Fall Courses 2015

AM 103 The American City

Professor Amber Wiley
Tu Th, 2:10-3:30
Credits: 4
Introduction to the interdisciplinary study of American culture, past and present. Emphasizes reading critically, thinking historically, practicing interdisciplinarity, and acknowledging diversity. Students will analyze and synthesize multiple kinds of primary sources (such as fiction, film, music, art) and disciplinary perspectives (sociology, economics, media criticism) to appreciate better the complexity of American life and culture. **Note(s):** (Fulfills social science requirement.)

AM 103W A Humorous (Dis)Course

Professor Beck Krefting
Tu Th, 12:40-2:00
Credits: 4
In this course we will use comedic cultural forms to think critically about American culture and to explore key moments and transitions in American history. As burgeoning Americanists, we will examine the history of comedy as the history of the United States—that comedy re-

AM 103 002 Intro.: Wizard of OZ

Professor Megan Williams
M/W 4:00-5:20
Credits: 4
This course is an interdisciplinary and intersectional analysis of The Wizard of Oz as an American myth, meant to introduce students to the study of American culture, past and present. Beginning with L. Frank Baum's turn-of-the-century feminist fairytale, The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, students will analyze the ways cultural producers and audiences have used The Wizard of Oz myth to negotiate issues of gender, race, class, sexuality, and ability during periods of social change and backlash.

AM 260C 001 African Experience

Professor Amber Wiley
MW, 2:30-3:50
Credits: 3
A study of the African-American experience, 1860s–1980s. Using both primary and secondary source material, the course examines the critical issues and period relevant to the African-American struggle toward freedom and equality. Topics include slavery, emancipation, and Reconstruction; the woman's era; the age of Jim Crow and the new Negro; the civil rights movement; and the post-reform period. Sources include narratives, documents, photographs, and films.
Note(s): (Designated a Cultural Diversity course; fulfills social sciences requirement.

AM 332 001 Global Perspectives of United States

Professor Daniel Nathan
WF, 8:40-10:00
Credits: 4

U.S., its citizens and culture. Employing an interdisciplinary methodology, student will consider how the U.S. appeared to Europeans in the eighteenth century and how others since then have made sense of this country, with an emphasis on the twentieth century and the post-9/11 cultural moment. Students will examine themes including the preferred national narrative of the U.S. as a place of freedom, opportunity, democracy, and multicultural pluralism; and different forms of anti-Americanism.
Note(s): 300-level courses in American Studies are not ordinarily open to first-year students except by permission of the instructor. (Designated a Cultural Diversity

Chairs Letter continued:

Skidmore students also took to the road on field trips. I took my first-year Scribner Seminar students, David Kieran, and Jacque and some of her AM 103 students to New York City in November to visit the National September 11 Memorial & Museum. It was a cold, rainy day and a powerful educational experience for everyone. Having Jacque there was great, as she is a bona fide expert on 9/11 and collective memory and has worked at the 9/11 Museum. Greg Pfitzer also took his students on myriad field trips (for a list of them, see p. 10).

Another valuable out-of-the-classroom experience for our students was the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery exhibit, Hope and Anger: The Civil Rights Movement and Beyond, that Megan Williams and her students (and Rachel Seligman of the Tang) helped curate (see p. 6 for more on this). Kudos to Megan for taking the initiative to make this public history event happen. The opening night in December was full of energy and excitement. Speaking of Megan, I have to share that in January she was quoted in , due to her expertise.

Faculty Megan Williams

AM 103 - Introduction to American Studies

AM 236 - Jazz, Race, and Gender

AM 260A - Race, Gender, Sexuality, and the Civil Rights Movement

kg m dh k mo i occ h nnc kd b cc mmpbbg a m

g f am h AM 360D - World War II

Brooks Robinson

I decided to be any American Studies major after taking Professor Lynn's New England Begins course. It was the perfect combination of my other English and History courses. After graduation I'll be going back to Boston to work in the legal field and then applying to law

This year was my (lucky) thirteenth at Skidmore. It went well and remarkably fast. The fastest year ever, I think.

In the fall, in addition to serving as Chair, I taught two courses, oldies but goodies: American Sport/American Culture (AM 234) and my Scribner Seminar about American memories. In the American Memories class, one of my first-year students, Anna Reeves, won a Candace Carlucci Backus ’66 FYE Prize “in recognition of exceptional scholarly or artistic achievement in the fall’s Scribner Seminars.” Anna’s essay, “The Land Sings Its Memory,”

