



## LOVE, AMERICAN STYLE

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<b>Lectures:</b>	Tu, Th 9:30-11:00am	102 Wurster Hall
<b>Discussions:</b>	Section 101 (W 4:00-5:00pm)	285 Cory Hall
	Section 102 (Th 4:00-5:00pm)	242 Hearst Gym

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“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.”

—St. Paul, “First Epistle to the Corinthians,” circa CE 53-54

“There is always some madness in love. But there is always some reason in madness.”

—Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 1883-1911

“Love is never any better than the lover. Wicked people love wickedly, violent people love violently, weak people love weakly, stupid people love stupidly, but the love of a free man is never safe. There is no gift for the beloved. The lover alone possesses his gift of love. The loved one is shorn, neutralized, frozen in the glare of the lover’s inward eye.”

—Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*, 1970

“As a society we are embarrassed by love. We treat it as if it were an obscenity. We reluctantly admit to it. Even saying the word makes us stumble and blush...”

—Diane Ackerman, *A Natural History of Love*, 1994

“One of the best things about love, real love, is that it doesn’t demand perfection. It simply invites us to live up to our potential.”

—Rosie Danan, *The Intimacy Experiment*, 2021

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### COURSE OVERVIEW AND LEARNING GOALS

On the *Private Dancer* album in 1984, Tina Turner asked, “What’s love got to do, got to do with it?”—a question that rose to the top of the US *Billboard* Hot 100. This course proposes to take the reverberations of Turner’s question seriously as a means of approaching the study of American culture and history. We will consider how love has been depicted and deployed in the service of romance and its concomitant lust and attachment; arguments about sex and sexuality; domestic labor and family organization; friendship; ethnic, racial, and generational differences; the wedding industry; consumer culture; ritualized behavior; and the built environment. By focusing on love as a theory, a fantasy, a place, an event, and a media construct, this course develops a “toolkit” for the interdisciplinary study of American culture.

Building on concepts and methods of inquiry which “define” American Studies, this course will emphasize analyzing cultural meaning, knowledge, and values through the examination of a variety of cultural situations and productions—including the values, patterns of behavior, and even objects that most of us take for granted—in order to explore how individuals, groups, and institutions interact through the different ways they give “meaning” to experience. Through close reading of diverse texts, we will work towards developing an approach that enables us to analyze the processes involved in the ongoing

creation, maintenance, and transmission of cultural meaning within American society. A student's goal in this course is to practice close reading, critical thinking, and writing skills that will enable them to be a self-conscious and thoughtful investigator of American culture.

The aims of *Introduction to American Studies* are:

1. To introduce American Studies as an interdisciplinary mode of inquiry;
2. To develop a working vocabulary for doing American Studies;
3. To introduce a variety of methods and matters (literary, oral, visual, and material) in the interdisciplinary study of American culture;
4. To foster knowledge about American society and culture and the values and beliefs that have given meaning and shape to the experience of its peoples;
5. To develop skills in analysis and synthesis, particularly as applied to the close reading of American texts with reference to their social and cultural contexts.
6. To help students reflect upon their insights into the nature of American culture, as participants in that culture.

This course does not satisfy the American Cultures Requirement.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

**Books:** The Cal Student Store has the following books, which we will read in the following order:

1. Ronald de Sousa, *Love: A Very Short Introduction*
2. Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
3. James Baldwin, *If Beale Street Could Talk*
4. Gwendolyn Brooks, *Maud Martha* (available as PDF on bCourses)

\*\*Additional required readings listed in the Semester Schedule are available on bCourses. These required readings may change to suit the needs of the course—any changes will be announced in class at least one week in advance.

**Films:** We will consider four feature length films in the following order. Be sure to screen them before class. All films are either available in the Media Resource Center at Moffitt Library or via online streaming services. This list of films may change to suit the developing direction of the course.

1. *Love Finds Andy Hardy* (1938) — Directed by George B. Seitz
2. *The Bachelor & the Bobby-Soxer* (1944) — Directed by Irving Reis
3. *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* (1967) — Directed by Stanley Kramer
4. *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944) — Directed by Vincente Minnelli

**Recordings:** The following recordings are available for listening online at the URLs listed below.

1. *Lemonade*, Beyoncé Knowles-Carter (2016): <https://tinyurl.com/af9by639>
2. Oral argument in *Loving v. Virginia* (April 10, 1967): <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1966/395>

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

Your coursework will be evaluated as follows:

**Attendance in Lectures:** Attendance is essential, as the exams will require you to draw on evidence and interpretations advanced in the lectures. In addition, there will be some opportunity to participate in discussions during lectures. Doing so on a consistent and informed basis will serve to ratchet borderline final grades upward.

