American Culture and Society

Course Outline

This short course will explore the connections between US history and contemporary culture, with a particular focus on race and immigration. As a brief introduction to American culture and society, it cannot provide a broad survey of US history or present-day culture. Instead, we will address three key moments foundational to American culture: the turn of the last century, the mid-twentieth century, and the present moment. We will ask: What are some popular myths about the United States? How are these ideas created and circulated through mass culture and other media? How have these myths excluded some people from the idea of who is a true American? And how have some Americans challenged their exclusion? At the turn of the century, we will consider Native American history and culture, as well as the histories of immigration at Ellis Island and Angel Island. In the mid-twentieth century, we will focus on civil rights, including photographic images of the African American civil rights movement, post-war Puerto Rican migration, and the shift from the idea of the “yellow peril” to the Asian American model minority. In the contemporary moment, we will explore issues of violent protest/riots, illegal/undocumented immigration, and American sports culture. We will use a broad range of sources to explore these topics, including photographs, cartoons, poems, songs, newspaper articles and broadcast news, documentary and narrative films. Our goal is not only to gain a familiarity with key debates around race, immigration, and culture in US history and contemporary society, but also to cultivate a critically reflective perspective on the ways that American society is represented both within the United States and globally.
Instructor

Dr. Anna Pegler-Gordon is an Associate Professor at MSU James Madison College. She has taught courses in Asian American history, immigration policy, comparative race and ethnic relations, and U.S. racial and immigration history. Professor Pegler-Gordon has received fellowships for her teaching and research, including national awards from the Organization of American Historians, the Japanese Association for American Studies, and the Immigration and Ethnic History Society. Professor Pegler-Gordon was a visiting research fellow at the University of London School of Advanced Study (2008) and was one of two scholars selected nationally for a teaching residency in Japan (2009). Her first book, In Sight of America: Photography and the Development of U.S. Immigration Policy (University of California Press, 2009) won the Immigration and Ethnic History Society’s 2009 Theodore Saloutus prize. She is currently researching her second book, a study of Asian immigrants at Ellis Island.

Program Dates

July 17, 2018 to August 8, 2018

MSU East Lansing Campus: July 17 to August 1

East Coast Trip (Niagara Falls, Washington DC and New York): August 1 to August 8

Key Features

Students will engage in up to 40-55 instructional hours (equivalent to a 3 credit course).

- 24-30 hour in-class lectures and class-related activities
- Up to 15 academic instructional hours including career planning, professional development and leadership training
- Cultural field trips to Henry Ford Museum in Detroit and Lake Michigan/Sand dunes.
- One-week long East Coast trip including Niagara Falls, Washington DC. And New York City

Summer School Award

MSU Certificate of Global Young Professional Program (GYPP) on Global Enterprise Innovation by the Visiting International Professional Program

Admission Requirement

- Undergraduate students at a 4-year college in any major
- Intermediate English skills
Fee
- $3,800
- Including tuition, on-campus housing, MSU breakfast and lunch, local transportation, Detroit airport pick up and drop off (on July 17 designated time only), and all expenses of the East Coast tour
- Fee does not include international or domestic airfare, health insurance, MSU dinner, or any other living costs

Application
Application will open on February 1, 2018 and closes on May 31, 2018.
All applications must be submitted online at vipp.isp.msu.edu
Contact Dr. Mina Shin at mshin@msu.edu or +1 517-884-2180 for further information.

Special Note
If a university sends a total of 15 or more students to our summer school programs, accompanying staff cost will be only $1,900 per person. This cost includes lodging, meals and transportation for the three-week program.
America Culture and Society Daily Schedule

All morning sessions from 9 am to 12pm with 30-minute break.
All afternoon sessions from 2 pm to 4 pm (or 5 pm depending on activity)

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