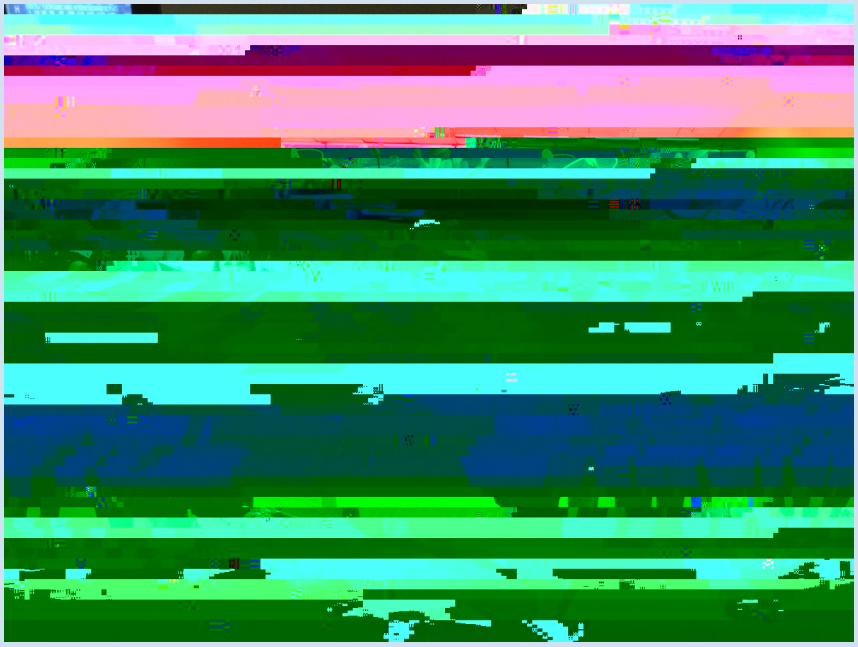
Hide-ho AMsters! Having spent the last year on sabbatical, I am happy to report that I am actually up to date on my current events and popular culture. I caught up on Game of Thrones and discovered Homeland and BBC's The Fall, not to mention all the good comedy specials I was finally able to watch. I didn't spend the entirety of my sabbatical in front of the boob tube, though it was tempting to do so. This year was mainly devoted to advancing my research on two very different book projects: one on preppers (folks anticipating a variety of disasters both small and large-scale) and the other examining the impact of social media on the comedy industry. The big news for me is that my first book was published, becoming available for purchase last July! You can get your copy of *All Joking Aside: American Humor and Its Discontents* on Amazon or Johns Hopkins University Press.

Last summer, I had the distinct pleasure of working with Becca Baruc (Class of 2015 and this year's winner of the American Studies Faculty Award) in the Summer Faculty/Student Research Program. Together we conducted interviews with industry executives, comedy club owners, comic writers/actors, and digital media experts in New York City, Los Angeles and over Skype. We presented our findings to an inquisitive and welcoming audience at the American Humor Studies Association/Mark Twain Circle of America Quadrennial Conference in New Orleans, in December. Our work yielded immensely helpful data for my book project as well as a co-authored journal article titled: "A New Economy of Jokes?: #Socialmedia #Comedy," which has been accepted for publication in Routledge's Comedy Studies Journal (fall/winter issue, forthcoming).

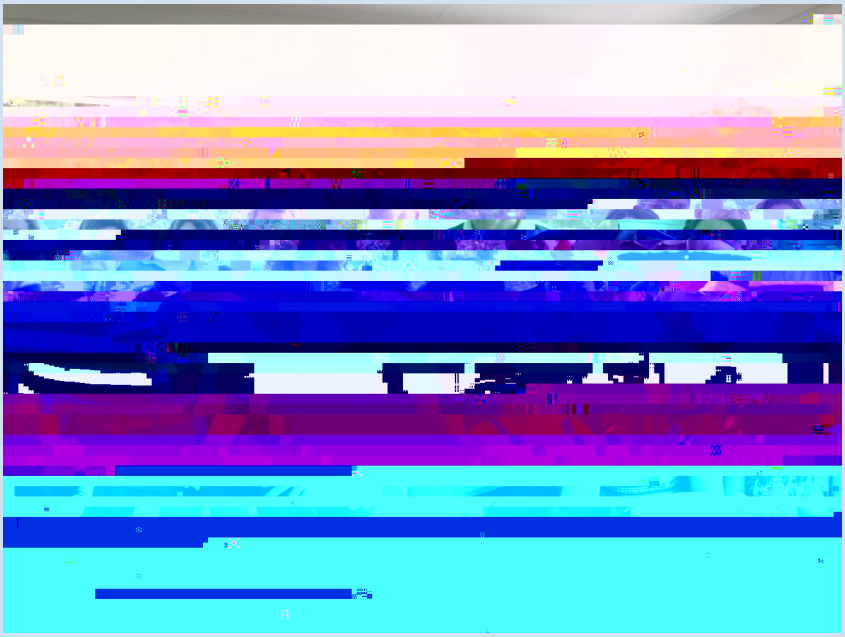
In the early fall, I studied all things Margaret Cho, who embodies much of what I enjoy about comedy: social consciousness paired with a dirty, dirty mind. The sum of these labors yielded a chapter for the edited collection Hysterical! Women in American Comedy(University of Texas Press, forthcoming). In November, just when it was starting to get cold here in Saratoga Springs, I hightailed it to sunny San Juan, Puerto Rico, where I attended the National Women's Studies Association and moderated a panel on women and comedy. The panelists were mainly graduate students dipping their toes in these proverbial waters, so it was fun to see new research and interesting approaches to gender and humor studies.

Lucky me, I was awarded a Research Initiative Grant from Skidmore, which helped to fund research related to my book project on preppers, tentatively titled: Prepper Nation: Adapting to Potential Futures . With thor b siQ si F

AMERICAN STUDIES EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS



Bowling at Strike Zone December 2014



End of year celebration with our American Studies majors and faculty!

One of our many events hosted by American Studies

American Studies Department
815 North Broadway