

American Studies AMST 2011: America After 9/11

Instructor: David Karjanen

Contact: email: karjanen@umn.edu

Credits: 3

Course Prerequisites: None

Course Schedule: Asynchronous June 9, 2025-August 1, 2025

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday noon-2:00pm, and by appointment

Course Description:

This course begins with a historical overview of US foreign policy since the 1970s, including the development of US backed fighters in Afghanistan, the rise of Bin Laden, and the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union. It covers CIA operations, US militarization, and various aspects of US foreign policy through the 9/11 attacks and after. The course also covers domestic politics and policy, including cultural debates that occur in music and film, as well as legal debates about combating terrorism and national security measures after 9/11.

Course Goals and Objectives

This course covers the historical background to the 9/11 attacks, and the historical background of US foreign policy, domestic politics and military policies, before and after the attacks. The course also covers a range of topics and disciplinary approaches—from popular culture to history to international law and economic development and planning. The broad goal of the course is to provide students with the background and knowledge to understand the September 11 terrorist attacks as part of American history, politics, and culture. There are also several specific goals:

- Students will learn the different debates about the origins of al Qaeda and the 9/11 attacks
- Students will learn about the different explanations for suicide bombing and terrorism as political and military strategies

- Students will learn some of the basic aspects of US foreign intelligence and information gathering and collaboration with foreign powers
- Students will learn about different periods, priorities, and aspects of US foreign policy from the Cold War to the present
- Students will learn about competing debates in international law and human rights about the treatment of prisoners of war, torture, and the justification of using force on another country
- Students will also learn about domestic politics and how they are related to international affairs and vice versa
- Students will learn about political debates and how they are reflected in popular culture, and how cultural production is also connected to politics
- Students will learn about the different aspects of how culture and politics produces new social concerns, over issues like religion and immigration

Required Readings:

Readings are all available either on Canvas as PDF files, or free via hyperlinks in the syllabus.

Films:

There are a number of films being shown this term. We will see them (some shortened due to class time) in class. These will be on reserve as well if you miss class and want to view them at the library.

Required Assignments:

Reading Responses, Two, 10 points each (20% total grade)

Quizzes, Two, 10 points each, (20% total grade)

Discussion Board Participation, Two, 10 points each, (20% total grade)

Policy Brief, One, 10 points total, (10% of total grade)

Final exam, (30% total grade)

Assignment Descriptions:

Reading Responses: Reading responses will be posted a week prior to being due. Three questions related to the readings will be posted. Students need to respond to at least two of the three questions in, at minimum, 1 page answers per question.

Quizzes: Ten questions, multiple choice, via Canvas.

Discussion Board Assignments: Discussion board assignments require students to participate in an online discussion of several questions which will be posted during the week that the discussion is due. Students should write three sentences, up to a full paragraph, for each discussion question that they want to respond to. There is a minimum of two questions to receive full credit for the discussion board assignment.

The Policy Brief: This assignment requires students to take an issue that is the topic of public policy in the United States (poverty, inequality, unemployment, underemployment, etc) and to look at different sources of information on the topic that are presented in class, and write a brief (1-3) page proposal for addressing the problem. This should include a summary of the problem and appropriate citation of sources.

Final Exam: The final exam is 30 multiple choice questions, cumulative and via Canvas.

Assignment Schedule:

Week 1: no assignments

Week 2: Quiz 1

Week 3, Quiz 2

Week 4, Reading response 1

Week 5, Discussion Board

Week 6 Reading response 2

Week 7 Discussion Board

Week 8: Final Exam. This is cumulative!

Attendance Requirement: This course is online/asynchronous; there is no attendance requirement.

Statement on Extra Credit: There are no extra credit options. If you are unhappy with your grade on an assignment, contact the instructor to discuss the option to re-do the assignment. This is an available option for all students.

Instructional Time Statement: Each class has an approximately 1 hour and 15 minute lecture. Some weeks also have supplementary videos via youtube, with links on the syllabus. The total amount of instructional time for the course, just with lectures, amounts to the total required instructional time for the credit hours: 45.

There are also online discussion board assignments where students have to participate in a conversation on the online message board regarding the readings for that week; this adds another hour of instructional time. Finally, there are external videos running, in total, about an hour and a half, for a total of over 50 hours of instructional time.

Independent Student Work Time Statement

Students will have 4 lecture videos each week, approximately one hour and 15 minutes long, for a total of five hours of video lectures each week. Total estimated student time for the course is 900 minutes per week with instructional time at 300+ minutes per week and student independent work time at 600+ minutes per week.

