

**Carleton University**  
**Winter 2014**  
**Department of English**  
**ENGL 5609/CLMD 6904**  
**Introduction to U.S. Cultural Studies**  
**Thursday 2:30-5:30**  
**201D St. Patrick's Building**  
**Instructor: Franny Nudelman**  
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**franny\_nudelman@carleton.ca**

### Course Description

In this course, we will explore some of the issues and approaches that have defined the field of U.S. Cultural Studies in recent years. We will read influential scholarship, as well as analyzing relevant primary sources, with an emphasis throughout on nation, empire, ethnicity, and globalization. Familiarizing ourselves with a range of methods and concepts, we will consider the different ways that scholars in the field have interpreted the relationship between culture, power, and history.

### Reading

*Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, eds. Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler (2007)  
Tom Englehardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (1995)  
Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011)  
Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (1997)  
Nikhil Singh, *Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (2004)  
Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism* (2000)

Books for the course, as well as a course reader, can be purchased at Octopus Books, 116 Third Avenue (at Bank St.). All essays marked with a \* are in our course reader.

### Viewing

John Frankenheimer, *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962)  
Spike Lee, *When the Levees Broke* (2006)  
Edward Zwick, *Glory* (1989)

### Listening

Charles Mingus, *Mingus Ah Um* (1959)

## ASSIGNMENTS

### Journal

You will keep a journal in which you make at least two entries each week—one in response to the week's reading/viewing, and one in response to class discussion. This assignment is meant to give you a chance to work through your ideas, and to keep a record of our class discussions. In your journal, feel free to write informally, and to explore and test ideas that are not yet fully formed. Please bring your journal with you to class.

### Reading Response

Each of you will write a two-page in response to one week's reading, and circulate this response to the rest of the class by 5 pm on Sunday. Your response should aim to prompt class discussion. It need not be comprehensive, but rather should zero in on an issue or question that we can explore more fully as a group. Everyone should be sure to read these responses carefully in advance of class, and bring them with you so that we can discuss them in detail.

### Review Essay

In this five-page essay, you will review a book of American Studies scholarship that is not on our syllabus. I will give you a list of texts to choose from. In this essay, you will summarize the book's argument and its contribution to the field of U.S. Cultural Studies, describe its strengths and weaknesses, and survey the reviews of other scholars.

### Final Essay

The topics for this eight-page essay, due at the end of the semester, will evolve out of our class meetings.

## EVALUATION

### Attendance

Please do not miss class for anything short of an emergency. If you miss more than one class your grade will be lowered one half-grade for each class (in excess of one) that you miss.

### Class Participation

Our class will succeed or fail based on your active, informed, and generous participation in class discussions. For that reason, class participation will make up 30% of your grade. This grade will reflect not only your contribution to our conversations, but also your ability to listen and respond to (apply, extend, contest) each other's ideas.

### Writing Assignments

Your journal and reading response will each count for 10% of your grade, and your two essays will each count for 25%.

Week 1

Introduction

## Week 2

Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, Chs. 1-5

Abraham Lincoln, "Emancipation Proclamation" (January 1, 1863)

<http://www.archives.gov>

Frederick Douglass, "Men of Color to Arms" (March 21, 1863)

<http://www.gilderlehrman.org>

KEYWORDS: NATION, SLAVERY, ABOLITION

## Week 3

Nikhil Singh, *Black is a Country*, "Introduction: Civil Rights, Civic Myths"

\*\*David Blight, " 'Five Score Years Ago': Civil War and Civil Rights," from *American Oracle: The Civil War in the Civil Rights Era* (2011)

\*Kenneth Warren, "Taking Measure of the Black Atlantic" (from *States*)

Martin Luther King, "I Have a Dream" (1963)

[http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/mlk01.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/mlk01.asp)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smEqnklfYs>

KEYWORD: DEMOCRACY

## Week 4

Finish *Black is a Country*

KEYWORDS: AFRICAN, DIASPORA, RACE

## Week 5

\*\*Scott Saul, *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain't: Jazz and the Making of the Sixties* (2003), Introduction, Chs. 5 and 6

\*\*Leigh Raiford, *Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare: Photography and the African American Freedom Struggle* (2011), Introduction, Ch. 2

Brown v. Board of Education (1954)

<http://www.nationalcenter.org/brown.html>

Charles Mingus, *Mingus Ah Um* (1959)

KEYWORD: CULTURE

## Week 6

*Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, Chs. 6 and 7

Edward Zwick, *Glory* (1989)

KEYWORD: CITIZENSHIP

## Week 7

Tom Englehardt, *The End of Victory Culture*, Sections I and II ("War Story," and "Containments")

Dwight Eisenhower, "Farewell Speech" (1961)  
[http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/eisenhower001.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/eisenhower001.asp)

KEYWORDS: WAR, EXCEPTIONALISM, INDIAN

Week 8

*End of Victory Culture*, Section III ("The Era Reversals")

John Frankenheimer, *The Manchurian Candidate*

KEYWORDS: ASIAN, CAPITALISM

Week 9

Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence*

KEYWORDS: DOMESTIC, GENDER, EMPIRE

Week 10

\*Anne McClintock, "Paranoid Empire: Specters from Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib"

Susan Sontag, "Regarding the Torture of Others" (2004)

[www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

\*Sherman Alexie, *The Sin Eaters* (2000)

\*Matthew Frye Jacobson, "Where We Stand: US Empire at Street-Level and in the Archive," American Studies Association Presidential Address (2012)

KEYWORDS: INTERNMENT, STATE

Week 11

Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence*

KEYWORDS: GLOBALIZATION, ENVIRONMENT

Week 12

Finish *Slow Violence*

Spike Lee, "When the Levees Broke"

\*Robert Levine, "American Studies in an Age of Extinction"

KEYWORD: AMERICA