AMST 602 Syllabus

Fall 2023

Instructor: Dr. Aaron Dial, ██
Schedule: ███████████
Room: ████████████
Office Hours: By Appointment – ajdial@purdue.edu
AMST 602 Zoom Classroom: █████████████████████████████

Course Description:
You have taken AMST 601 and have a basic sense of what American Studies "is" and can be, but the objective of this course is to venture into an often under-articulated and considered sub field of American Studies – Black Studies. My use of "sub," here, is intentional and worthy of much critique. One could convincingly argue the father of American Studies, as we understand it, was W.E.B DuBois, a Black man. Moreover, "sub" names the academy's concerted effort to diminish the provocative potential and canonical importance as well as confine an entire corpus of scholarship to the assumed niche and limits of racial embodiment. Next, finding your place within the contemporary crosscutting discussions and debates that comprise American Studies scholarship is an essential tenet of this course, but doing so, must center voices and discourses that for too long have been deemed alternative and "sub." Black Studies, currently, is experiencing a moment of powerful renaissance and philosophical invigoration. Scholars rooted in this tradition are doing work transcending what not that long ago would've been the seemingly unassailable boundaries of mainstream (read: white) academic disciplines and conversations. Now, as the inclusion of Othered perspectives are momentarily *en vogue*, folks are having to play catch up, realizing just how well-equipped Black Studies is to address the current issues of our time.

Admittedly, this course covers a lot. While I opted for breadth, readings that survey a disciplinary field, and in honoring the inherent "sub"-ness adhered to Black Studies, I also wanted to showcase depth. In selecting the texts for this course, my goal was to spelunk instead of merely surveying. Thematically, this means that this course sits with and in important and historical conversations within the field. However, and inevitably, this course leaves out so much more. These interdisciplinary works span a cross section of relevant themes, ideas, and concepts within Black Studies and, by proxy, American Studies as well. The predominant goal of this semester will be to assist you in fine tuning your interests and developing a coherent conceptual network that will help shape your current and future research agenda.

Assigned Texts: See Reading Schedule

Grading:
- 3,2,1 Posts (Weekly): **20%**

- Discussion Lead Presentations (3 x group): **20%**

- Final Project/Paper: **20%**

  - Paper/Project Proposal
  - Paper/Project Annotated Bibliography Presentation
  - Paper/ Project Journal Submission Plan

- Final Paper/Project Due: **20%**

- Final Project Presentation – **20%**

Assignment Descriptions

- **3,2,1 Posts**
  - Each week, in preparation for the week's discussion, students are required to submit a weekly response. These will come in the form of the 3,2,1 Posts. **Students who are leading discussions for a particular week are not required to do the posts. Instead, the work that would go into crafting the response should be used to frame your discussions for that week. I will grade these merely on completion.** If you do them and honor the spirit of the assignment, you will get full credit, so no need to stress. This is an assignment that supports your own scholarly growth.
    1. **The 3:** For each week of required readings, students will be tasked with posting **3 questions** about the readings (there are no restrictions to these questions).
    2. **The 2:** Students are tasked with posting **2 substantive comments** about the readings. There are no length requirements, but **the 2** should try to contextualize the readings with the student's own interests, consider outside sources you have encountered in other courses or your own research, and (most importantly) seek to extend the text in some meaningful way. The mark of a scholar is not in how we can regurgitate or paraphrase what we read but how we can incorporate what we read and apply it to our own work and thoughts.
    3. **The 1:** Students are tasked with bringing **1 artifact** that is related, in some way, to the readings. This can be anything really – a website, podcast, article, social media thread or post, etc.
    4. **Students can miss 2 posts and not receive a penalty.**
    5. **Due each week Mondays by midnight**
- **Discussion Lead Presentations**
  - A part of your philosophical development is being able to lead a discussion about something you have read. This is not the same as teaching the class – though it may, in many ways, appear as such. The discussion leader's role is not to teach the material. Your job is to frame a robust classroom discussion. As a result, my expectation for those weeks is that discussion leaders will have read the assigned texts fully and deeply. A successful discussion can be accomplished in several ways:
    1. **Summarize** key thematic issues of a text.
    2. **Explain** the scholarly and professional history of the author.
    3. **Highlight/Analyze** important passages.
    4. **Create/Facilitate** an activity that bolsters understanding and learning.
    5. **Ensure** equitable and robust participation of your classmates.
    6. **Be Prepared** with questions to engage the group.
  - Remember, this isn't an all or nothing assignment. Some of you may do some of these things; others, all; and others still, will approach this completely differently. Also, you aren't doing this alone. You have me. In the week leading up to class, **Discussion Leaders are required to have at least a 30-minute meeting with me** to discuss their strategy and discuss any questions/concerns. Lastly, I will be in class too, and I will interject with my own thoughts and analysis. Also, if you check the reading schedule, there are weeks where no student is "leading" discussion. In those weeks, I will be modeling a way to do this. **Again, students are graded on a completion basis. If you lead the discussion on your assigned week, you will receive full credit. If not, you will receive no credit.**
- **Final Paper/Project**
  - This semester's work will culminate with a final paper or project. I imagine most of you will choose to do an article length paper (5-8k words). However, given there is a rich corpus of academic production beyond the written world – I will make space for students to pitch a

