

American Culture Description and Syllabus

Instructor	Sara Pendleton	E-mail	sara@tailoredlegalservices.com
Office	Online	Office Hours	Monday 15:00-16:00

Course Description:

In this course, we will look at the basics of American society and culture from an outside perspective. Emphasis will be on understanding how Americans think and feel, based on their history and culture. Most importantly, we want to understand why Americans live the way they live and do the things they do. As always, the answers are complex, but interesting.

Attendance:

Please attend every single class. The university allows you to miss three (3) classes. If you miss four (4) you fail for the entire semester. I take a note of all students signed into the course. Three (3) late occasions (signing in late or leaving early) equals one missed class. It adds up very quickly, so arrange your matters accordingly. It is your responsibility to know how many classes you have missed and how many times you have been late. I will not remind you at every class, however you can always ask me before and after class.

Please refrain from checking your email or social media during class unless I direct you to do so. Although distance learning may be challenging and finding a reliable internet connection and private space may be difficult, you will benefit the most from this class by coming prepared and engaging for the full 90 minutes. If this is not possible, please email me **BEFOREHAND** so that we can make other arrangements.

Expectations:

In-class participation can make-or-break your grade for this class. You and others benefit the most from class if you participate in the discussion, ask questions, and share your observations. Each class period I will grade a random selection of students on participation points. You will not know if you were chosen for that particular day. So it is in your best interest to be engaged and participating each class period. If you email me before class to discuss issues with participation (internet connectivity, non-private forum for class, lack of understanding of material), I will take you off the list for participation. Otherwise, you are expected to participate each week.

Complete the readings and watch the movies/series episodes. These are given to you to facilitate discussion. If you choose not to do them you will not be able to participate in the class which will lead to a fail mark.

Everyone will sign up for a date and bring one (1) exercise through which they will teach the class the chapter. These can concentrate on vocabulary, content, statistics, history, or the entire chapter itself. The exercises cannot take more than ten (10) minutes maximum to complete. Missing your day will result in missing out on the points for this part of the class in your final grade. I will not grade these exercises, these are for you to practice for your chosen future career. I will expect you give each other feedback on the execution of the teaching exercises. This is purely for your benefit, so I suggest using this opportunity to the maximum.

There will be a short quiz on the reading at the beginning of every class. I will not deduct points if you do not have more than three failed pop quizzes. Missing a pop quiz will result in a fail.

There will be an oral exam at the end of the semester. You will have five (5) questions and three (3) minutes to answer them. There will not be any questions you cannot answer in the allotted time. I will provide a sign-up sheet for you with times when you can take the exam. We will discuss the exam during the course of the semester.

Texts:

Datesman, M.K., Crandall, J., Kearny, E. *American Ways (4th Edition): An Introduction to American Culture*. Pearson, 2014

Link to media:

Evaluation:

In-class participation: 25%

Oral Exam: 25%

Pop quizzes: 25%

Exercise: 25%

Final Course Grades:

All of the above will need to be completed and not more than three missed classes for the following grades to be assigned.

100% to 91% = 5

90% to 81% = 4

80% to 71% = 3

70% to 60% = 2

Rules of the class: No off color language will be tolerated (I can joke, you can joke, but we will not put someone down, we will not make anyone feel uncomfortable). If you feel uncomfortable at any point during the semester, please let me know so that we can resolve the situation. I have office hours every week and you can always reach me through email. I reserve the right to change any or all of the syllabus during the semester.

Schedule: Fall 2020

	Class	Subject	Reading and Class Preparation
1	Sept 8	Class Introduction, Introduction to Cultural Studies, and a little history of the Beginning of the United States (including the Constitution)	<p>Colonization of the Americas (4:34): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKyyI4tW03U</p> <p>Revolution (11:26): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HIUiSBXQHCw</p> <p>The U.S. Constitution (5:52): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMoymqXB4Cs</p> <p><i>Additional viewing:</i></p> <p>Tension between Colonists and Great Britain (2:47) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfnrdWYmZus</p> <p>Revolutionary War (4:24) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MeyeEnkDLKA</p> <p>U.S. Constitution (3:53): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSWI5ldEv6w</p>
2	Sept 15	American Demographics Teaching exercises:	<p>Chapter 1 pgs. 4-11 and your own research! Media: <i>The Great American Melting Pot – Schoolhouse Rock</i> (shown to grade school children in civics and history classes) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQ28jC6zG9k</p>
3	Sept 22	Traditional American Beliefs and Values Teaching exercises:	<p>Chapter 2 pgs. 31-37 Media: <i>No Small Potatoes: Junius G. Groves and His Kingdom in Kansas</i>, Tonya Bolden (2018); <i>Self-Made: Inspired by the Life of Madame C.J. Walker</i></p>
4	Sept 29	American Religious Heritage Teaching exercises:	<p>Chapter 3 pgs. 54-62 Media: <i>Sam Harris Podcast Ep. #103 – American Fantasies</i> (2017)</p>
5	Oct 6	The Frontier Heritage Teaching exercises:	<p>Chapter 4 pgs. 80-86 Media: Interactive Timeline and Information about Frontier Migration in Oregon Trail and Mormon Trail https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/timeline/historic-sites/wyoming/us-migration-mormon-emigration-and-the-handcart-experiment?lang=eng</p>
6	Oct 13	The Heritage of Abundance Teaching exercises:	<p>Chapter 5 pgs. 102-110 Media: <i>History 101: Ep. 1 Fast Food; Ep. 4 Plastics</i></p>
7	Oct 20	The World of American Business Teaching exercises:	<p>Chapter 6 pgs. 126-136 Media: <i>The Big Short</i> (2015)</p>
8	Oct 27	Fall Break	Enjoy!!
9	Nov 3	Government and Politics in the United States Teaching exercises:	<p>Chapter 7 pgs. 153-164 Media: TBD U.S. Election Day!</p>

10	Nov 10	Ethnic and Racial Diversity in the United States Teaching exercises:	Chapter 8 pgs. 180-188 Movie: <i>Last Week Tonight with John Oliver</i> “School Segregation”; <i>Fault Lines – Disenfranchised in America</i>
11	Nov 17	Education in the United States Teaching exercises:	Chapter 9 pgs. 205-217 Movie: <i>Last Week Tonight with John Oliver</i> “Charter Schools,” “Standardized Testing,” “Sex Education”
12	Nov 24	How Americans Spend Their Leisure Time Teaching exercises:	Chapter 10 pgs. 232-242 Movie: <i>Friday Night Lights</i> (2004)
13	Dec 3	Course and final exam review – sign up for digital, in-person oral final exams	Review for final exam
14	Dec 10	Final exam opportunity	Review for final exam