**Attendance plus Active and Informed Participation in Discussion Sections (15%):** A successful section depends on the active and informed participation of all students, with the discussion going through one another and not simply through the GSI. Your GSI may have additional expectations, which will be covered in the Section Syllabus.

**Methods Assignments (40%):** There will be a series of brief methods assignments to give students practical experience with the research methods of American Studies. These projects will be discussed fully in sections, during which guidelines will be distributed. The first two essays will each be worth 10% of your course grade. The third essay will be worth 20% of your course grade. See the Semester Schedule for due dates.

**Midterm Exam (20%):** There will be one in-class midterm examination on October 7.

**Final Exam (25%):** The final exam will take place on Tuesday, December 14. It is scheduled to begin at 3pm.

★ **Important Note** | Students who intend to declare the American Studies Major are advised that you must earn a course grade of at least a C to be eligible for application to the program.

## SECRETS TO DOING WELL

Come to class on time. Late arrivals disrupt your fellow students, interrupt the professor, and cause you to miss announcements made at the beginning of the session.

Keep up with the readings. Class discussions will make sense only in the context of the assigned reading, viewing, or listening. If you fall behind, do your best to catch up quickly. Some days/weeks have more reading/viewing/listening assigned than others. Plan, and when possible, read ahead.

Take notes actively by hand. You should be making notes every lecture and discussion meeting. There is significant empirical evidence that shows not only that taking notes via computer hinders understanding but also that students who take notes with pen and paper grasp concepts more fully. In other words, there is a direct correlation between notetaking, learning, and class performance. Ideally your notes will not simply record what was discussed but will also reflect ideas that class discussions gave you, connections that you see between course materials, and questions that the class inspired in you. Think of your notes as “educated doodles, thoughtful graffiti.” For all these reasons, unless you have a formal, DSP-sanctioned accommodation that requires it, **keep computing devices** (i.e., laptops, iPads, iPhones, etc.) **put away during class.**

Visit office hours. Try to visit the professor during office hours at least once. This is the best way for your instructor to get to know you and to address any questions you may have. Email is NOT the best way to contact your instructor. As a rule, if the question you have requires more than a sentence to respond, please visit office hours.

Be respectful of one another when engaging in discussions. Active class participation will enhance your understanding, help us get to know one another, and boost your course grade. Please use discretion

when asking or responding to questions. Raise your hand and wait to be acknowledged, and refrain from calling out or holding your own conversations during lectures and discussions.

I expect my students to:

1. Respect one another's opinions and perspectives, and speak respectfully to one another;
2. Complete all assignments on time;
3. Be prepared to discuss readings/viewings in tutorials; and
4. Be active participants in the learning experience.

Students can expect that I will:

1. Respect their opinions and perspectives, and speak respectfully to them;
2. Be available to students via office hours and email (*note that I may not respond to emails sent over the weekend until Monday*);
3. Provide clear expectations for assignments and grading; and
4. Solicit feedback on the learning experience throughout the semester.

★ **Important Note** | If you have any questions or concerns, or if help is needed, ask. No question is too small. **As a student in American Studies 10, you are worth our time!**

## ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, you can work with the Disabled Students' Program (DSP) to request an official **disability-related accommodation**. You can find more information about DSP, including contact information and the application process here: [dsp.berkeley.edu](http://dsp.berkeley.edu). If you have already been approved for accommodations through DSP, please meet with me so we can develop an implementation plan together. The earlier you do this, the better. If you require schedule accommodations due to religious observance, athletic activities, or childcare, **please inform me as early as possible**.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** When you reference another person's ideas or work, cite that other person. This is true whether you are directly using that person's words, or only paraphrasing the "gist" of what they are saying. Engaging another person's work is a good thing (this is what we do as scholars); claiming another person's work as your own is not. Unsure if you're doing it right? Ask us! Any instance of plagiarism or other academic dishonesty will result in a course grade of "F" and a report to the Office of Student Conduct. More information is available at: [sa.berkeley.edu/code-of-conduct](http://sa.berkeley.edu/code-of-conduct).

