Instructor: Dr. Tom Heeney, Director of American Studies & Associate Professor, Department of Communication
Office: 9 College Way, Room 207
Hours: T/Tr 1-3:00 & by appointment
Contact: heeneyt@cofc.edu; or (843) 953.3859.


Bruce Burgett & Glenn Hendler, eds. Keywords for American Cultural Studies. New York University, 2007.


Course:
American studies is an interdisciplinary inquiry, using the resources of history, literature, culture and communication studies to investigate who we are, where we came from, and what we are like today. The theme of this introduction to the field is sports, rituals, games and identity: how are the cultural, literary, and festive activities produced over time indicative of the changing dynamics of American identity? How do business, politics, and law offer the ‘serious’ counterpoints to the more leisurely ways we define our identities?

Exams & Grades:
The midterm and final exams will test reading and discussion materials as assigned, and will combine essay and objective questions. In addition, there will be four short reaction papers (25 points—5 pages). Active class attendance and discussion will contribute to maximizing the participation portion of the course grade. Evaluative standards for the tests and reaction papers combine normal college expectations for comprehension and discussion of course materials, with writing and analytic skills. The final course grade will be calculated as a simple sum of all possible points:

Midterm exam………………………………...…100
Final Exam……………………………………….100
4 short reaction papers (@ 25 pts each)……..100
Attendance & Participation……………………..100
Total possible points   400

The final course grade ranges are:
A = 100-94%   B- = 83-81%   D+ = 70-68%
A- = 93-91%   C+ = 80-78%   D = 67-64%
B+ = 90-88%   C = 77-74%   D- = 63-60%
B = 87-84%   C- = 73-71%   F = below 60%
Incompletes will be offered only with a valid medical or other verified, college recognized excuse. Drop (no credit) for excessive absences will be at the instructors discretion.

**Attendance, Participation & Class Policies:**

You should attend regularly, and be prepared to demonstrate your reading of the assigned materials through active class participation. I encourage active learning, and a critical inquiry: be prepared to discuss and even questions the concepts and assumptions presented in the readings and class discussion. Opinions are encouraged, when informed by the issues and readings we will investigate together: part of an informed opinion is an understanding of the historical legacy of concepts and issues. Reaction papers invite this blend of research and a well crafted analysis of issues and traditions.

If you do not attend regularly, or participate minimally in class discussions, then that portion of the grade will reflect your absence from this active learning. Unexcused absences beyond two class periods will begin to affect this portion of the course grade. No extra credit: attend and participate, doing your best on the examinations and assignments the first time. Late or missing work will be penalized.

**Communicating with the Instructor:**

The best way to contact me, especially with course related questions or issues, is through email. When you do, please put “AMST 200” in the subject line, and only use your Edisto account. Not following either of these directions may result in a delayed or a missing response, as non-edisto email often gets misdirected, or does not get to me at all. I will attempt to answer emails with 24 hours during the regular work week, Monday through Friday. I cannot respond promptly after business hours or on weekends, although I attempt to monitor all communications.

You are welcome to use phone contact, and at the number above. Same comments apply, but be careful and repeat your return contact information if you use the phone: fast or mumbled talkers on tape become hard to comprehend.

**Honor Code & Academic Integrity:**

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of the college honor code. When suspected or identified, these incidents will be processed following the procedure outlined in the college honor code and the *College of Charleston Student Handbook*: consult this binding contract for any questions about the definition or consequences of any of the above issues, and for a fuller definition of procedures and protocols. Grade penalties, including no credit and withdrawal for dishonesty (XL), or course failure are possible consequences of the verdict of honor court.

**Last Thoughts:**

Have fun, do good work, and participate! Nobody “owns” the definition or practice of “American Studies,” and we all participate in the conversation about identity, history and memory, honor and recreation, gender, family and community. Your experience in this course will be a direct consequence of becoming invested in the co-exploration of the themes and texts we will discuss.
*Reading & Tentative Dates* (*Sporting with the Gods= SG; *Keywords= KW; *Sports & Recreation=SR). Read all the pages assigned for that topic starting with the first day of discussion.

1/11   Introduction to American Studies

1/13-   Games Nations Play: American Identities?

1/20-   American Exceptionalism
1/25   *Read:* KW “Exceptionalism,” “Civilization,” & “Society”

1/27-   Sportsmen and Gamesmen
2/1    *Read:* SG pp 29-81.
2/3    Southern Honor
       *Read:* SG pp 82-116. KW “South” “Class”

2/8    **DUE:** short paper on “The American Dream”

2/8-    Where do the Women Play: Different Games?
2/10   *Read:* SG pp 117-150. KW “Gender,” “Marriage” “Sex”

2/15-   The Business of Life
2/22
2/24

3/1    **Midterm Exam**

3/3-    20th Century Legacies: Everybody into The Game
3/17   “Mestizo/a,” “Orientalism,” “Queer,” “White”
3/22

3/17   **Due:** short paper on a “keyword” (tba)

3/24   Holy Play, Just Play, Transcendent Countercurrents
3/29   *Read* SG pp 355-476
3/31
4/5
4/5    **Due:** short paper on your choice of southern sport (tba)

4/7    Case Studies Today
4/12   *Read:* SG Epilogue, SR select entries
4/14   **Due:** short paper on “keyword” or southern sport (tba)
4/19
4/21

**Final Exam:** Thursday April 28, 8-11:00am