



The University of Texas at San Antonio

American Studies

Letter from AMS Coordinator, Kirsten Gardner

Hello to everyone and I hope you are enjoying your Fall semester. This month, AMS is sponsoring a broad range of programming and we hope to see you at many events! Please feel free to bring friends and family. In addition, visit our webpage (<http://colfa.utsa.edu/HIST/ams/>), and see a comprehensive list of Spring classes. Finally, thanks to Philis Barragan and Megan Lebrecht for sharing their insights in this Fall 2009 edition of the American Studies newsletter.

Philis Barragan joined AMS Faculty this Fall and teaches *Approaches to American culture*

An undergraduate professor of mine, Professor Haney, once said he hated when students felt unsure of their history degree. His suggestion went something like, "Well, if you can't figure



Philis Barragan

out what you're going to do with your degree, just open up a store and sell history!" Despite his contagious zeal, with which I was quite imbued,

events played out differently in practice. After I graduated and left the academic world, I found myself in one much more brutal, and I became very unsure of my real world skills. I began an assiduous search for any job openings pertaining to history. After weeks of disappointment, I wondered what exactly Professor Haney meant with his charismatic

statements.

Eventually, I became a private school teacher. Even though working with the children brought more satisfaction than most people ever see, it only inspired me to go further.

After three years of teaching, I applied to the History Master's program at UTSA and had no idea the profound effect graduate school would have on me. A few of my professors took an interest in my academic development, and their encouragement is something for which I will always be grateful.

After I received my Master's in History, I entered the American Studies doctoral program at UT in Austin, and I am currently in my third year there. I never would have—or could have—pursued a Ph.D. without the training and confidence the UTSA Master's program gave me. And in American Studies, I have found what I've been looking for all along: an understanding of the

relationship between scholarship and everyday life, a connection I was never able to understand in Professor Haney's class. Intersections of gender, race, class, borderlands/transnationalism, and other social theories are in the texts I'm reading for my comprehensive exams, yes, but they are also in that "30 Rock" episode that was on the other night, in that fashion magazine at the checkout stand, and in that awkward social interaction you continually dread. When students ask me what they can do with a degree in American Studies, I tell them they can do anything—office work, teaching, non-profit, journalism—because they will have what many people don't, an understanding of what's socially constructed and what's not and how these intersecting constructions both chain us down and stand us up.

Do you want to major in AMS?

AMS: Interdisciplinary study focused on transnationalism; race/ethnicity; gender and sexuality.

If you are interested in declaring your major in American Studies, please call our front desk in the COLFA Advising Center at 458-4900 and schedule an appointment to meet with me. Thanks and I look forward to meeting with you. Carlos Guerro <http://colfa.utsa.edu/advising/>

Megan Lebrecht, UTSA Undergraduate majors in AMS



Megan Lebrecht

When I transferred to UTSA two years ago, I switched my major from History to American Studies and have not regretted it for an instant. There are a number of classes that explore American cultures through race, ethnicity, and gender, and all are interesting and engaging.

American Studies has given me the opportunity to write many papers that allow me to

critically evaluate issues and make my own conclusions instead of just restating someone else's idea. For my senior seminar research paper I am tackling the issue of teenage poverty. So far the research process has been both challenging and rewarding. The amount of information I am taking on is immense, but it is also enlightening and

meaningful. I chose my topic because I attended high school in an inner city neighborhood and saw first hand the issues of poverty at that age. Hopefully when I graduate in December I can use my skills and knowledge obtained as an AMS major to better serve those in my community.

Speaker: Tim Tingle

Title: "Walking the Choctaw Road: History, Memory, Sovereignty"

Time: 12:30 pm

Date: Tuesday, November 10th

Location: Harris Room - UC 2.212

AMS Classes — Spring Semester

AMS 2043.001 Approaches to American Culture	MWF 12:00-12:50pm	Barragan
AMS 3023.001 Modern American Culture	TR 12:30-1:45pm	Aitches
AMS 3123.001 Applications in American Studies	TR 3:30-4:45pm	Aitches
AMS 3243.001 Studies in Transnationalism	TR 5:30-6:45pm	Aitches
★ AMS 3243.901 Studies in Transnationalism	TR 9:30-10:45pm	Miranda
AMS 3343.002 Race & Ethnicity	TR 9:30-10:45pm	MendezNegrete
AMS 3343.003 Race & Ethnicity: African-Americans/Supernatural	MWF 10:00-10:50pm	Brooks
AMS 3343.004 Race & Ethnicity: American Indians	TR 11:00-10:5pm	Portillo
AMS 3343.004 Race & Ethnicity: African-American Literature	TR 11:00-12:15pm	Brooks
AMS 4823.002 Topics in American Culture: 1945-Present	TR 11:00-12:15pm	Dodwell
AMS 4823.003 Topics in American Culture: Young Adult Lit	MWF 9:00-9:50pm	Pohler
AMS 4823.006 Topics American Culture: US Mexican Border	TR 3:30-4:45pm	Gonzalez

Additional courses for the spring semester that will count toward an AMS degree:

★ POL 3023.901 Civil Lib in Am Law Practice (AMS Topics American Culture)	MW4:00-5:15pm	Gambitta
★ POL 3113.901 American Political Theory (AMS Topics American Culture)	MW 4:00-5:15pm	Rosales
SOC 3043.001 Race and Ethnic Relations (AMS Race/Ethnicity)	TR 11:00-12:15pm	Spraggins
SOC 3293.001 Gender Roles (AMS Gender/Sexuality)	M 2:00-4:45pm	Bartkowski
SOC 3383.001 Sociology of African American Com (AMS Race/Ethnicity)	TR 12:30-1:45pm	Lewis

Speaker: Alice Wexler

Title: Stigma Secrecy & Medical History: What we can learn from Huntington's Disease

Time: 5:00 pm

Date: Tuesday, November 10th

Location: Retama - UC 2.02.02

Speaker: Alexis Gumbs

Title: "We Can Learn to Mother Ourselves": The Queer Danger of the Black Mother

Time: 2:00 pm

Date: Thursday, November 12th

Location: Mesquite Room – UC 2.01.24

Speaker: Gregg Eckhardt

Title: "The Environmentalism in American Culture"

Time: 5:30 pm

Date: Thursday, November 19th

Location: Downtown in BV 3.330