Ph.D.

North American Studies Program, Doctoral School of Literature, UD

BTP2NA\_T\_1

**INTRODUCTION TO ADVANCED AMERICAN STUDIES**

*Spring 2025*  *Dr. Zoltán Abádi-Nagy, Prof. Emeritus of English*

*F 8:00-11:40 Phone: +36-30-382 9992 (no voice mail)*

*Online (Skype) E-mail:* [*abadi-nagy.zoltan@arts.unideb.hu*](mailto:abadi-nagy.zoltan@arts.unideb.hu) *Office hours: before and after class*

*or by appointment, online*

*Make-up class(es), if needed:*

*subject to negotiation*

***Prospectus***

The course will focus on American Studies (hence AS) as a branch of philology; on its history and theoretical background earlier and today; on questions of interdisciplinarity and method; the AS movement, traditional topics and new directions (including canon debates, reconceptualizations, and the internationalization of AS); reference literature, journals, resource collections, and technology (web sites); AS in the US, Europe, and Hungary; as well as professional associations and fellowships.

***Class Format:*** seminar; 2 hours per week in even distribution, ***block-taught in fact***; graded (discussion, presentation, and papers).

***Status of Course***: required for American stream, optional for British-stream students, 3 credits

***General Requirements***

The reading assignments are kept as reasonable as possible. Students will be expected to attend class faithfully, to keep up with the readings, and to come to class prepared with questions and comments for discus­sion. The classes will be conducted in an atmosphere in which the instructor and the students take the time to discuss readings and share their insights. We can set aside part of any class meeting for informal discussion of our work if needed.

***Course Requirements***

Informed attendance and participation, two oral presentations, two 5-page and two 3-page papers, as well as technological assignment.

## **Presentations**

Students are expected to conduct two discussions in class, based on any two of their four papers (see writing assignments below). The presenter’s aim is to present her/his position and, by using the interrogative method, generate a good debate. ***Sign-up deadline: March 7*** (see *sign-up sheet*); 2 presentations per double class sessions at the maximum.

***Writing Assignments***

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OUT-OF-CLASS PAPERS—Each student is expected to prepare **four papers** in which s/he examines (one aspect of) her/his dissertation research topic **in the contexts of** 1) ***one relevant traditional AS topic*** and 2) ***one new-accent AS topic***. (Both are five-page papers.) For topics see page 8 of this syllabus. The other ***two are position papers*** (three typed pages each) based on two articles of the student’s choice: one from the *American Quarterly* and one from either the *Journal of American History, Journal of American Culture,* or the *Journal of Popular Culture*. Those articles cannot be syllabus-items; i.e., none of the 4 papers should be based on texts indicated for class discussion in the syllabus Schedule (optional reading items at the end of this semester’s Schedule–p.7– excepted). ***The papers must clearly indicate which of the four paper-requirements they satisfy. Electronic submissions are required. Deadline: continuous; they may be submitted in any order, at any time, but submissions must be complete no later than May 31, without penalty.* N.B. NO PAPERS SUBMITTED IN OTHER COURSES TO SATISFY OTHER COURSE REQUIREMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

***Technological assignment***

INTERNET RESOURCES—Each student will study one of the “new accents” web resources that relate, in some relevant way, to her/his dissertation topic. A brief (half-page) description and a ***one-page professional evaluation of the web material*** must be submitted (electronically), with the title and the web address of that resource appearing top-page, as the title of the submission. Deadline: continuous.

N.B.

