

# American Culture in the Atomic Age

AMST 268 | MWF 2:20-3:20pm | Hum 402



*Natural Resource Management. Bunky Echo Hawk. 2006*

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Office Hours @ Hum 101: Mondays 3:30-4:30pm by appt only

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to American Culture in the Atomic Age! In this course, we will explore nuclear politics, culture and infrastructure. Since the development of the first atomic weapon, nuclear power, time and space has come to define the American political landscape and cultural sensibilities. Fantasies of annihilation and apocalypse not only define the contemporary popular imagination but, also, disciplinary bounds of time, space, and futurity. In this exploration, we will center race, indigeneity and sexuality and gender to push back against these forms of enclosure. During our final section, "The Wasteland Writes Back", students will produce a creative final multimedia project. No special background is needed. All students are welcome. *Note: This syllabus is subject to change. The most updated version will be accessible via our course Moodle.*

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- identify and apply key terms, concepts, and frameworks in American Studies and Environmental Studies
- articulate and expand upon nuclear politics, culture and history in the U.S. and globally
- interpret and analyze a range of primary sources
- demonstrate and apply a range of interdisciplinary humanities-based research methods
- collaborate and work collectively on group projects and presentations
- exchange and evaluate each other's work through a peer review process
- propose and design an original and independent research project

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

Jessica Hurley. *Infrastructures of Apocalypse: American Literature and the Nuclear Complex*. University of Minnesota Press: 2020. \$27.00 paperback

All other required materials for this course can be found online or through a link provided via our course site.

## COURSE POLICIES

For students to thrive and be successful in this course will require advanced preparation, organization discipline and communication. The following are guidelines to ensure student success:

**Students are expected to check the university-listed e-mail account before every class.** This will ensure that you have the most recent updates regarding assignments, changes in the course syllabus or announcements about class cancellations and related events.

**Strive to be respectful peers, willing to learn and be intellectually challenged.**

This classroom is designed to be a safe learning environment for all, and therefore, discriminatory behavior of any sort including race, sex, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, or class will not be tolerated. Not all identities are visible so please be thoughtful as we get to know each other over the course of this term. Points will be deducted for participation and, in some cases, disruptive students will be asked to leave the classroom, either temporarily or permanently, depending on the impact and extent of their behavior.

**E-mail Correspondences:** E-mails should always begin with "AMST Course #:" in the subject line. This will enable a timely response. Allow 48 hours to pass, if the instructor does not respond, then please re-send your e-mail.

Please check the syllabus before e-mailing either the TA or Professor. If you have questions regarding the course schedule, assignments, attendance, or due dates always consult the syllabus first.

**ATTENDANCE:** During the ongoing covid-19 pandemic, attendance will not impact overall course grades. However, if you miss more than 3 class sessions (1 full course week) without explanation, your participation grade will begin to drop by a half-letter grade. Options will be available to demonstrate participation and engagement remotely throughout the course should you require them to ensure collective health.

**SUPPORT:** We are learning and working together under enormous constraints during a global pandemic, increasing acts of state violence, community organizing against antiblack and settler colonial state violence, unprecedented levels of unemployment and evictions. Most students are young people leading active lives outside of college. Urgent conditions may arise for you or your family members during this course. While I do not require precise details (significantly, in some circumstances it may be against your interests to inform me fully), I do need to be made aware when students require resources for additional support or flexibility during this course.

**LATE WORK:** All coursework must be turned in by **5pm, Monday, May 8, 2022**. No exceptions.

**INCOMPLETES:** If you require extra time to complete the course, you will need to meet with the instructor to inquire about the conditions and agreements for an Incomplete.

**GRADE GRIEVANCE:** If you have a grade grievance you must wait 48 hours before submitting a written response to the instructor about your grade. Grade grievances are as likely to result in a higher grade as they are in a lower grade.