**NO COMMERCIAL USE:** Do not sell, forward, or otherwise share any materials from this class to any individual or business, online or otherwise. Do not create audio recordings of any lectures or discussion sections without prior consent of the instructor.

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The course is subject to university policies governing academic integrity, nondiscrimination, disability accommodation, and sexual harassment. Links to these policies are available on the course website.

## CONTENT WARNING

Reading in this course may include offensive language such as racial, sexual, or gendered epithets. Students will encounter such language on the page, but it will never be spoken aloud in class. Students will also encounter other difficult content, including the representation of violence.

★ **Important Note** | This class is happening in the middle of an ongoing global pandemic that has introduced layers of uncertainty to our class, to our campus, and to the world around us. I am committed to providing clear communication, consistent instruction, and a classroom environment conducive to critical inquiry and intellectual curiosity—whether we are in 102 Wurster Hall or on Zoom. *Your wellness is important. If you encounter any COVID-related challenges, please let me or your GSI know.*

## SEMESTER SCHEDULE

### PART I — LABOR OF LOVE: LAYING THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Aug 26      **INTRODUCTION**

Aug 31      **WHAT IS AMERICAN STUDIES?**

Patricia Limerick, “Insiders and Outsiders”  
Elaine Tyler May, “The Radical Roots of American Studies”  
Lisa Duggan, “The Fun and the Fury of Transforming American Studies”

Sep 2      **AMERICAN STUDIES METHODS AND KEYWORDS**

[HS/AL]

The first week of the course introduces students to American Studies’ peculiar **history**. We survey major thinkers and trends in the field, moving from the model of British critical studies (e.g., Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams) to the model of American cultural studies (e.g., Stuart Hall). Students read addresses by past presidents of the American Studies Association. We survey the rise of a distinctly Americanist scholarship alongside the institutional establishment of the field, including the seminal work of Henry Nash Smith, consensus narratives, and the subsequent influence of European theory on cultural studies. To illustrate some of the more profound developments, students engage in lecture with a series of 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs as well as illustrations from the graphic novel, *Kingdom Come* (1996) to explore how messages about power are communicated through **art**.

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Sep 7      **THEORIZING LOVE, I**

José Ortega y Gasset, “Facciones del amor” / “Features of Love”  
Ronald de Sousa, *Love: A Very Short Introduction*, chapters 1-3  
bell hooks, “Preface” and “Introduction”

Sep 9      **“I ONLY HAVE EYES FOR YOU”**

Thomas Lewis, et al, “The Heart’s Castle”  
Robin Dunbar, “Truly, Madly Deeply”



[AL/HS]

During the second week of the course, we focus on how

love has been defined, constructed, represented, commodified, and legally inscribed. Here we consider how love has been defined in religious, philosophical, political, narrative, artistic, and consumer terms. We move from St. Paul BCE to novels by Rosie Danan and digital illustrations in 2021. The first day of the week engages: Howard Jones's 1983 **song** "What Is Love?," the linguistic use and **etymology** of "love," and **popular writing** about love from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the late 20<sup>th</sup>. I model how to read **visual culture**, developing historically contextualized close readings of **paintings** (i.e., Gustav Klimt's *The Kiss* [1908], René Magritte's *The Lovers* [1928], Frida Kahlo's *Diego on My Mind or Self-Portrait as Tehuana* [1943], Henry Ossawa Tanner's *The Banjo Lesson* [1893], Glenn Ligon's *Prisoner of Love #1* [1992]) and **sculpture** (i.e., Ron Mueck's *Spooning Couple* [2005]). During the second lecture, we survey how biological and social scientists have historically researched love (e.g., Sternberg's theory of love, the "Frizzy Wig" experiment, the prat fall effect).

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Sep 14, 16      **THEORIZING LOVE, II**

Ronald de Sousa, *Love: A Very Short Introduction*, chapters 4-6  
Deesha Philyaw, "How to Make Love to a Physicist"

[HS/AL]

Here we conclude the **historical survey** of scientific research on love, from "mechanical matchmaking" in 1924 to online dating and algorithms in 2020. We especially examine the **illustrations as art** in the April 1924 issue of *Science and Invention* magazine. The week concludes with textual analysis of **narrative fiction** in the form of a 2020 **short story**.

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[HS/AL]

In Part II of the course, we consider love and through the lens of **time**, looking at when dating was [a] first invented and [b] later commodified, exploring a range of texts from film to advertisement, from music to polemic, all of which trained an entire generation of young people in the middle of the last century what love looks like, how love should feel, how it should be expressed, and also, as one 1950s social engineering film shows, what to do on a date.