1. Documentation, format—When you consult or quote a source, document it according to the usual academic principles. In all matters of form, use the MLA format. If you have questions about how to do so, ask me, or ask a librarian for the *MLA Handbook,* not earlier than the 7th as for its edition.
2. Editing—Take pride in your work, edit it carefully, root out mechanical errors. Expect your papers to lose one point per every five errors.
3. Font, margins—Out-of-class papers must be typed, double-spaced, in an ordinary font. Those with abnormally wide margins or typeface, will be returned unmarked, and must be resubmitted as directed.
4. Late paper policy—No late paper policy***.*** Papers cannot be accepted for credit beyond May 31. The same applies to the technological assignment.
5. Academic misconduct—Plagiarism will not be tolerated. It is my practice to levy the

maximum penalty against plagiarism. You can be assigned a grade of zero for it, and

can even be dropped from the class with a grade of ***F***. The Doctoral School of Literature

expects its students to adhere to the university’s policies regarding student conduct,

especially academic misconduct. **A statement must be typed on the title page of your**

**essay: “This paper has been prepared in full awareness of the international norms of**

**academic conduct.”**

***Grading***

Participation in class discussion will count 30%;

2 oral presentations: 10% each (=20);

4 out-of-class essays: 10% each (=40);

technological assignment (online-source evaluation): 10%.

Excellent (5) = 91-100; good (4) = 81-90; average (3) = 71-80; satisfactory (2) = 61-70;

F (1) = 0-60.

N.B.

1. *Course requirements—* The out-of-class papers and the oral presentations are course requirements; i.e., a student must ***complete all of these assignments in order to pass the course at all.***
2. *Absence policy*— Regular attendance and participation are always required in a Ph.D. course. Faithful and alert attendance is extremely important to what you learn in the course, as well as to successful work as a whole. Considering the block-taught nature of the course, however, ***attendance is mandatory***. If circumstances exist which cause you to be absent, make an appointment to speak to me about your progress in the course. It is possible to fail the course by absences alone.
3. *Tardy policy*—Tardiness and early departures are not allowable. They are offensive to your fellow students and to the instructor because they disrupt class work. If you have a compelling reason for arriving late or leaving early, speak with me about the problem. If you regularly cut the beginning and/or the end of class sessions, it can add up to unexcused full-class-time absences.
4. *Extra credit*—No extra credit policy.
5. *Borderline grades*—If your grade is borderline, it depends on attendance and the general pattern of your work (performance improvements) if you can get a break.
6. *Discussing grades*—If you have questions about how I evaluated your work, please get in touch online. It is my policy not to discuss grades over the telephone or via e-mail.

**S C H E D U L E**

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| Month | Day | **Theory, method, issues (discussions)** | **AS research**  **methodology** |
| February | 28/1 | **Orientation: course introduction and requirements** | |
| *The Discipline*   1. Richard P. Horwitz, “America Studies: Approaches and Concepts” (free download from: http://myweb.uiowa.edu/rhorwitz) 2. Roy Harvey Pearce, “AS as a Discipline” (CP) 3. Warren I. Susman, “History and the American Intellectual: Uses of a Usable Past.” (CP, *LAS*) 4. Henry Nash Smith, “Can AS Develop a Method?” (CP, *LAS*) | Americanization  Internationaliza-tion of AS  Transnational AS |
| 28/2 | Trans-American S  Inter-American S  Transatlantic S |
| 28/3 | *Theory, Methods*   1. Richard M. Huber, “A Theory of AS” (CP) 2. Leo Marx, “AS—A Defense of an Unscientific Method” (CP, *NLH*) 3. Joel Jones, “AS: The Myth of Methodology” (CP, *American Self*) | AS reference,  bibliographies  LOC |
| 28/4 |
| March | 7/1 | *Directions, Culture, Cross-disciplinarity*  Myth-and-Symbol   1. Robert Sklar, “The Problem of an AS ‘Philosophy’: A Bibliography of New Directions” (CP, *AQ*) 2. Richard E. Sykes, “AS and the Concept of Culture: A Theory and Method” (CP) 3. Bruce Kuklick, “Myth and Symbol in American Studies” (CP) 4. Gene Wise, “’Paradigm Dramas’ in AS: A Cultural and Institutional History of the Movement” (CP, *LAS*) | AS associations 1  ASA |
| 7/2 |

