

FALL 2025 CURRICULUM

Center for American Studies

Hamilton Hall 319

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FALL 2025 CURRICULUM

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SEMINARS

THE SUPREME COURT IN AMERICAN HISTORY

UN3930 SEC. 004 - M 6:10-8:00 PM

BENJAMIN ROSENBERG

As Tocqueville observed, "scarcely any political question arises in the United States that is not resolved, sooner or later, into a judicial question." As a consequence, the Supreme Court of the United States has been at the center of many of the most significant developments in American history. It has played significant roles in, for example, (1) the creation of the young republic and the achievement of a balance between states and the federal government, (2) race relations including the institution of slavery, (3) the rights of workers, (4) civil rights, and (5) elections. This seminar will explore the Supreme Court's role in American society by examining its decisions on key issues throughout its history.

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SEMINARS

SHAKESPEARE IN AMERICA

UN3930 SEC. 003 - T 10:10-12:00 PM

JAMES SHAPIRO

This course explores the place of Shakespeare in American literary and political culture from the Revolution to the present. We will explore the ways in which American poets, novelists, presidents, essayists, polemicists, and humorists over the past two hundred years have turned to Shakespeare, time and again, in addressing such divisive issues as race, immigration, gender, and national identity. In this sense, the complex story of Shakespeare in America offers an alternative version of our nation's past. Readings include works by Washington Irving, John Adams, Emily Dickinson, Herman Melville, Mark Twain, Mary Preston, Walt Whitman, Jane Addams, Henry James, Isaac Asimov, Mary McCarthy, and Adrienne Rich. Familiarity with Shakespeare's major plays is expected.

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THE NATIVE NORTHEAST

UN3935 SEC. 001 W 4:10-6:00 PM

RYAN CARR

This course provides an interdisciplinary perspective on Native peoples of present-day New York and New England and their interactions with colonial empires (French, Spanish, British, US). Most of the reading will be by Native authors. In order to provide a firm historical foundation for understanding the dynamics of Indigenous and colonial history our emphasis will be on the period between European settlement and the nineteenth century. The course will cover topics in literary and religious history, politics, law, and anthropology, and should appeal to students in any of those fields, while providing an introduction to the history and methods of Indigenous Studies.

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SEMINARS

LANGUAGES OF AMERICA

UN_3930 SEC. 002 W 12:10-2:00 PM

JOHN MCWHORTER

The United States, often thought of as a nation where since its origins all foreign languages spoken by immigrants have withered away upon exposure to English, has actually always harbored a complex mixture of languages and dialects. This course will examine the history of language in America, including the robust role of German in colonial times and beyond (once as commonly heard in America as Spanish); creole languages such as Gullah, Louisiana Creole French and Hawaiian “Pidgin” English; Black English, including its history and present; Native American languages and modern efforts to preserve them; and the history of Asian languages in modern America, including Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Hmong. The course also serves, in ancillary fashion, as an introduction to the variety among languages of the world and to a scientific perspective on human language.

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SEMINARS

GENDER HISTORY & AMERICAN FILM
UN3930 SEC. 001 - W 2:10-4:00 PM
HILARY HALLETT

This seminar explores the history of American gender through the history of the American film industry from the first features in the 1910s through the crumbling of the Hollywood Studio System and Production Code in 1968. During this period, much of the controversy sparked by the industry stemmed from its depictions of new ideals of womanhood, manhood, and sexuality. Moreover, in this era, Hollywood targeted specific audiences and movies were not afforded the protection of free speech. We will use motion pictures and movie stars as primary sources and consider how the changing institutional history of film production connected to the images it sold. Students will write one short paper and a paper proposal in preparation for a short research-based essay on a topic relating to how some aspect of film history reflected a particular problem in gender history.

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SEMINARS

DEMOCRACY & DE-DEMOCRATIZATION

UN3949 SEC. 001 - M 2:10-4:00 PM

JEAN COHEN

The concepts of democratic backsliding, regime cycles (between oligarchy and populism, democracy and dictatorship), hybrid regimes and reverse waves, were devised with regard to newly democratized and/or insufficiently institutionalized democratic regimes. Our inquiry will involve an in-depth study of the political theory and American politics literature on the relevant concepts and dynamics. In the first part of the course, we will discuss the basic concepts and theories regarding democracy, oligarchy, constitutionalism and regime cycles developed in classical and early modern political thought.

The second part of the course will focus on the U.S., the oldest constitutional representative democracy and typically deemed the exemplar of a successfully consolidated democratic regime. Our focus will be on four sets of factors and modes of explanation for the relevant shifts: constitutional, political, socio-cultural, and economic. We conclude with analysis of the contemporary conjuncture and current threats to American constitutional democracy.

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Center for American Studies

AFFILIATED FACULTY

AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE: THE ESSAY

ENGL GU4619 - TR 1:10-2:25 PM

FARAH GRIFFIN

AMERICAN LITERATURE TO 1945

ENGL BC3183 - MW 1:10-2:25PM

MAURA L. SPIEGEL (BARNARD)

BLACK FILM AND MEDIA

FILM GU4300 - T 9:10 - 1:00 PM

RACQUEL GATES

HISTORY OF HORROR CINEMA

GERM GU4938 - TR 8:40 - 9:55 AM

JEREMY DAUBER & ELEANOR
JOHNSON

IMMIGRATION & CITIZENSHIP IN AMERICAN HISTORY

HIST UN3030 - R 12:10- 2:00 PM

JESSICA H. LEE

INDIANS AND EMPIRES IN NORTH AMERICA

HIST UN3501 - W 10:10-12:00 PM

MICHAEL WITGEN

INTRO TO COMPARATIVE ETHNIC STUDIES

CSER UN1010 - MW 1:10 - 2:25 PM

SHANA REDMOND

JEWS & RELIGION IN 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN HISTORY

HIST GU4471 - R 2:10-4:00 PM

REBECCA KOBRIN

POST-1945 AMERICAN LITERATURE

ENGL UN2603 -TR 2:40 - 3:55 PM

RACHEL ADAMS

US LESBIAN & GAY HISTORY

HIST UN2533 - MW 11:40 - 12:55 PM

GEORGE CHAUNCEY