**PART II — "GO TOGETHER LIKE A HORSE AND CARRIAGE": LOVE AND MARRIAGE IN AMERICA**

Sep 21      **THE INVENTION OF DATING**

\*\*\*Paper #1 due in class 9/21\*\*\*

Sep 23      **FROM RATING AND DATING TO GOING STEADY**

McComb, "Rate Your Date"  
Jennifer Scanlon, "Boys-R-Us"



[HS/AL]

The **history** of American courtship, including 18<sup>th</sup> century courting and 19<sup>th</sup> century "calling" and romance; changing expectations in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, including "dating," "treating," and "charity girls;" prewar developments such as "rating and dating" and the "once arounder"; postwar developments, including going steady and marriage (mimetic and actual); late daters; and obit bracelets. The principal materials here are **textual** (e.g., dating manuals aimed at adolescent girls); **material** (e.g., dance cards, 1920 makeup kits); **visual** (e.g., photographs of partner dancing performances, cartooning social dance); and **sound** recordings of popular songs about love in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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Sep 28, 30      **ADOLESCENTS IN LOVE**

*Love Finds Andy Hardy*, 1938  
*The Bachelor & the Bobby-Soxer*, 1947

[AL/HS]

In order to examine the two assigned films and how they represent adolescent expressions of affection and fantasies about love, we explore the 1920s (adolescent folk speech, high school vs. college, *sheiks and shebas*, preferring dating over courtship); the 1930s (the Great Depression, the universalizing of high school, gendered expectations, and rating and dating); 1930s films (Shirley Temple, Judy Garland, and Deanna Durbin, the “fix-it” girls, and *Every Sunday* [1936]); the series of Andy Hardy films, Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland, and the ideal adolescent. Once we establish this **historical context**, we turn to close readings of *Love Finds Andy Hardy* and the teen **musical as genre**. For *The Bachelor & the Bobby-Soxer*, I similarly establish the film’s historical and theoretical contexts (e.g, bobbysoxers, swing music, Frank Sinatra and the “Bobbysoxer Riots,” bobbysoxers and consumer culture, the sub-debs, and Shirley Temple films) before developing a close reading. Students are trained how to “read” and write about film.

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Oct 5              **THE MAKING OF AN AMERICAN MARRIAGE**

Nancy F. Cott, “Domestic Relations on the National Agenda”

Oct 7              **\*\*\* MIDTERM EXAM \*\*\***

Oct 12            **HAPPILY EVER AFTER: HOW LOVE CONQUERED CONTRACTS**

Stephanie Coontz, “The Radical Idea of Marrying for Love” and “The Many Meanings of Marriage”

[HS/AL]

We explore how marriage has been defined anthropologically, legally, and **historically**. We study the specific relationship between marriage and property; examine how marriage operated under slavery, the folk practice of “jumping the broom”; and how marriage and freedom became legally intertwined. As part of the consideration of marriage under slavery, we develop close readings of a series of **illustrations** from *Harper’s Weekly* (1899) to consider the relationship between **art and propaganda**. Drawing on the work of Cott and Coontz, we study marriage as “domestic relation”; consent; the “laws of marriage;” and trace how “men and women” became “husbands and wives.” We also work toward an archaeology of American monogamy *as citizenship via coverture and the feme covert*.

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Oct 14            **LOVE ACROSS THE COLOR LINE, I**

the letters of Alice Hanley to Channing Lewis  
oral argument in *Loving v. Virginia*, April 10, 1967 (<https://www.oyez.org/cases/1966/395>)

Oct 19            **LOVE ACROSS THE COLOR LINE, II**



Guess Who's Coming to Dinner? (1967)

[HS/AL]

Part of my aim here is to help students understand **history** as a discursive practice and how myth and ideology can intersect. We use historical documents (e.g., legal briefs, court cases, letters, newspapers, political cartoons, Edward William Clay's 1828-1830 *Life in Philadelphia* illustrations, and pamphlets) to examine the relationship between race and marriage, particularly as it relates to the "miscegenation hoax" of 1864 and to Irish Americans as "Colored" in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While it may seem as though the abovementioned primary sources are presented as evidence, I treat them as texts to be "read" as any other, and I train my students always to look for the story that is being told, so while the political cartoons are indeed evidence of how Irish Americans were perceived, we examine them also and importantly as an **art form**, considering issues of form, style, and genre.

