

American Studies 101D-001  
(32547)  
Intro To American Studies  
Philosophy and Popular Culture  
PHL103D-001 (34371)  
TR 8-9:15 + Recitation  
Reid Hall 201, 3 units

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### Required Texts

Howl, and Other Poems by Alan Ginsberg (bookstore) esp. “Howl” and “America”  
On the Road by Jack Kerouac (bookstore)  
(supplementary) The Doors of Perception by Aldous Huxley  
“Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” by Walt Whitman <http://www.bartleby.com/142/86.html>  
“Song of Myself” by Walt Whitman <http://www.daypoems.net/plainpoems/1900.html>  
“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” by T.S. Eliot  
[http://public.wsu.edu/~wldciv/world\\_civ\\_reader/world\\_civ\\_reader\\_2/eliot.html](http://public.wsu.edu/~wldciv/world_civ_reader/world_civ_reader_2/eliot.html)  
“The Hollow Men” T.S. Eliot <http://poetry.poetryx.com/poems/784/>  
“I am Waiting” by L. Ferlinghetti  
(supplementary) The Psychedelic Experience by Timothy Leary  
[http://www.erowid.org/library/books\\_online/psychedelic\\_experience/psychedelic\\_experience.shtml](http://www.erowid.org/library/books_online/psychedelic_experience/psychedelic_experience.shtml)  
Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance by Robert Pirsig (bookstore)  
The Electric Kool Aid Acid Test by Tom Wolfe (bookstore)  
Manufacturing Consent by Noam Chomsky (bookstore)  
The Campus War by John Searle <http://www.ditext.com/searle/campus/1.html>  
EST (bookstore)  
Remember, Be Here Now by Ram Das (bookstore)  
Serial Killers: Philosophy for Everyone (bookstore)

### Course Description

What is it to be American? Is there an American culture and counter-culture? We will explore the literature, poetry, media and self-help methods written and designed by Americans in the last 100 years. Is there a uniquely American approach to enlightenment? Self-actualization? Despair? How do Americans understand their individual and political lives? How do Americans seek, and maintain, personal happiness and fulfillment? What do Americans do to stay sane, or condemn others as insane? Using poetry, fiction and non-fiction from this century, we will address these and related questions and work toward a better understanding of the experience and culture of America.

### Grading Scale

A	93-100%	373-400 points	C	73-76%	292-304 points
A-	90-92%	360-372 points	C-	70-72%	280-291 points
B+	87-89%	345-359 points	D+	67-69%	265-279 points
B	83-86%	332-344 points	D	60-66%	240-264 points
B-	80-82%	320-331 points	F	0-59%	0-239 points
C+	77-79%	305-319 points			

### Grading Policy

Grades are based on the following course requirements:  
1) Four Short Papers (75%); 2) Discussion Days (25%) (includes recitation sections).  
You must check your email and D2L regularly as part of this course.

### Course Requirements

- 1) 4 Short Summary & Argument Papers, (1000-1350 words, or about 4-5 pages, 75 points each, 300 points total) consisting of **a summary of the current reading, and your own well-supported position on a question or issue arising from that summary**. Grades are based on: How well your thesis is supported, accuracy and completeness of relevant summary, grammar, spelling, and finesse. The papers must pertain to relevant issues and texts covered in class. I will give a certain amount of guidance as to what to concentrate on in your papers, however, the position that you choose to attack or defend is entirely up to you. You may write on similar questions for each paper, focusing on different thinkers, or you may wish to address new issues in each paper. For example, you may write all your papers on American despair (as long as each pertains to the current class material and current readings), or write each paper on an entirely new topic. **All papers must include specific references to class topics and discussions, and/or current events, to show they are not plagiarized.**
  
