

University of Jordan
Faculty of International Studies
Department of American Studies

2403710 American Culture
Spring Semester 2012
Arts Building, Room
Tuesday, 5:00 – 8:00 P.M.

Lecturer : Dr. Debbie Abuelghanam

Office:

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Course Description

This course examines the development of American culture by drawing upon the perspectives of liberty, anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, and aesthetics. Placing special emphasis on the 20th century the course surveys a wide variety of distinctively American cultural forms and traditions. Students explore a range of topics related to “high” culture, popular culture, and folk culture: art and architecture, music, film, television, and the role of the media in American life, food and fashion, sports and leisure, religion, education, the commodification of culture, and regional and ethnic folkways.

Course Objectives

The objectives of this class are to take an in depth look at American Culture. There are many aspects of culture to examine and analyze. Then once these aspects are understood, what is each individual role in developing the American culture as a whole.

Course Requirements

Exams There will be two exams for your enjoyment. There will be a midterm exam on **March 27, 2012** and a final exam on **May 22, 2012**. The exams will consist of essay questions. The Midterm Exam is worth **30 points** and the Final Exam is worth **40 points**.

Term Paper A term paper is a requirement of this course. The topic of the paper should be relevant to one of the topics in the Assignment Schedule. The paper should be 10 – 15 pages in length. The topic and preliminary outline are due on **March 13, 2012**. The first draft of the paper is due on **April 24, 2012** and the final draft is due at the paper presentations scheduled on **May 15, 2012** (see Assignment Schedule). If you use a

published source it must be **documented**. **Plagiarism** will not be tolerated. You will present your paper at the end of the semester.

Attendance Class attendance is mandatory. Attendance will be taken each session. Legitimate reasons for any absence will be accepted and must be accompanied with documentation.

Class Each student is expected to have read the assigned reading prior to attending

Participation class. THIS IS A SEMINAR STYLE COURSE. Each student must be prepared to participate in class discussion concerning the readings.

Grading The total number of points that can be earned for the semester is **100 points**. The points are distributed as follows:

Midterm Exam	30 points
Final Exam	40 points
Term Paper	20 points
Class Participation	<u>10 points</u>
	100 points

Term Paper	Outline	5 points
	1 st Draft	5 points
	2 nd Draft	5 points
	Presentation	<u>5 points</u>
		20 points

Assignment Schedule

		<u>Topics</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Week 1	Feb. 7	Orientation	
Week 2	Feb. 14	What is Culture?	Weber article Hofstede Metcalf Ch. 1 pp.1-6
Week 3	Feb. 21	Society & Individual	Metcalf Ch. 3 & 9
Week 4	Feb. 28	Social Class	Newman etal. Ch.4 Parenti, Ch.2
Week 5	Mar. 6	Cultural Diversity	Newman etal. Ch2 Jones, Ch.28
Week 6	Mar. 13	Family Life	Lerman, etal. Clemans-Cope, etal. Acs and Nichols
<u>Outline Due</u>			
Week 7	Mar. 20	Race	Emerson, etal.Ch. 1/ 5 Shapiro, Ch. 2
Week 8	Mar. 27	<u>Midterm Exam</u>	
Week 9	Apr. 3	Religion	Pew Forum
Week 10	Apr. 10	Education	Loveless Mc Andrews
Week 11	Apr. 17	Media	Parenti Section II
Week 12	Apr. 24	Commification <u>1st Draft of Paper Due</u>	
Week 13	May 1	Labor Day Holiday	
Week 14	May 8	Wrap Up	
Week 15	May 15	<u>Paper Presentations</u>	

Week 16

May 22

Final Exam

Reading List

Acs, Gregory and Austin Nichols. 2010. *America Insecure: Changes in the Economic Security of American Families*. The Urban Institute.

Clemans-Cope, Lisa and Cynthia D. Perry, Genevieve M. Kenney, Jennifer E. Pelletier. 2008. "Access To and Use of Paid Sick Leave Among Low-Income Families with Children. *Pediatrics: Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics*. 122; pp. 480-486. 2008.

Emerson, Michael O. and Christian Smith. 2000. *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Chapter 1 – Confronting the Black-White Racial Divide

Chapter 5 – Controlling One's Own Destiny

Hofstede, G 1997. *Culture and the Organizations: Software of the Mind*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Jones, Maldwyn A. 1995. *The Limits of Liberty: American History 1607-1992*. 2nd Edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

Chapter 28 – American Society and Culture 1940-1980.

Lerman, Robert, Gregory Acs and Anupa Bir. December, 2007. "An Economic Proposal and Selected Proposals For Demonstrations for Strengthening Marriages, Employment, and Family Functioning Outcomes." The Center on Labor, Human Services and Population. The Urban Institute. Pp. 4-7.

Loveless, Tom. February 2011. *How Well Are American Students Learning: With Sections on International Tests, Who's Winning the Real Race to the Top and NAEP and the Common Core State Standards*. The Brown Center at the Brookings Institute

McAndrews, Lawrence J. "Choosing Choice: George Bush and Federal Aid to Nonpublic Schools." *Journal of Higher Education*. Pp. 453-469.

Metcalf, Peter. 2005. *Anthropology: The Basics*. London & N.Y: Routledge,

Chapter 1 – Encountering Cultural Difference

Chapter 3 – Social Do's and Don'ts pp. 38-53

Chapter 9 – Culture and the Individual, pp. 163-181

Newman, Otto and Richard de Zoysa. 1999. *The American Dream in the Information Age*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Chapter 2 – The Melting Pot, pp. 31-59.

Chapter 4 – The Underclass and Joblessness, pp. 87-110.

Parenti, Michael. 1995. *Democracy for the Few*. 6th Edition. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Chapter 2 - Wealth and Want in the United States. Pp. 7-32.

Parenti, Michael. 1996. *Dirty Truths: Reflections on Politics, Media, Ideology, Conspiracy, Ethnic Life and Class Power*. San Francisco: City Light Books.

Section II – Media and Culture pp. 97- 151.

Pew Forum. U.S. Religious Landscape Survey.

Shapiro, Thomas M. 2004. *The Hidden Cost of Being African American: How Wealth Perpetrates Inequality*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Chapter 2 – The Cost of Being Black and the Advantage of Being White

Weber, Mark. 2010. *America in Decline: A Society in Denial*. The Institute for Historical Review. www.ihr.org