project that centers alternative forms of academic making. Regardless of mode, these projects are an opportunity for students to experiment with ideas and concepts and develop both as a writer and scholar. Moreover, it is an opportunity to present your work to a larger academic community from the safety of the classroom. **With this in mind, the expectation and requirement of these papers/projects is that students will submit their work for publication.** Remember, they do nothing for you just sitting on your hard drives. With this in mind, this assignment will be scaffolded into four tasks: **Proposal, Annotated Bibliography, Journal Submission Plan, and your Final Paper/Project**. **The first three sub-assignments are graded on completion. However, I will not accept or grade your final project if I have not received those assignments.**

1. **Proposal –** Essentially, this is **a 500 word abstract** for your paper. **In this, you should clearly define your object of study, theoretical investments, and predicted mode of delivery.**

2. **Annotated Bibliography –** Each student is responsible for presenting a bibliography with 15 sources, **two of which must be from our list of course readings**. Next, **I am also requiring that half of these sources be from queer, trans, BIPOC, and/or women authors** – **the two sources you use from the course count towards this number.** Instead of a written bibliography, students will deliver a 15-minute presentation providing brief summaries of their particular project, themes uniting the sources and how the researchers envision these sources working together. Think of this as preparation for developing your exam list, just on a much smaller scale. As such, it is not imperative at the time of the presentation for students to have read all of their sources. However, in choosing a potential source, students should have enough information about a particular source to explain their value to their project. The point of a presentation instead of a written annotated Bib is that it allows students to receive feedback and commentary on their ideas and sources.

3. **Journal Submission Plan –** This is just what it sounds like. Students will provide a plan for how and where they will submit their papers upon completion. For example, is there a CFP you are going to submit to? What is the impact factor and reputation of the journal? Where do folks in your particular disciplinary conversations submit? This will all be a part of your submission plan. **It should be no more than 500 words, and it will be submitted via email.**

- **Final Paper –** On the day of our scheduled exam, students will submit their final papers via email. Each paper will be between **5-8000 words, or whatever the specifications of your intended journal.** If you aren't doing a paper, the logistical requirements of your submission will have been negotiated individually with the instructor.

- **Final Project Presentation:** In our last class session, students will deliver a **20-minute formal presentation** on their paper. Think of this as an extended conference presentation. If you all decide to submit this work to conferences, and I hope you do, this project will prepare you for that endeavor.

Classroom Decorum (Don't be an A**hole Policy)
More than most courses, courses that discuss race in any meaningful way can be an anxiety-riddled, deeply personal, and a triggering experience for many students. In many ways, the philosophical crux or impetus of the course (the point of it all) is to make students comfortable with being uncomfortable. All of us (myself included) must take great care to make our meetings a space and time that is amenable to student growth and learning. **Accomplishing this is easy: just don't be an a**hole.** This is a funny way of reminding you to treat your classmates with respect and empathy. In this class, specifically, gaslighting, weaponized questions, trolling, the use of upsetting vocabulary, derailing class discussions, interrupting others who are speaking, will not be tolerated.

Academic Honesty:
Student-teacher relationships are built on trust. For example, students must trust that professors have made responsible decisions about the structure and content of the courses they teach, and professors must trust that the assignments that students turn in are theirs. Acts that violate this trust undermine the educational process.

In this class, all assignments that are turned in for a grade must represent the student's own work. In cases where help was received, or teamwork was allowed, a notation on the assignment should indicate with whom you collaborated. If you have any questions concerning this policy before submitting an assignment, please ask for clarification.

The following will be considered instances of academic dishonesty: copying a paper from another student; recycling one's own or others' papers from other courses; obtaining part or all of a paper from another source other than your own research without providing quotations and citations; direct quotation from printed, electronic or online sources without providing a citation (including rewording or "patchwork plagiarism"); and the use of specific ideas and interpretations of printed or electronic sources without citation ("theft of ideas"). Any material that you quote should be placed under quotation marks and cited with a footnote or reference immediately following the quoted portion that provides the source. Do not hide plagiarism by quoting material and then adding a vague reference at the end of the text. You may discuss homework assignments with other students, and you may prepare for papers and class with other students, but the writing assignments should be your own work. If you quote any source or even take ideas from that source, the source should be referenced completely. The penalty for plagiarism can be an "F" in the course.
http://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academicintegritybrochure.php