  - 2) Discussion/Activity Days: (25 discussions, 4 points each, 100 points total) Many of your discussion points will be gained through attendance and participation in recitation sections. You need not prepare anything extra for these days, but know the lectures and readings well, just in case you are called on to speak - you wouldn't want to be embarrassed. Mary or Dr. Waller will give a topic for discussion on those days, and you will have a chance to write down what you think about that topic and why, and then discuss it with the class. Discussions may occasionally take on different formats, such as a debate, or lighthearted competition, or a game.  
Recitations:  
Mondays 9-9:50 (34372) Wilson Hall 1-139  
Tuesdays 12:15-1:05 (34373) Wilson Hall 1-124  
Wednesdays 1:10-2:00 (34374) Wilson Hall 2-274
- Please attend the recitation section in which you are enrolled. If you have a conflict and need to attend another section, please discuss this with Mary.
- 3) Extra Credit: (sporadic, usually involving attendance at an event or participation in an activity and one paragraph about your experience as related to some aspect of America, up to 21 points) I will announce extra credit opportunities as they appear.

**Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty are Serious Offenses. Know what they are and recognize that the consequences could be worse than a failing grade on the assignment.**  
<http://studentaffairs.case.edu/office/integrity/policysummary.html>

## **Argument Papers**

**They are not research papers. They are not comparison and contrast papers.**

Thesis Paragraph: State your thesis, define your primary terms, mention the relevant philosophical background, i.e., authors or arguments for and against the thesis that have been covered in class, and mention your reasons, arguments, and examples you will use to make your point.

Summary Paragraphs: explain the relevant texts and arguments clearly and completely. Do not explain or discuss anything irrelevant to your thesis. Use at least 3 and no more than 5 quotations from the texts we are using in class that are important to your view.

Argument Paragraphs: Support your view with reasons, evidence (including lived examples), and arguments. Use the views of relevant philosophers, writers, and thinkers to your advantage, citing them properly as you proceed.

Objection Paragraph(s): Present a view that directly and clearly opposes your thesis. Present it briefly but completely, using philosophical texts studied in class as appropriate.

Reply to Objections: Respond to the objection(s) you presented. Be honest.

## **Paper Grading Guidelines**

How well your THESIS statement is supported (15 pts. total, 5 pts. each error).

- Failing to state a thesis is an error. **State your thesis clearly**, and distinguish your position from other positions.
- Fallacies are errors. See handout.
- Distorting facts to make your case is an error. For example, claiming that the planets move in perfect circles, or that the moon only appears at night, is a distortion of our best-substantiated view of the world today and cannot be used for evidence of any view.
- Failing to define terms that are relevant to your thesis is an error.
- Failing to give a reason for your view is an error.
  - Agreeing with your other beliefs/what you were taught is not a reason
  - Making you feel good is not a reason
  - Claiming you have a right to your opinion is not a reason to believe that the opinion is true. In this culture we often agree that each person has a right to his or her own opinion. However, that does not make all opinions equally true or equally well supported. Some opinions are false, and some views have no substantiation.
- Part of supporting your argument is considering a reasonable, well thought out **objection** from an opposing viewpoint. Explain the other viewpoint clearly and thoroughly. Why does your opposition believe something that you do not?
- Part of supporting your argument is **responding to this objection**. How can you defend your view against the view you just presented? This response is the conclusion of your paper.

Accuracy and completeness of summary (25 pts. total, 5 pts. each error).

- Misattributing a view to an author is an error.
- Failing to produce **two** relevant quotes from the text is an error. When citing from a web source without page numbers, note book title, author, chapter and section.
- Failing to include information important to your thesis that was covered in class is an error.
- Including information that is irrelevant to your thesis is an error. Do not wildly summarize everything that comes to mind about an author or position.

Number of grammatical and spelling errors (up to 5 pts.).

- *Nota Bene*, if you spell an author’s name from the required reading incorrectly in your paper, I will remove 10 points immediately (over and above the 5 points), and then continue to count grammatical errors.
- If you use terminology learned in class incorrectly, I will remove 5 points (over and above the 10 points).
- All other graded grammatical errors appear in the attached or forthcoming handout, and are worth 1 point each.

