

**READING CULTURE**  
**American Studies 2098 / Section 401**  
**3 credit hours / Wednesdays 5:30-8:00 / TUCC 518**

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**Office Hours:** Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays: 9:00 to 9:45; 11:00 to 11:45; 1:00 to 1:45.  
Additional hours can be arranged. Contact me with any questions or concerns. Be sure to bring to my earliest attention any problem related to your successful completion of assignments.

As an introduction to the methods and scope of American Studies, this course will utilize Philadelphia to help you develop an in-depth, interdisciplinary understanding of urban place from the 19th century to the present. We'll explore how culture in its many manifestations had shaped how people live their daily lives, see themselves and others and create new meaning. We'll explore the relationships and conflicts among different expressions of culture: maps, city planning, architecture, public art, journalism and literature. We'll delve into rich case studies in different creative formats. Through discussion, research, and writing, this class will investigate the varied dimensions of American culture and learn to understand their broader social, aesthetic, ethical, and political contexts.

**Course Goals and Learning Outcomes:**

- Recognize and explore ways in which the study of specific place becomes a lens for understanding urban cultures.
- Sharpen information literacy skills and competence in the analysis of evidence: texts, visual and archival information.
- Produce written work using a disciplined, iterative method of research and reflection developing a proposal, drafts and revisions based on additional reflection and feedback.

In this course, you will read and reflect on the assigned readings and actively participate in the classes by listening and contributing. Students will download and read materials posted on Blackboard and the internet. In addition, students will participate in class discussions, attend site visits and contribute to the class thoughtfully and substantively.

**Required Readings:** These will be available online via Bb. Find.pdf files at "Reading Files" or links at the online "Syllabus & Schedule," also on Blackboard. When assigned, video materials will be found online or on reserve at Paley/Media.

**Assumptions**

**Attend and Engage:** Your presence in class and involvement in discussions is important to your success in this course. I will keep track of your attendance and you should, too. Know when you are in danger of incurring an absence penalty. (Email me for an update if you are unclear.) Students with an emergency (e.g., death in the family, illness, and automobile accident) may have excused absences (**three total**) but if additional absences amount to more than one fifth of

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class hours for the semester, you should consider withdrawal. This semester, is the last day to drop a course is Monday September 12. The last day to withdraw is October 25.

**Prepare:** Each and every week, in addition to class time, plan to devote at least 3 hours for preparation: reading, studying, reflecting, preparing written assignments, reviewing feedback, revising and re-writing.

**Questions:** All questions are welcome. Ask before, during or after class. Or contact me via email or/and visit during office hours.

**Access to the Internet:** This course has numerous assignments to be completed on the internet that will require a broadband connection. These assignments can be completed in any campus computer lab and on any computer in a networked dormitory.

**Social Media During Class:** Cell phones must be turned off and put away during class. **If you persist in using your cell phone in class, you will be counted as absent.** Laptops, tablets and other devices may be used **only** for the purposes of note taking.

**Turn in All Assignments:** Note carefully the dates for all assignments and quizzes listed in this course schedule and on Blackboard. If you miss these requirements without a valid, documented excused (illness, family emergency), you can receive a failing grade for that particular requirement. It is your responsibility to inform me of a problem BEFORE the scheduled event.

**Know and abide by the rules of academic honesty:** Plagiarism and academic cheating are very serious infractions and need to be avoided. It is your responsibility to understand what plagiarism is. Consult Temple's definitions and policies on academic honesty and integrity. They clearly state: "all work done for courses—papers, examinations, homework exercises, lab, reports, oral presentations—is expected to be the individual effort of the student presenting the work and that undocumented use of materials from the web is plagiarism." Plagiarists and students whose work is the source for plagiarists will both receive "0" for relevant assignments and can receive a failing grade for the semester. Do not share your coursework with other students this semester or in future semesters. Cases of plagiarism or cheating may be referred to the University Disciplinary Committee. More at: <http://bulletin.temple.edu/undergraduate/about-temple-university/student-responsibilities/#academichonesty>

**Attendance:** This course meets three times every week and attendance will have a significant impact on your grade. After three forgiven absences, each additional absence will translate into a final grade reduction of 2 points. Example: a student who earns 82 or B- for the semester who also missed 6 classes would receive a penalty for three absences (three over the limit). This student would earn a 76, or a C for the course.

**Lateness, Penalties and Early Departures:** Coming to class late or leaving class early is disruptive and must be avoided. If you are late (5 minutes or more) you will be counted as absent. If you must leave early for a reason, inform me ahead of time. Unexcused departures during class are counted as absences.