Purdue Attendance Policy:
This course follows Purdue's academic regulations regarding attendance, which states that students are expected to be present for every meeting of the classes in which they are enrolled. Attendance may be taken at the beginning of each class. When conflicts or absences can be anticipated, such as for many University-sponsored activities and religious observations, the student should inform the instructor of the situation as far in advance as possible. For unanticipated or emergency absences when advance notification to the instructor is not possible, the student should contact the instructor as soon as possible by email or phone. When the student is unable to make direct contact with the instructor and is unable to leave word with the instructor's department because of circumstances beyond the student's control, and in cases falling under excused absence regulations, the student or the student's representative should contact or go to the Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS) website to complete appropriate forms for instructor notification. Under academic regulations, excused absences may be granted by ODOS for cases of grief/bereavement, military service, jury duty, parenting leave, or emergent or urgent care medical care.

My Attendance Policy:
Obviously, things happen – sickness, doctor's appointments, scheduling conflicts, weather, car or transportation issues, work; the list is almost endless. **Because of this, I am allowing two absences, no question asked.** When using one of your absences, please do not feel the need to explain yourself. They are your absences, and you are grown and have the wherewithal to determine how you can or should use them. **Lastly, and most importantly, there are exceptions to almost every rule.** If you have anything happen that changes your ability to attend courses, and I mean anything, please do not hesitate to reach out. My job is to help you grow and develop as a scholar not administrate failure, **meaning almost everything can be fixed or mitigated if I know in advance.**

Late Work Policy:
1. For the Final Paper/Project assignments (not including the actual paper submission, the annotated bibliography presentation, and the conference style presentation). **I am allowing a 1-week grace period for the remaining two assignments.** All assignments will be due on class days, so this means that you could submit an assignment the following class period. If for some reason we do not meet on that following week, **students are still responsible for submitting assignments** on that day via email.
2. For presentations, by and large, **you are not allowed an extension or make-up presentation.** This is especially true for your tri-semester group presentations. Since we only have so much class time to cover a lot of theoretical ground, rescheduling presentations is a cumbersome process I would much rather avoid. However, if you have a documented reason for needing to reschedule, then, of course, exceptions can be made.

Accommodations for Disabilities:
If you have any type of disability, whether apparent or non-apparent, learning, emotional, physical, or cognitive, and you need some accommodations or alternatives to lectures, assignments, or exams, please feel free to contact me to discuss accommodations for your access needs. Please remember that it is important that we talk about this at the beginning of the semester. Also note that students are encouraged to notify the Disability Resource Center (http://www.purdue.edu/drc or drc@purdue.edu or by phone: 765-494-1247) of an impairment/condition that may require accommodations and/or classroom modifications.

Nondiscrimination:
Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. More details are available on our course Brightspace table of contents, under University Policies. Purdue University prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a veteran. The University will conduct its programs, services and activities consistent with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and orders and in conformance with the procedures and limitations as set forth in Executive Memorandum No. D-1, which provides specific contractual rights and remedies. Purdue's nondiscrimination policy can be found at: http://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea_eou_statement.html.

Mental Health/Wellness:
- If you find yourself beginning to feel some stress, anxiety and/or feeling slightly overwhelmed, try WellTrack. Sign in and find information and tools at your fingertips, available to you at any time.
- If you need support and information about options and resources, please contact or see the Office of the Dean of Students. Call 765-494-1747. Hours of operation are M-F, 8 am- 5 pm.
- If you find yourself struggling to find a healthy balance between academics, social life, stress, etc., sign up for free one-on-one virtual or in-person sessions with a Purdue Wellness Coach at RecWell. Student coaches can help you navigate through barriers and challenges toward your goals throughout the semester. Sign up is free and can be done on BoilerConnect.
- If you're struggling and need mental health services: Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students.
- If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of mental health support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 765-494-6995 during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or by going to the CAPS office on the second floor of the Purdue University Student Health Center

(PUSH) during business hours. The CAPS website also offers resources specific to situations such as COVID-19.

Basic Needs Security:
Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. There is no appointment needed and Student Support Services is available to serve students 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday 5 through Friday. Considering the significant disruptions caused by the current global crisis as it related to COVID-19, students may submit requests for emergency assistance from the Critical Needs Fund.

Violent Behavior Policy:
Purdue University is committed to providing a safe and secure campus environment for members of the university community. Purdue strives to create an educational environment for students and a work environment for employees that promote educational and career goals. Violent Behavior impedes such goals. Therefore, violent behavior is prohibited in or on any University Facility or while participating in any university activity. For more information, please refer to:
http://www.purdue.edu/policies/pages/facilities_lands/i_2_3.shtml

Emergency Preparation:
In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control. Relevant changes to this course will be posted onto the course website or can be obtained by contacting the instructors or TAs via email or phone. You are expected to read your @purdue.edu email on a frequent basis. For more information, please refer to:
https://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency_preparedness/staff.html

This Syllabus is subject to change!!!