Exams and Missed Work Policy

Missed quizzes: Missed quizzes can be made up within one week, unless there are further accommodations necessary, in which case contact the instructor.

Late Work: Late work should be made up within one week, unless there are further accommodations necessary, in which case contact the instructor.

Final exam: There is a make up final exam if necessary, contact the instructor to take it.

Liberal Education Requirements and Student Learning Outcomes:

This course satisfies the following Liberal Education Requirements and Student Learning Outcomes.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Can communicate effectively.

How will this outcome be addressed in the course? Students are required to write reading response papers, short essays, where they convey their ideas about the readings and the course material for that particular week. Students also have to write a midterm exam where they answer a set list of questions in essay format. Students are evaluated on their ability to communicate their answers effectively in clear essays, including syntax and content.

Can Use conceptual tools or a theoretical framework to analyze a social problem or a cultural object.

This course is interdisciplinary, like all American Studies courses. Readings are from sociology, anthropology, history, political science, cultural studies and other disciplines. Students will become familiar with the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of several different disciplines, their approach to studying specific questions, and what types of analysis and results emerge from these different approaches. In particular, the course asks students to analyze elements of popular culture, including music, films, music videos, and social media.

Students will need to understand these different approaches and how they provide different ways of knowing about thematic topics in the course. They will demonstrate this by writing assignments where they must apply different theories to examples drawn from the course. Part of the writing assignments involves directly posing solutions to pressing national and global problems, such as balancing national security with privacy and individual rights.

Can identify, define, and solve problems.

This course looks at a number of problems related to the functioning of democracy, national security, foreign policy, public engagement, media transparency and accuracy. Students are asked to identify problems related to America's place in the world after

9/11 (e.g. how do you balance individual rights and civil liberties with national security concerns about intelligence gathering among suspected terrorists or supporters?). Students are asked to discuss various different solutions to these problems throughout the course, and to offer up their own solutions. (e.g. How would you ensure that the media are being accurate in communicating threats to national security?). The mid-term assignment and online discussions are exercises where students have to communicate clearly their ideas about the pressing social, political, and cultural problems that American society faces.

Liberal Education Requirements

Historical Perspectives

This course examines past U.S. wars and conflicts as a means of understanding the significance of the 9/11 events and their aftermath. The course begins in the 1970s and moves to the present through lectures and readings and multimedia content, giving the students a historiography of American society and international relations during the period far prior to the events of 9/11—US support for Mujahideen in Afghanistan, the support of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, CIA and multilateral interventions in the Middle East and Central Asia, up through the present.

The course examines past and present American ideas about war and occupation, paying particular attention to the change within and continuity across those beliefs. To do so, we will focus on frameworks such as counterinsurgency, détente, humanitarian intervention, terrorism, etc. Readings and assigned reading responses, as well as discussion participation, requires that students show the skills necessary for understanding the historical materials and asking important questions about the historical evolution of American society. These exercises require students to directly address the use of historical materials, such as media reports from the past, and professional historians publications, to see the value and limitations of particular types of documents and materials. We will work with such primary sources as newspapers, official government reports, cartoons, declassified documents, etc. To demonstrate how historians work, students will work with historical materials, newspaper documents, presidential speeches (The President's Radio Address in 2003), government reports (The 9/11 Commission, Colin Powell's Speech to U.N. Security Council), oral histories (We Are All Suspects Now), as well as elements of popular culture (The Host, Machuca, Paradise Now, September 11, Sir! No Sir! and cartoons). The course will investigate the

conceptual frameworks of social, cultural, and political history as a means to interpret primary sources. Using political history, the course examines how political movements and leaders in the U.S. promoted U.S. imperial interests in parts of Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. The course is also a demonstration of the cultural history of empire since it uses popular culture (film, music, and cartoons) to illustrate the national interest in empire and the movements, cultural texts, and ideas that contested that interest.