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| **Month** | **Day** | **Theory, method, issues**  **(discussions)** | | **AS research**  **methodology** |
| March | 7/3 | Empirical Researchand the Reflective Turn  1. Stanley Bailis, “The Social Sciences in AS” (AQ! 26.3 [1974]: 202-224) 2. Guenter Lenz, “AS – Beyond the Crisis?” (*Prospects* 7 [1982]: 53-113) | AS associations 2:  AS in Europe | |
| 7/4 |
| 21/1 | 1. Philip Gleason, “World War II and the Development of American Studies” (AQ! 36.3 [1984]: 343-358) 2. Linda K. Kerber, “Diversity and the Transformation of AS” (AQ! 41.3 [1989]: 415-31) | AS associations 3:  AS in Hungary | |
| 21/2 |
| 21/3 | AS and Poststructuralism (debate) 1  Steven Watts, “The Idiocy of AS: Poststructuralism, Language, and Politics in the Age of Self-Fulfillment” (CP, *AQ*)  \*\*\*  *AS and Poststructuralism (debate) 2*   1. Barry Shank, “A Reply to Steven Watts’s ‘Idiocy’” (CP, *AQ*) 2. Nancy Isenberg, “The Personal is Political” (CP, *AQ*) 3. Steven Watts, “Reply to Critics” (CP, *AQ*)   \*\*\*  Selected Bibliography: Cultural Studies (CP, *Norton*) – FYI ony | AS conferences | |
| 21/4 |
| April | 4/1 | *Crossroads of Cultures*  1. Shelley Fisher Fishkin, “The Transnational Turn in AS” (AQ! 57.1 [2005]: 17-57—assigned section: pp 22-43 only) | AS research centers | |
| 4/2 |

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| **Month** | **Day** | **Theory, method, issues (discussions)** | AS research  methodology |
| April | 4/3 | *Critical Internationalism and Transatlantic Studies*   1. Jane C. Desmond and Virginia R. Dominguez, “Resituating American Studies in a Critical Internationalism” (CP, *AQ*)   2. Will Kaufman and Heidi MacPherson, “Transatlantic Studies” (CP, *New Perspectives*) | Fellowships |
| 4/4 |
| May | 23/1 | *Cultural Theory, Reconceptualizations*   1. Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., “A New Context for a New AS?” (CP, *LAS*) 2. Donald E. Pease, “The Place of Theory in the Future of American Studies” (*HJEAS*) 3. George Lipsitz, “Listening to Learn and Learning to Listen: Popular Culture, Cultural Theory, and AS” (CP, *LAS*) 4. Alice Kessler-Haggis, “Cultural Locations: Positioning AS in the Great Debate” (CP, *LAS*) | AS journals,  dissertations |
| 23/2 |
| 23/3 | *AS and Technology*   1. Joel Dinerstein, “Technology and Its Discontents: On the Verge of the Posthuman” (AQ! 58.3 [2006]: 569-595) 2. Debra DeRuyver and Jennifer Evans, “Digital Junction” (AQ! 58.3 [2006]: 943-980]   *The Futures of AS*  Gordon Kelly, “The Social Construction of Reality: Implications for Future Directions of AS” (*Prospects* 8 [1983]: 49-58)  Donald E. Pease and Robyn Wiegman, “Futures.” (CP, *The Futures of AS* 1-42)  ***Concluding the seminar*** | AS research and technology  The Crossroads Project |
| 23/4 |

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| Optional suggestions for further reading (open for presentations) |  | *Remapping American Culture*   1. Peter Carafiol, “’Who I Was’: Ethnic Identity and American Literary Ethnocentrism.” (CP, Wonham 43-62) 2. Shelley Fisher Fishkin, “Interrogating ‘Whiteness,’ Complicating ‘Blackness’: Remapping American Culture” (CP, Wonham 251-90) 3. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. “The Trope of a New Negro and the Reconstruction of the Image of the Black.” (CP, Fisher 319-45) 4. Barbara Smith, “Toward a Black Feminist Criticism” (CP, *Norton*) |
|  |  | *Shifting the Center, Multiculturalism*   1. Patricia Hill Collins, “Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing” (CP, *American Families* 197-217) 2. Karen Brodkin Sacks, “Toward a Unified Theory of Class, Race, and Gender.” (CP, *American Families* 218-29) 3. John Trombold, “The Uneven Development of Multiculturalism” (CP, *Profession* 236-47) |

