Course Description: American Studies 601 is an Introduction to the development of the field of American Studies. We examine the key questions and debates in the literature of American Studies, identify major and emerging figures in the field, and consider ways of ‘positioning’ one’s work in relationship to the discipline. The course should enable you to develop your own sense of how American Studies asks and answers key questions, and provide a range of understandings of just what “America” means in the context of the discipline. We will also learn how to “read” an American Studies text to unearth its methodological strategies, ideological assumptions, and ways of advancing the field of American Studies.

Required Books (see below): Available at Von’s Bookstore, 315 State St., West Lafayette

Course Requirements:

Leading Class Discussion: Each student is responsible for leading one class discussion during the semester. Leading discussions entails the following responsibilities:
1) Identifying some key themes or ideas in the text(s) for review and discussion with the class; 2) Providing your own critical interpretation of the material; 3) Offering some provocative questions for discussion; 4) Providing a one page (minimum) handout that helps your peers understand your presentation. In addition, you must write a 5 page paper in conjunction with the presentation. The paper should offer a critical analysis of some key issue, problem or idea in the reading. 20 percent of final grade.

Annotated Bibliography: Each student must complete and submit an Annotated Bibliography. The readings in the Bibliography should relate to one of the units of the course. The Bibliography should include a minimum of ten sources. You must provide each instructor a hard copy of the completed bibliography. In addition, you must e-mail your peers a copy of the Bibliography. For examples and definitions of annotated bibliography see http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_annotatedbib.html Due Week X. 10 percent of final grade.

Short Critical Essay: This 6-8 page essay should take up a key theme, problem or idea in ONE text we are reading this semester. The paper should be a concentrated analysis of the issue. You must use a minimum of five secondary sources. Due Week VII. 20 percent of final grade. Papers should follow MLA citation format.
Long Critical Essay: This 15-20 page essay should be an extended, in-depth treatment of a key problem, issue or idea drawn from readings in the seminar. You must use at least three primary readings (from the syllabus) and eight secondary sources in the essay. Papers should follow MLA citation format. Due Week XVI. 30 percent of final grade.

Class Participation: 20 percent of final grade.

Grading Policy: All grades will be based upon a 100 point scale. Late assignments will be docked 5 percent of the final grade for each day late.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance at every session is expected. Your final grade will be reduced by 1 point for each unexcused absence from the seminar.

Plagiarism:

May be grounds for failing the course.

Course Schedule:

Week I:

Week II: Origins and Origin Myths in American Studies
Aug. 30th: Henry Nash Smith The Virgin Land

Week III: Counter Myths and Counter Histories
Sept. 6th: Annette Kolodny The Lay of the Land

Week IV: Classic Historiography
Sept. 13th: Alan Trachtenberg The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age

Week V: Race, Class and Performance in U.S. History
September 20th: Eric Lott Love and Theft

Week VI: Whiteness, Immigration and Labor History
Sept. 27 Alexander Saxton The Indispensable Enemy

Week VII: History and Ethnicity from Below
Oct. 4 Elizabeth Cohen Making a New Deal

Mid-term Essays Due!
Week VIII:  **Post-Consensus American Studies**  
Oct. 11  George Lipsitz  *American Studies in a Moment of Danger*

Week IX:  **Cultural Studies and American Studies**  
Oct. 18  Tricia Rose  *Black Noise*

Week X:  **New Ethnography and Gender**  
Oct. 25th  Julie Bettie  *Women Without Class*

**Bibliographies Due!**

Week XI:  **Sexuality Studies and American Studies**  
Nov. 1  Philip Brian Harper  *Are We Not Men?*

Week XII:  Independent Study Day  
Nov. 8:

Week XIII:  **Transnational American Studies**  
Nov. 15th  Michael Denning  *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds*

Week XIV:  **Thanksgiving Holiday  No Class**  
Nov. 22

Week XV:  **Post-American Studies**  
Nov. 29  Guillermo Gomez-Pena  *The New World Border*

Week XVI:  Student in-class reports on final seminar papers  
Dec. 6  Final Seminar Papers Due