

050:101

Introduction to American Studies

This course provides an introduction to the methods and central themes of American Studies. First and foremost, students will learn to critically evaluate and make cultural sense of a wide range of sources—such as films, literature, music, material objects, and photographs. We will also explore a number of the key issues or lines of inquiry that have defined the discipline of American Studies. What makes an American? How do Americans identify themselves within the context of the nation (or communities within the nation)? How does "culture" operate in people's lives? What dominant values (if any) govern American life? Each member of the American Studies faculty will present a guest lecture, thereby giving students further introduction to a range of topics and influential approaches in the field.