***Traditional topics***

**the Frontier the Old South**

**slavery**

**19th cent. Am. Lit.**

**the 1920s**

**the 1930s**

**the 1940s**

**the 1950s**

**the 1960s**

**the 1970s**

**the 1980s**

**the 1990s**

**the early 21st century**

**autobiography**

**cultural geography**

**education**

**folklore, folk culture**

**labor, the worker the presidency**

**religion**

***New accents***

**African American studies**

**Arab American Studies**

**Asian American studies**

**body studies**

**communal history**

**cultural studies**

**(the) culture of poverty**

**ecology**

**ethnic studies film studies**

**gender/women’s studies**

**globalization studies**

**Hispanic American studies**

**inter-American studies**

**material culture**

**multiculturalism**

**Native American studies**

**pop culture**

**regional studies**

**transatlantic studies**

**urban history**

**visual studies**

**youth studies**

***Topics other than these (traditional or new accents) are negotiable.***

***Texts***

***The “course packet” is available in electronic format on the e-learning course page.***  Several CP-items come from *American Quarterly,* *Journal of American History, New Literary History,* or *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* you can locate them in those journals. Reading items indicated with an exclamation mark in the syllabus Schedule as “AQ!” are available on the internet only. Download and printing is FREE if done through the university network from „*American Quarterly* on JSTOR.”

**ALWAYS BRING PRINTED COPIES TO CLASS FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES.**

***Recommended*** *bibliography (some essential items –* ***other than the ones assigned*** *in the Schedule as required readings)*

Bass, Randy. *Engines of Inquiry: A Practical Guide for Using Technology to Teach American*

*Culture.* Crossroads Project, 1997.

Bate, William and Perry Frank, eds. *Handbook for the Study of the United States.* Washington,

D.C.: USIA, 1989.

Bathrick, David, “Cultural Studies” (CP).

Bender, Thomas, “Wholes and Parts: The Need for Synthesis in American History” (CP,

*JAH*).

Bennett, David, ed. *Multicultural States: Rethinking Difference and Identity.* London:

Routledge, 1998.

Bercovitch,Sacvan. *The Rites of Assent: Transformations in the Symbolic Construction of*

*America.* New York: Routledge, 1993.

Bradbury, Malcolm and Howard Temperley. *Introduction to American Studies.* 2nd ed.

London: Longman, 1989.

Brodkin Sacks, Karen, “Toward a Unified Theory of Class, Race, and Gender.” (CP,

*American Families* 218-29).

Cady, Edwin H., “American Studies in the Doldrums: Or Whistling up a Breeze” (CP).

Peter Carafiol, “’Who I Was’: Ethnic Identity and American Literary Ethnocentrism.” (CP,

Wonham 43-62)

Collins, Patricia Hill. “Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing” (CP,

*American Families* 197-217)

Coontz, Stephanie, Maya Parson, and Gabrielle Raley. *American Families: A Multicultural*

*Reader.* New York: Routledge, 1999.

Dixon, Melvin. *Ride Out the Wilderness: Geography and Identity in Afro-American Literature.*

Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1987.

Feischmidt, Margit, ed. *Multikulturalizmus.* Budapest: Osiris, 1997.

Fisher, Philip, ed. *The New American Studies: Essays from* Representations. Berkeley: U of

California P, 1991.

Richard Wightman Fox, “Public Culture and the Problem of Synthesis” (CP, *JAH*).

Franklin, Phillis, ed. *Profession 1999.* New York: MLA, 1999.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. *Reading Black, Reading Feminist: A Critical Anthology.* New York:

Meridian, 1990.

---, “The Trope of a New Negro and the Reconstruction of the Image of the Black.” (CP,

Fisher 319-45).

