 % each) of your final grade
Midterm Exam	20 % of your final grade
Term Essay	30 % of your final grade (grade includes proposal)
Final Exam	30 % of your final grade

Thesis

for Term Essay **This item will not be graded. If you do not submit it on time, then your grade on the term essay will be reduced by 5 %.**

“INC” grades will be given only to students providing documented medical or family emergency.

Syllabus

Week 1: Introduction

- 1/11** **Introduction to the course:** requirements and syllabus. A brief discussion of the “Myth-and-Symbol School” of American Studies and the problem with “American Exceptionalism.”
- 1/13** **Read:** Rowe, “Introduction,” *A Concise Companion to American Studies* (2010), pp. 1-16.

Week 2: California and the New American Studies: John Rollin Ridge

- 1/18** **Read:** John Rollin Ridge, *Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta* (1854), about one third.
- 1/20** **Read:** Ridge, another third.

Week 3: The New American Studies

- 1/25** **Read:** Ridge, complete the novel.
- 1/27** **Read:** Concluding discussion of Ridge. **Ideas for Term Essays Distributed in Class and Discussed.**

Week 4: Mexican Culture in the US: José Clemente Orozco

- 2/1** **Screen in class:** José Clemente Orozco’s fresco, “The Epic of American Civilization” in the Reserve Room, Baker Library, Dartmouth College

2/3 **Read:** José Martí's "Our America" (1891) (on Blackboard); **Discussion:**
Orozco's fresco and Martí's utopia.

Week 5: The Black Atlantic

2/8 **Read:** Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, ch. 1

2/10 **Read:** Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, ch. 2

Term Essay Proposal Due by Email (johnrowe@usc.edu) by 5 PM

Week 6: African American Diasporas

2/15 **Read:** Gilroy, ch. 3

2/17 **Read:** Gilroy, ch. 6

Week 7: Midterm Exam

2/22 **Review for Midterm Examination.**

2/24 **Midterm Examination in Class.**

Week 8: African American Migrations

3/1 **Read:** Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, pp. 1-63.

3/3 **Read:** *Beloved*, pp. 64-125.

Week 9: African American Migratons

3/8 **Read:** *Beloved*, pp. 126-165.

3/10 **Read:** *Beloved*, pp. 166-276.

3/13-3/20: **Spring Recess**

Week 10: Asian American Diasporas

3/22 **Read:** Maxine Hong Kingston, *China Men*, "On Discovery" through "The
Ghostmate." **Term Essay Thesis Due by 5 PM to johnrowe@usc.edu .**

3/24 **Read:** *China Men*, "The Great Grandfather of the Sandalwood Mountains"
through "The Laws"

Week 11: Asian American Diasporas

- 3/29 **Read:** *China Men*, “Alaska China Men” through “The Adventures of Lo Bun Sun”
 3/31 **Read:** *China Men*, “The American Father” through “On Listening”

Week 12: Before and After America: On Indigeneity

- 4/5 **Read:** Coco Fusco, *English Is Broken Here*, pp. 21-63.
 4/7 **Read:** Coco Fusco, *English Is Broken Here*, pp. 145-178; Jodi Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), pp. 69-76 (**available on Blackboard**).

Week 13: The Transpacific: Guam or Guåhan?

- 4/12 **Read:** Craig Santos Perez, *from unincorporated territory [saina]* (about half)
 4/14 **Read:** Craig Santos Perez, the rest of the poem.

Week 14: Fieldwork Week

4/19 and 4/21 This week is set aside for your visits to Judy Baca’s Mural and the California African American Museum in Exposition Park, as well as to write your 2-page report on each visit. See the Syllabus for more information. Visits and reports may be completed at any time before this week, but April 29 (F), 5 PM, is the deadline for your reports.

Week 15: The New American Studies and Visual Cultures

- 4/26 **Discuss:** Judith Baca’s mural, “La Memoria de Nuestra Tierra”
 4/28 **Discuss:** Visits to the California African American Museum
Final Examination Questions distributed in class.
 4/29 (F) **Last day to submit fieldwork reports (5 PM) by email to: johnrowe@usc.edu**
- 5/2 (M) **Term Essays due, 5 PM: johnrowe@usc.edu**
- 5/11 (W): **4 PM: Take-Home Final Examination due: johnrowe@usc.edu**