Civic Life & Ethics

The field of American Studies directly engages issues of civic life and ethics. The field has consistently analyzed and interrogated social constructions around just v. unjust and right v. wrong especially in the domain of U.S. legal, economic, and social practices. This course provides an analysis of how civic life and ethics in past wars shaped the post-9/11 world. Students will thus see how issues of immigration restriction, surveillance, occupation, and prison expansion were part of public discussions within the U.S. years before the War on Terror and after. Students in the course will explore the ways in which such discussions took place in a variety of areas: news media, newspapers, cartoons, movies, music, public protest, etc. The course also focuses on ethical debates in public policy and the law, particularly regarding the prosecution of terrorism, the treatment of detainees, policies like Extraordinary Rendition, and the prosecution of war and war criminals as well as international legal debates about the just war doctrine. The course looks at how these ethical principles have been produced and debated in the law, in media, in scholarship, in popular culture, and in activism. This class encourages students to analyze their own personal views and beliefs about U.S. Wars and how those wars relate to their lives as residents of the U.S. and members of a global society.

Schedule:

Week 1 Introduction/ Frameworks

Background to 9/11: The Cold War to Al Qaeda and the Deep State
Film: The War Briefing, Frontline

Peter D. Scott, "Afghanistan and the Origins of Al Qaeda"

Topic: The Attacks, Suicide Terrorism, and US Foreign Policy

Peter , D. Scott, "The Al-Kifah Center, al Qaeda, and the U.S. Government 1988-1998"
Robert Pape "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism" American Political Science
Review, 97(3): 2003.

Topic: Suicide Bombing

"the Moral Logic and Growth of Suicide Terrorism" Scott Atran

https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/satran/wp-content/uploads/sites/330/2015/10/twq06spring_atran.pdf

Robert Pape "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism" American Political Science
Review, 97(3): 2003.

"the Will To Fight" Scott Atran <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.abl9949>

Topic: The Militarization of U.S. Society

The Danger of Militarization in an Endless "War" on Terrorism

Richard H. Kohn, The Journal of Military History, Volume 73, Number 1, January 2009,
pp. 177-208

Andrew Bacevich: "A Decade of War" on Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWBHfl2AkqU>

Week 2: Why We Fight: Militarism, American Culture, and the Media

Topic: Militarization in the US

Film: "Why We Fight"

Topic: Media Wars Going Into Iraq

Amy Gershkoff and Shana Kushner "Shaping Public Opinion: The 9/11-Iraq, Connection
in the Bush Administration's Rhetoric," Perspectives on Politics Issue 3, 2005. Pp. 525-
537.

Ronald R. Krebs and Jennifer Lobasz, Fixing the Meaning of 9/11: Hegemony,
Coercion, and the Road to War in Iraq Security Studies Volume 16, 2007 - Issue 3

Andrew Flibbert, The Road to Baghdad: Ideas and Intellectuals in Explanations of the
Iraq War Security Studies, Volume 15, 2006

Film: PBS Frontline: Bush's War

Week3: Iraq, The Invasion, the Aftermath

Topic: Background and Iraqi Policy

Naomi Klein: Chapter 14 “Shock Therapy in the USA” and Chapter 16 “In Search of a Model for the Middle East” in The Shock Doctrine.

Naomi Klein: Chapter 17 “Ideological Blowback: A Very Capitalist Disaster” and Chapter 18 “Full Circle: From Blank Slate to Scorched Earth” in The Shock Doctrine.

Film: Iraq For Sale

Topic: Propaganda and Warfare

Deepa Kumar “War Propaganda and the Abuses of Women: Media constructions of the Jessica Lynch story,” Feminist Media Studies Vol. 4, No. 3, 2004. Pp 297-313.

Film: The Hurt Locker

Topic: Extraordinary Rendition, Guantanamo, and Torture

James D. Boys (2011): What's so extraordinary about rendition?, The International Journal of Human Rights, 15:4, 589-604

<http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/globalizing-torture-20120205.pdf> Globalizing Torture, Open Society Foundation.

Week 4: Terror, Culture, and US Foreign Policy After 9/11

Topic: The Ticking Time Bomb Scenario: 24 Hours

David Danzig “Countering the Jack Bauer Effect: An Examination of How to Limit the Influence of TV’s Most Popular, and Most Brutal, Hero. In: Screening Torture: Media Representations of State Terror and Political Domination, Michael Flynn and Fabiola F. Salek eds.

Topic: Bin Laden/Zero Dark Thirty

FILM: Zero Dark Thirty. 'Zero Dark Thirty'

Is Osama bin Laden's Last Victory Over America, By Matt Taibbi, Rolling Stone,
<http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/blogs/taibblog/zero-dark-thirty-is-osama-bin-ladens-last-victory-over-america-20130116>

Trevor McCrisken "Ten years on: Obama's war on terrorism in rhetoric and practice,"
International Affairs 87:4 (2011) 781–801

Week 5: Music, Pop Culture and the War on Terror

Spigel, Lynn. "Entertainment Wars: Television Culture after 9/11." American Quarterly, vol. 56 no. 2, 2004, p. 235-270. Project MUSE, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/aq.2004.0026>.