**Ground Rules & Notes on General Civility**

1. *If a disagreement arises, present facts and evidence calmly rather than a heated and useless personal attack. Some opinions are more well-justified than others, but none merit active hostility or degradation.*
2. *Missed papers, presentations, discussions, quizzes and exams cannot be made up, but an opportunity for extra credit will be provided for those who have experienced some difficulties in attending class. If you experience an extended illness or catastrophe, see me.*
3. *If something or someone in the class is genuinely and persistently bothersome, offensive and/or inhibiting your learning process, please bring it to my attention.*
4. *If work is accepted by email, it is always due at 11:59 p.m. on the stated due date. If your work does not arrive in my inbox with that time stamp (because you experience internet difficulties, your computer has problems, your computer clock is inaccurate, or for any other reason), or if I cannot open your file or if it is corrupt, you will receive 0 points for that assignment.*

**Schedule (subject to change)**

Date	Class Content	Due/Points	Read
<b>Week One</b>			
Recitation	<b>No Recitation</b>	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
Thurs. Jan 10	Introduction to course, texts, and syllabus, Basic concepts in philosophy & American Philosophy, Whitman, Howl, America		THE SYLLABUS, Howl, America, other poems
<b>Week Two</b>			T.S. Eliot, Walt Whitman, Leary, Huxley, Kerouac
Recitation	Film: Howl (2010)	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
Tues. Jan 15	Whitman, other poets, psychedelic experiences, basic concepts in philosophy, continued	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	On The Road, book 1
Thurs. Jan 17	On the Road		
<b>Week Three</b>			Finish On The Road, especially books 3 and 5, Begin Zen and the Art of MM
Recitation	Discussion and Review	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	

Tues. Jan 22	Fallacies, reason and argument, writing papers. Finish On The Road	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
Thurs. Jan 24	Zen and the Art		
<b>Week Four</b>			Zen & the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance
Recitation	Working on Thesis Papers	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
Tues. Jan 29	Zen & the Art	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
Thurs Jan 31	Paper #1 Due	<b>Paper #1 Due</b>	
<b>Week 5</b>			Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test 1--197
Recitation	Discussion and Review	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
Tues. Feb 5	Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test 1--123		
Thurs. Feb 7	Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test 124-197	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
<b>Week 6</b>			Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test 198-end
Recitation	One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
Tues. Feb 12	One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
Thurs. Feb 14	Electric Kool-Aid (finish)		
<b>Week 7</b>			Manufacturing Consent, Intro and Chapter 1
Recitation	Excerpts from MC film	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
Tues. Feb 19	Manufacturing Consent Plato's Noble Lie		
Thurs. Feb 21	Manufacturing Consent	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
<b>Week 8</b>			The Campus War
Recitation	Discussion and Review	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
Tues. Feb 26	The Campus War	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
Thurs. Feb 28	<b>Paper #2 Due</b>	<b>Paper #2 Due</b>	
<b>Week 9</b>			
Recitation	No Recitation		
Tue. Mar 5	Media Day Extra Credit		
Thur. Mar 7	No Class!		
March 10-16	<b>Spring Break</b>	<b>No Class</b>	EST book
<b>Week 10</b>			
Recitation	LGST, therapy, self-help	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	

Tue. Mar 19	Therapy, EST, cults? <a href="http://eventlynx.com/south%20park.avi">http://eventlynx.com/south%20park.avi</a>		
Thur. Mar 21	<b>Mary would you lead a class discussion on therapy/self-help/pharma?</b>	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
<b>Week 11</b>			Be Here Now
Recitation	Discussion and Review	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
Tue. Mar 26	Be Here Now	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
Thur. Mar 28	<b>Paper #3 Due</b>		
<b>Week 12</b>			Star Trek
Recitation	Discussion and Review	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
Tue. Apr 2	Star Trek & Twilight Zone	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
Thurs. Apr 4	Science, Star Trek, etc. Films		
<b>Week 13</b>			
Recitation	Discussion and Review	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
Tue. Apr 9	Rock and Roll, Jazz, Rap and Hip-Hop	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
Thur. Apr 11	Music, continued		
<b>Week 14</b>			Serial Killers
Recitation	Discussion and Review	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
Tue. Apr 16	Serial killer culture		
thur. Apr 18	Serial killer culture	<b>Discussion (4)</b>	
<b>Week 15</b>			
Recitation	No recitation		
Mon. Apr 23	Media Day Extra Credit		
Wed. Apr 25	<b>Paper #4 Due</b>	<b>Paper #4 due</b>	