Because part of our task is to study how traditional notions of love and marriage have been challenged or otherwise disrupted, we examine the historic Supreme Court case, *Loving v. Virginia* (1967). After tracing the legal history of the case, we develop close readings of a *LIFE* magazine series of **photographs** of Richard and Mildred Loving and their loved ones to see how **visual narratives** are produced in photographs. While they are documentary evidence, we also consider them as **art**. Additionally, we engage in **film criticism** with *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*.

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Oct 21           **"I WISH I KNEW HOW TO QUIT YOU"**

Annie Proulx, "Brokeback Mountain"  
Lorraine Hansberry as Emily Jones, "Chanson du Konallis" and "The Anticipation of Eve"

[AL/HS]

Building on the previous exploration of disruptions to traditional notions of love and marriage, we next focus on literary explorations of queer love. Much as in other weeks, I situate material in its historical and theoretical contexts, meaning that my students leave the course not only able to make arguments about Hansberry's short stories but also know about her personal, professional and political life, from her friendships with Nina Simone and James Baldwin, to her Drama Critic's Circle Award for *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959), to her unwavering advocacy for civil rights in the face of resistance from then Attorney General Robert Kennedy, and to her desire to support financially and artistically budding queer publications like *One* magazine.

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Oct 26, 28       **THE (UN-)(RE-)MAKING OF AN AMERICAN MARRIAGE**

Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, *Lemonade*, 2016  
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"  
Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power"  
Assata Shakur, "Affirmation (I believe in living.)"  
bell hooks, "Moving Beyond Pain"  
Derek Walcott, "Love After Love"



Nov 2, 4           **"LOVE IS LAK DE SEA"**

Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, all

[AL/HS]



These two weeks are focus on **art** in the form of music, short fiction, poetry, and a novel. As noted above, each of the texts under consideration are deeply **historicized**, as the relation between text and context is a significant to American Studies dynamic for an introductory course.

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Nov 9           **THE BUSINESS OF LOVE**

\*\*\*Paper #2 due in class on 11/9\*\*\*

[HS/AL]

This lecture focuses on [1] the business of love from dating sites to matchmakers, including a close reading of Gerard van Honthorst's 1625 painting, *The Match-Maker*; [2] weddings in the U.S. as folk custom/ritual and as consumer rite; and [3] the history of diamond engagement rings and the advertisements used to market them to American couples, including the birth of the color "diamond blue" and designing the men's engagement ring. We view the advertisements with particular consideration given to their **artistry**, including form, use of color, and style.

Nov 11           **ACADEMIC HOLIDAY**

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### PART III – FAMILIES, FRIENDSHIPS, AND OTHER INTIMACIES

[AL/HS]

Where the previous Parts of the course have focused on romantic love, in the final Part of the course, we study how friends and family relate to one another. The course closes with two novels, *If Beale Street Could Talk* and *Maud Martha*, one film, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, and the television friendship of Lucy Ricardo and Ethel Mertz.

The final three weeks of the course are primarily focused on **arts and letters**; however, students best appreciate the deep investment to writing about a family making a way out of no way in James Baldwin's novel when they understand the **history** of the civil rights movement, integration, and police violence in the US. Similarly, I read *Meet Me in St. Louis* out of its **context** as a **postwar film**, telling a story that is specific to 1944 even as it looks back to 1904. The relationship between historical context and the text is, again, significant and constituting.

Nov 16           **"THE LOVE AND THE LAUGHTER COME FROM THE SAME PLACE"**

James Baldwin, *If Beale Street Could Talk*, all

Nov 18           **"ROSES ARE RED, JOHN'S NAME IS TRUETT. ESTHER'S IN LOVE, WE ALWAYS KNEW IT!"**

*Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944)

Nov 23           **"A FRIEND IS ANOTHER SELF"**

*I Love Lucy*, "Lucy and Ethel Buy the Same Dress" (1953)

Nov 25           **THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

Nov 30           **IN GOOD COMPANY**

Gwendolyn Brooks, *Maud Martha*, all



Dec 2

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

\*\*\*Paper # 3 due in class\*\*\*

**REVISION WEEK:** Schedule a remote appointment via this link: [bit.ly/3icy8GR](https://bit.ly/3icy8GR).

**FINAL EXAM:** Tuesday, December 14 beginning at 3pm; location TBA