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**Participation:** Every class will be a combination of lecture and discussion. All students will be required to (and graded for) participation in class discussions based on the reading assignment for that day.

**Your non-negotiable grade for the course will be determined accordingly:**

Three modules, each worth a possible 30 points for the course grade: Proposal (5 points); draft essay (10 points); presentation (5 points); revised essay (10 points). There will be 3 unannounced quizzes based on assigned readings for a total of 10 points.

**TOTAL POINTS: 100**

**Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:**

92.5% and higher = A; 90.0 – 92.49% = A-; 87.5% - 89.99% = B+; 82.5% - 87.49% = B  
80% - 82.49% = B-; 77.5% - 79.99% = C+; 72.5% - 77.49% = C; 70% - 72.49% = C-  
67.5% - 69.99% = D+; 62.5% - 67.49% = D; 60% - 62.49% = D-; 59.99% and lower = F

**Prerequisites or co-requisites:** None.

**Disability Statement:** This course is open to all students who met the academic requirements for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Contact Disability Resources and Services at 215-204-1280 to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

**Academic Freedom:** Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has adopted a policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy # 03.70.02) which can be accessed through the following link: [http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy\\_no=03.70.02](http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02).

**Religious Holidays:** If you will be observing any religious holidays this semester which will prevent you from attending a regularly scheduled class or interfere with fulfilling any course requirement, you may have an opportunity to make up the class or course requirement if you make arrangements by informing me as to the dates of your religious holidays **within two weeks** of the beginning of the semester (or **three days** before any holidays which fall within the first two weeks of class).

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**Wednesday August 31 – Course Introduction and Syllabus Review. Origins of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway**

<b>MODULE I: PUBLIC ART – Assignment: Select an example of public art for research and analysis.</b>
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**Wednesday September 7 –A Walk on the Lower Parkway (meet outside TUCC at 5:30)**

**READ:**

- Museum Without Walls (Association for Public Art). Introduction:

<http://museumwithoutwallsaudio.org/about-mww/>. Listen and view 4 recordings on public art of your choice: <http://museumwithoutwallsaudio.org/interactive-map/>  
- “Public Art,” by Sally Webster, *Encyclopedia of American Studies*, ed. Simon J. Bronner (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013).  
- “The Parkway’s Tipping Point: a Millionaire, a Mayor and a Model?” November 17, 2011. <http://www.phillyhistory.org/blog/index.php/2011/11/the-parkways-tipping-point-a-millionaire-a-mayor-and-a-model/>

**Wednesday September 14 – Is Public Art Democratic Art?**

**READ:**

- Dell Upton, “Why Do Contemporary Monuments Talk So much?” *Commemoration in America: Essays on Monuments, Memorialization and Memory*, edited by David Gobel and Daves Rossell (University of Virginia Press, 2013), pp. 11-35.  
- Ralph Cipriano and Tom Infield, “You Either Loved Him Or Hated Him Rizzo's Blunt Personality Kept Him In Controversy,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 17, 1991, [http://articles.philly.com/1991-07-17/news/25783951\\_1\\_police-officers-frank-rizzo-rowhouse](http://articles.philly.com/1991-07-17/news/25783951_1_police-officers-frank-rizzo-rowhouse)

**DUE: Proposal (See Bb for details.)**

**Wednesday September 21 – The evolution of Rocky as Philadelphia’s Civic Image**

**READ:**

-Laura Holzman, “A Question of Stature: Restoring and Ignoring Rocky,” *Public Art Dialogue*, (October 2014), Vol. 4, No. 2, 249-265.  
**DUE: Draft submitted online.**

**Wednesday September 28 – Presentations and Discussions**

**READ:**

-Monumental Complications in Germantown, The PhillyHistory Blog, June 24, 2015, <http://www.phillyhistory.org/blog/index.php/2015/06/monumental-complications-in-germantown/>  
- “When Public Art Becomes a Hot Potato,” The PhillyHistory Blog, June 18, 2015. <http://www.phillyhistory.org/blog/index.php/2015/06/when-public-art-becomes-a-hot-potato/>

**DUE: Revised Draft for Presentation and Discussion**

<p><b>MODULE II: THE URBAN NOVEL AND THE CITY</b> – Imagine the class is curating an exhibition of novels set in Philadelphia. Your assignment is to produce a 750-800 word essay for the exhibition catalogue.</p>
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**Wednesday October 5 – Overview of the Philadelphia Novel, 1790s - 2010s**

**READ:**

-*The Philadelphia Almanac and Citizens' Manual for 1995*. (Philadelphia: The Library Company of Philadelphia, 1994), pp. 130-135.  
-Matt Cohen and Edlie L. Wong, *The Killers: A Narrative of Real Life in Philadelphia*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), Introduction, pp. 1-20.