Pop Goes to War, 2001–2004: U.S. Popular Music After 9/11, Reebee Garofalo
<https://posgrado.unam.mx/musica/pdfLR/sesion9/GarofaloUSPopularMusicAfter911.pdf>

Andrew Boulton (2008) The Popular Geopolitical Wor(l)ds of Post-9/11 Country Music, Popular Music and Society, 31:3, 373-387

The Dixie Chicks 2001-2003: The Dissonances of gender and genre in war culture, Christian Griffiths, Media, War and Conflict, 2015

Week 6: Immigration, Migration, and Islamophobia Politics

Marshall A. Taylor. (2024) Attention, shocks, and relevance judgements: the case of white nationalism in the U.S. South, 1980–2008. Social Movement Studies 0:0, pages 1-18.

Amílcar Antonio Barreto & Omar K. Sindi. (2020) From nearly white to brown: nation, identity, and the racialization of Muslim Americans. Culture and Religion 21:4, pages 409-427.

Romero, L. A., & Zarrugh, A. (2017). Islamophobia and the making of Latinos/as into terrorist threats. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 41(12), 2235–2254.

Luis A. Romero. (2022) Unsacred Children: The Portrayal of Unaccompanied Immigrant Minors as Racialized Threats. American Behavioral Scientist 66:12, pages 1669-1687.

Week 7: The Costs of War

Stephanie Savell & Catherine Lutz. (2024) The costs of war: Lessons from a public scholarship project on the post-9/11 wars. American Anthropologist 126:3, pages 479-496.

The Costs of War: selections from the Watson Institution for International and Public Affairs at Brown University

<https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/>

Jackson, R. Culture, identity and hegemony: Continuity and (the lack of) change in US counterterrorism policy from Bush to Obama. *Int Polit* 48, 390–411 (2011).

Pilecki, A., Muro, J. M., Hammack, P. L., & Clemons, C. M. (2014). Moral exclusion and the justification of U.S. counterterrorism strategy: Bush, Obama, and the terrorist enemy figure. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 20(3), 285–299.

Week 8: Final Lectures and Exam Due

Education & Student Life Policies

Please be familiar with these, as these are University Of Minnesota policies, and govern the conduct of the course. You are all responsible for being familiar with these policies. Enrollment in the course means that you agree to adhere to them.

Student Conduct Code

The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. To support this environment, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community.

As a student at the University, you are expected to adhere to Board of Regents Policy: Student Conduct Code. Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach and/or a student's ability to learn." The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities.

Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom

Using personal electronic devices in the classroom setting can hinder instruction and learning, not only for the student using the device but also for other students in the class. To this end, the University establishes the right of each instructor to determine if and how personal electronic devices are allowed to be used in the classroom. For complete information, please review the Administrative Policy: Teaching and Learning: Student Responsibilities.

Scholastic Dishonesty

As students in a university community, you are expected to do your own academic work, and to cite sources of knowledge that you draw on in completing your assignments and other academic work. Failing to do so is scholastic dishonesty, which includes: plagiarism; cheating on assignments or examinations, including the unauthorized use of online learning support and testing platforms; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work, including the posting of student-generated coursework on online learning support and testing platforms not approved for the specific course in question; taking, acquiring, or using course materials without faculty permission, including the posting of faculty-provided course materials on online learning support and testing platforms; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, misrepresenting, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis. When it is determined that a student has cheated, the student may be given an "F" or an "N" for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the University. For additional information, please see: Teaching and Learning: Instructor and Unit Responsibilities.

Additional resources pertaining to academic integrity can be found through the Office for Community Standards and the Center for Educational Innovation.

Beware of websites that advertise themselves as being “tutoring websites.” It is not permissible to upload any instructor materials to these sites without their permission or copy material for your own homework assignments from these various sites. When you have additional questions and concerns, please speak with or email your instructor to clarify practices expected for the course. Your instructor can respond to your specific questions regarding what would constitute scholastic dishonesty in the context of a particular class, for example, when and whether collaboration on assignments is permitted, when citing sources is required and what citation method to use, or when and which electronic aids are permitted or prohibited during an exam.

