

American Studies 190: Senior Thesis Seminar Fall 2018

Wed. 1:15-4:00PM
Office: Mason Hall 123
Office Hours: Tu 4:15-5:30 Th 10:30-12:00 or by appt
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The senior thesis is the capstone intellectual experience of your college career. A thesis in American Studies is an original and substantive piece of research and writing that addresses an intellectual problem of your choosing. It allows you a chance to delve deeply into a set of issues that you find important and compelling. The thesis is an expression of your own thinking and allows you the opportunity to craft a work in which you believe.

Process: This course not only will help you research and write your senior thesis, but it also will provide the opportunity to work with other American Studies majors in a collaborative and supportive environment. The end result of your work this semester will be a detailed thesis prospectus (including a critical literature review of relevant secondary sources, a research plan, and an outline), a complete draft of one chapter of the thesis, and a body of original research.

Along the way you will identify a thesis topic, define a research question, identify appropriate sources, conduct primary research, and begin writing the actual thesis. The only outside readings will be a short book about research and one outside source each person chooses for their literature review and which we will all read.

In the spring semester, you will register for an independent study (AMST 191) with your adviser to finish your thesis. Both full-credit courses (this one and the spring independent study) are required for the major.

Advisers/readers: Two Claremont American Studies faculty will serve as your first and second readers—If you want a non-American Studies faculty reader, you will need to talk with me about it. Your readers' involvement is critical to a successful thesis. If you haven't already done so, decide as soon as possible whom you want to ask to be your readers. At Scripps this is required for formal registration for the thesis. You should meet with your first reader as soon as possible to clarify exactly how they want to proceed and to ask them to direct your independent study in the spring. By September 20 you will submit an email acknowledgment of your readers. Keep your readers informed of what you are doing in the seminar as well as keeping the seminar informed of any input provided by your readers.

Attendance: Regular attendance is required. Please let me know if an emergency will keep you from coming to class. Every unexcused absence will lower your grade by one grade (A to B, for instance).

Grading: Your grade will be based upon the effort you put into your work this semester and your contributions to the class. Some assignments will receive a formal grade, other will be on a credit/no credit basis as indicated below.

Required Reading: WC Booth et al, *The Craft of Research* (3rd edition)

Recommended: Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th Ed.

Assignment	Due date	Grade or credit	Weight
<u>1 paragraph thesis topic</u>	8/30 in class	C/NC	2.5%
2-3 min. presentation on potential thesis topic	8/30 in class	C/NC	2.5%
<u>2-3 min. Research sample presentation</u>	9/13	C/NC	2.5%
<u>Reader names to me via email</u>	9/20	---	---
2-3 min. present. of secondary article	9/27	C/NC	2.5%
<u>1500-2500 word lit review</u>	10/4	Grade	10%
<u>1500 word Research Plan/methodology</u>	10/13-Friday	Grade	10%
<u>Prospectus, Bibliography, and table of contents</u>	11/1	Grade	10%
<u>5 min. prospectus presentation</u>	11/1 in class	C/NC	5%
<u>Rough Chapter</u>	11/29	C/NC	10%
<u>Comments on fellow students' drafts</u>	12/6	C/NC	5%
Revised Chapter	12/12	Grade	20%
Class Participation	In class	Grade	20%

Remember to check Sakai and the class website for updates and links

Dates	Topics & Assignments
Wk 1: 9/5	Introduction: Requirements for thesis and the thesis seminar. What is an American Studies thesis? Schedule & requirements. Strategies for picking a topic, a problem, and readers; What is the difference between a topic and a research problem? software Due: 1 paragraph thesis topic ; Short (2-3 minute) oral presentation on your tentative topic; Read: Booth, chaps 1-4;
Wk 2: 9/12	Library Session—Meet at Digital Tool Shed, Honnold Identify sources—the doable project. Thesis ideas, topics, and questions.: What is a prospectus? Choosing readers; Due: Decide on and contact your readers; Begin research.
Wk 3: 9/19	Sources and methods: Research methods and ethics. Finding sources. Elements of a thesis. Read: Booth, chaps 5-6. In Class: Short (2-3 minute) Oral presentation of a primary document from your research ; Updates on first research—what primary source collection/archive will you use? Update on meetings with readers; -- Make appointments to meet with me for week 4 and make groups for lit review presentations.
Wk 4: 9/26	Library session: Meet in “Digital Tool Shed” In Class: Individual meetings; Prepare list of possible readings for lit review. At meeting: Discuss choice of reading(s) for your lit review ; Later: Upload your choice of one Lit Review article reading to Sakai . Due: Reader names to me via email
Wk 5: 10/3	Discussion of lit review readings Read: Lit review articles of those in your group In Class: Present 3-5 min. article synopses
Wk 6: 10/10	Individual Meetings Due: Lit review due via e-mail to me at 5pm.
Wk 7: 10/17	Research Updates In Class: Short (2-3 minute) Oral presentation of primary document; Due Friday 10/19: Research plan and methodology d ue on Sakai in resources/student research plans at 5pm.
Wk 8: 10/24	Individual Meetings
Wk 9: 10/31	Spooky Research and Writing Strategies Read: Read each other’s RP & M.; Read: Booth, chaps 7-17. In Class: Research updates; Discuss Research Proposals and Methodologies
Wk 10: 11/7	Prospectus discussions Due: Prospectus and table of contents du e at noon via e-mail to me with AS 190 Prospectus in the subject line. In Class: 5 min prospectus presentations
Wk 11: 11/14	Individual meeting
Wk 12: 11/21	Individual meetings
Wk 13: 11/28	Honor the First Peoples
Wk 14: 12/5	Rough Drafts of Chapters and Presentations Due: upload draft chapters to Sakai/resources/chapter rough drafts by 5pm 11/29. In class: Presentations on thesis chapters to American Studies Faculty
Wk 15: 12/12	Rough Draft discussions (if needed) Due: Read and Comment on fellow students' drafts In Class: Rough Draft Discussions
DUE: FINAL DRAFTS: 12/19 at 5pm	

Tentative schedule for the spring 2017:

- **Pre-enrollment:** Sign up for AMST 191 with your reader at your own college
- **March 24: End of spring break:** Complete draft of thesis for your readers
- **April 19:** Theses due
- **May 3:** Oral presentations to American Studies faculty and friends