**Wednesday October 12 – CLASS CANCELLED**

**READ:**

-Matt Cohen and Edlie L. Wong, *The Killers: A Narrative of Real Life in Philadelphia*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), pp. 21-41.

**DUE: Proposal – Select and research a Philadelphia novel**

**Wednesday October 19 – The Philadelphia Ethnic Imprint**

**READ:**

-Ron Ebest, “Uncanny Realist: John T. McIntyre and Steps Going Down (1936),” *New Hibernia Review*, Vol. 8, No. 3, Autumn 2004), pp. 86-99.

- Excerpts from McIntyre’s *The Ragged Edge* (1902) and *Steps Going Down* (1936).

**DUE: Draft**

**Wednesday October 26 – The Philadelphia Noir Novel**

**READ:**

- Carlo Rotella, *October Cities: The Redevelopment of Urban Literature* (University of California Press, 1998), “God’s Pocket” selection from chapter 7 “The Literature of Postindustrial South Street,” pp. 185-193.

- “Saving (and Stretching) Devil’s Pocket,” *The PhillyHistory Blog*, 10/28/2014, <http://www.phillyhistory.org/blog/index.php/2014/10/saving-and-stretching-devils-pocket/>

-Brad Windhauser, “Down There,” *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/down-there/>

-Excerpt from David Goodis, *Down There/Shoot the Piano Player* (1956)

**DUE: Revised Draft**

**Wednesday November 2 – Presentations and Discussions**

**MODULE III: THE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE**

Reading, researching images and writing relevant narratives. Select and research an image from the City Archives or another approved source and develop a 750-800 word narrative.

**Wednesday November 9 – Images of Grandeur: Intersections of Photography and Architecture**

**READ:**

- “The Rise and Fall of PhillyPalladian,” 8/9/2016

<http://www.phillyhistory.org/blog/index.php/2016/08/the-rise-and-fall-of-phillypalladian/>

-“Poor Richard in a Roman Toga,” 4/24/2012,

<http://www.phillyhistory.org/blog/index.php/2012/04/poor-richard-in-a-roman-toga/>

-“Philadelphia as Athens of America: More than Skin Deep,” 9/15/2011

<http://www.phillyhistory.org/blog/index.php/2011/09/philadelphia-as-athens-of-america-more-than-skin-deep/>

-“Benjamin Henry Latrobe’s ‘First Great Structure’,” 9/18/2013

<http://www.phillyhistory.org/blog/index.php/2013/09/benjamin-henry-latrobes-first-great-structure/>

-“The Very Model of an Ancient-Modern Monument,” 12/9/2013

<http://www.phillyhistory.org/blog/index.php/2013/12/the-very-model-of-an-ancient-modern-monument/>

-“John Haviland: Playing Out the Greek Option,” 9/30/2013

<http://www.phillyhistory.org/blog/index.php/2013/09/john-haviland-playing-out-the-greek-option/>

-“When Philadelphia’s “Earth Mother” Bit The Dust,” 5-2-2012

<http://www.phillyhistory.org/blog/index.php/2012/05/when-philadelphias-earth-mother-bit-the-dust/>

**Wednesday November 16 – Decoding Philadelphia Photography**

**READ:**

-Ken Finkel, “Looking at the Past,” in *City Abandoned: the Photographs of Vincent Feldman, 1990-2005*. (Paul Dry Books, 2014), pp. xvi-xxiii

**DUE: Proposal - Select and research a photographic image for your module proposal**

**Wednesday November 23 – FALL BREAK**

**Wednesday November 30 – Finding Meaning in “Ruin Porn”**

**READ:**

-Matthew Christopher, “Confessions of a ‘Ruin Pornographer,’” *Hidden City Daily*, 3/12/2012 <http://hiddencityphila.org/2012/03/confessions-of-ruin-pornographer/>

- “‘Ruin Porn’ and the Ambivalence of Decline: Andrew Moore's Photographs of Detroit,” *Photography & Culture* 7(2), July 2014, pp. 119-139.

**DUE: Draft**

**Wednesday December 7 – Presentations and Discussions**

**DUE: Revised Draft**

**Monday December 12 – Final Revised Essays Due Online**