Excused Absences and Makeup Work

Students will not be penalized for absence during the semester due to excused circumstances. Such circumstances include verified illness, participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, bereavement, and religious observances. Such circumstances do not include voting in local, state, or national elections. For complete information, please see Administrative Policy: Excused Absences and Makeup Work.

Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes and Course Materials

Taking notes is a means of recording information and more importantly of personally recording, integrating, and connecting information as part of your educational experience. However, broadly disseminating class notes beyond the current classroom community or accepting compensation for taking and distributing classroom notes undermines instructor interests in their intellectual work product while not substantially furthering instructor and student interests in effective learning. Such actions violate shared norms and standards of the academic community. For additional information, please see: Administrative Policy: Teaching and Learning: Student Responsibilities.

University Grading Scales

The University has two distinct grading scales: A-F and S-N.

A-F grading scale. The A-F grading scale allows the following grades and corresponding GPA points:

Grade GPA Points Definitions for undergraduate credit

A 4.000 Represents achievement that significantly exceeds expectations in the course.

A- 3.667

B+ 3.333
B 3.000 Represents achievement that is above the minimum expectations in the course.
B- 2.667
C+ 2.333
C 2.000 Represents achievement that meets the minimum expectations in the course.
C- 1.667
D+ 1.333
D 1.000 - Represents achievement that partially meets the minimum expectations in the course. Credit is earned but it may not fulfill major or program requirements.
F 0.000 Represents failure in the course and no credit is earned.
S-N grading scale. The S-N grading scale allows for the following grades and corresponding GPA points:

Grade GPA Points Definitions for undergraduate credit

S 0.00 Satisfactory (equivalent to a C- or better)

N 0.00 Not Satisfactory

For additional information, please refer to: Administrative Policy: Grading and Transcripts.

Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Stalking and Relationship Violence

The University prohibits sexual misconduct, and encourages anyone experiencing sexual misconduct to access resources for personal support and reporting. If you want to speak confidentially with someone about an experience of sexual misconduct, please contact a confidential resource on your campus. If you want to report sexual misconduct, or have questions about the University's policies and procedures related to sexual misconduct, please contact your campus Title IX office or relevant policy contacts.

Instructors are required to share information they learn about possible sexual misconduct with the campus Title IX office that addresses these concerns. This allows a Title IX staff member to reach out to those who have experienced sexual misconduct to provide information about personal support resources and options for investigation. You may talk to instructors about concerns related to sexual misconduct, and they will provide support and keep the information you share private to the extent possible given their University role.

For more information, please see Administrative Policy: Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Stalking and Relationship Violence.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity

The University provides equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, familial status, disability, public assistance status, membership or activity in a local commission created for the purpose of dealing with discrimination, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity.

Disability Accommodations

The University of Minnesota is committed to creating learning environments that are inclusive and accessible to all students. If you are experiencing disability-related barriers to learning in your courses, the Disability Resource Center (DRC) is the office that collaborates with students to explore reasonable accommodations, tools, and resources.

If you are registered with the DRC and have a current accommodation letter please share your letter with me as soon as possible so that we can discuss how your accommodations will be implemented in this course. The sooner I know about your disability access-needs, the more equipped I can be to facilitate accommodations. You may reach out to me or your (access consultant/disability specialist) if you have any questions or concerns about your accommodations.

If you are not registered with the DRC and are experiencing or think you may be experiencing disability related to a mental health, attention, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical condition, and would like to discuss accommodations and/or resources, please contact the DRC on our campus (e.g., Twin Cities campus - 612.626.1333).

If you have a short-term medical condition, such as a broken arm, I may be able to assist in minimizing classroom barriers. In situations where additional assistance is needed, you should contact the DRC as noted above.

Twin Cities - <https://disability.umn.edu/>, drc@umn.edu)

Equal Opportunity Statement

The University of Minnesota shall provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Inquiries regarding compliance may be directed to the Director, Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX, University of Minnesota, 274 McNamara Alumni Center, 200 Oak Street S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455, (612) 624-9547, eoaa@umn.edu. Website at www.eoaa.umn.edu.

Mental Health and Stress Management

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website. As an instructor/University community member, we care about the wellbeing of students. If health, safety, or mental health concerns are conveyed, we may consult with campus support offices to provide support and resources to a student.

Academic Freedom and Responsibility: for courses that do not involve students in research

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.*

Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the Department Chair, your adviser, the associate dean of the college, or the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost. [Customize with names and contact information as appropriate for the course/college/campus.]

* Language adapted from the American Association of University Professors "Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students."