Gibaldi, Joseph, ed. *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures.* 2nd ed.

New York: MLA, 1992.

Giles, Paul. *Virtual Americas: Transnational Fictions and Transatlantic Imaginary.* New

Americanists. Durham: Duke UP, 2002.

Girgus, Sam B., ed. *The American Self: Myth, Ideology, and Popular Culture.* Albuquerque:

U of New Mexico P, 1981.

Gordon, Irving, L. *American Studies: A Conceptual Approach.* Rev. ed. New York: AMSCO,

1984.

Gunn, Giles, “Interdisciplinary Studies” (CP)

*Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies*. “Theory and American Studies”

thematic issue. 7.1 (2001).

Hopkins—*The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism.* 2nd ed. Forthcoming.

Jaeger, Gertrude, and Philip Selznick, “A Normative Theory of Culture” (CP).

Kaufman, Will, and Heidi MacPherson, eds. *New Perspectives in Transatlantic Studies.*

Lanham, MD: UP of America, 2002.

Kelly, Gordon R., “Literature and the Historians.” *American Quarterly* 26.2 (1974): 141-59.

Kolodny, Annette. *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life*

*and Letters.* Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1975.

Kourany, Janet A., James P. Sterba, and Rosemary Tong, eds. *Feminist Philosophies: Problems,*

*Theories and Applications.*  2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999.

Leitch, Vincent B., ed. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism.* New York: Norton,

2001.

---, and Mitchell Lewis, “U.S. Cultural Studies” (CP, *Hopkins Guide*).

---, “Disorganization and Death of Theory American Style” (*HJEAS*).

Maddox, Lucy, ed. *Locating American Studies: The Evolution of a Discipline.* Baltimore: Johns

Hopkins UP, 1999.

Nadel, Alan. *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age.*

New Americanists. Durham: Duke UP, 1995.

*New American Studies* book series of Duke UP. (Some included here, e.g., Giles, Nadel, Pease,

Wald.)

*Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism, The.* Ed. Vincent B. Leitch.

Nye, David. *Contemporary American Society.* Akademisk Vorlag (Denmark), 1990.

Orszgh Lszl. *Bevezetés az amerikanisztikába.* Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1972.

Painter, Nell Irvin, “Bias and Synthesis in History” (CP, *JAH*).

Pease, Donald E., ed. “National Identities, Postmodern Artifacts, and Postnational

Narratives.” *National Identities and Post-Americanist Narratives.* New Americanists.

Durham: Duke UP, 1999. 1-13.

Pease, Donald E., and Robyn Wiegman, eds. *The Futures of American Studies.* New

Americanists. Durham: Duke UP, 2002.

Pells, Richard. *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American*

*Culture since World War II.* New York: Basic, 1997.

Reed, Ishmael, ed. Multi*America: Essays on Cultural Wars and Cultural Peace.* New York:

Penguin, 1998.

Rosenzweig, Roy, “What *Is* the Matter with History?” (CP, *JAH*).

Singh, Amritjit, Max J. Skidmore, and Isaac Sequeira, eds. *American Studies Today: An*

*Introduction to Methods and Perspectives.* New Delhi: Creative, 1995.

Sklar, Robert, “Cultural History and American Studies: Past, Present, and Future” (CP).

Smith, Barbara, “Toward a Black Feminist Criticism” (CP, *Norton*).

Sollors, Werner, ed. *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader.* New York: New York UP, 1996.

Trombold, John, “The Uneven Development of Multiculturalism” (CP, *Profession* 236-47).

Van Elteren, Mel. *Americanism and Americanization: A Critical Hgistory of Domestic and*

*Global Influence.* Jefferson NC: McFarland,, 2006.

Wald, Priscilla. *Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative Form.* New

Americanists. Durham: Duke UP, 1995.

Walker, Robert, ed. *American Studies: Topics and Sources.*

Wonham, Henry B., ed. *Criticism and the Color Line: Desegregating American Literary*

*Studies.* New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1996.