**EXTRA CREDIT:** Worth a half-letter grade applied to an assignment, students will attend a relevant event outside of our course. Thoughtful analysis is required; you will receive extra credit only if you make explicit connections between your selected event or text with concepts explored in the course materials. Extra credit papers are expected to follow these formatting conventions: two pages, double-spaced, with 1" margins and 12 pt Times New Roman font. The deadline for the extra credit assignment is on the last day of class, **5pm, Monday, May 8, 2022**.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of any disabilities (either permanent or temporary) they have which might affect their ability to

perform in the class. Students who require accommodations for access must be registered with Disability Services office in Kagin Hall. Such documentation must be provided to the instructor during the first two weeks of the semester. Adaptations of methods, materials or testing may be made as required to enable student's participation. However, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for such arrangements to be made if students choose to inform the instructor after a course assignment is due. More information may be found at:

<https://www.macalester.edu/disabilityservices/information-for-students/>

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty in their college work; violations of academic integrity are serious offenses. Students found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty -- including, for instance, forgery, cheating, and plagiarism -- are subject to disciplinary action. Examples of behavior that violates this policy, as well as the process and sanctions involved, can be found on the Academic Programs website,

<http://www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/academicintegrity/>.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

**Participation & Attendance (25%)**—During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, attendance is not graded. Attendance is tracked, however, so if you miss more than three courses, your participation grade will continue to drop by a half-letter grade. As a core course, your

### **Midterm (25%)**

Assignment sheet on Moodle

Due: 5pm, Friday, March 10<sup>th</sup>

### **Group Led Discussion Assignment (25%)**

Assignment sheet on Moodle

Rolling deadline (Monday)

### **Final Research Project & Presentation (25%)**—Solo or in groups of 2-3.

Assignment sheet on Moodle

Group presentations: April 24-28

Final Due Date: 5pm, Mon, May 8th

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### **Week 1**

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Friday, January 20

- *Introductions & Course Overview*

## **Week 2**

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- Hogue & Maurer. *Transnational Nuclear Imperialism*. Introduction.
  - Trouillot. *Power in the Story*.

Monday, January 23

Wednesday, January 25

Friday, January 27

## **Week 3**

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- White. *Indigenous Science (fiction) for the Anthropocene*
  - Matsunaga. *Indigenous Antinuclear Literary Resistance*
  - LaDuke. *Wiindigo Infrastructure*

Monday, January 30

Wednesday, February 1

Friday, February 3

## **Week 4**

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- May. *Explosive Issues*
  - Fawaz. *New Mutants: Flame On!*

Monday, February 6

Wednesday, February 8

Friday, February 10

## **Week 5**

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- Gillespie. *Thinking About Watchmen*
  - Hurley. *Ch 2 Civil Defense and Black Apocalypse*
  - Nguyen. *Watchmen's Misunderstanding of Vietnam* WashPo article
  - *Watchmen*

Monday, February 20

Wednesday, February 22

Friday, February 24

## **Week 6**

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- Teaiwa. *Bikinis and Other S/Pacific/N/oceans*
- Kahn. *Tahiti Intertwined*
- Sailiata & Teves. *Genealogies of Native Pacific Feminism*
- Slatter & Mangioni. *Will To Fight Together*

Monday, February 27

Wednesday, February 29

Friday, February 31

## **Week 7**

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- Suzuki. *Beasts from the Deep*
- *Gojira*

Monday, March 6

Wednesday, March 8: **Midterm Due**

Friday, March 10

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**\*\*\*Week 8: Spring Break–No Class March 11-19\*\*\***

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## **Week 9**

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- Voyles, Intro & Ch 1

Monday, March 20

Wednesday, March 22

Friday, March 24

## **Week 10**

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- Voyles, Hot Spots & Conclusion

Monday, March 27 \*No Class\* Attend: Honor the Earth 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event  
Wednesday, March 29  
Friday, March 31

### **Week 11**

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- Hurley, Cloning the Nuclear Age  
Monday, April 3: Class discussion  
Wednesday, April 5: Guest Speaker: Prof. Hi'ilei Hobart  
Friday, April 7

### **Week 12**

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- Hurley, Star Wars, AIDS & Queer Endings

Monday, April 10  
Wednesday, April 12  
Friday, April 14

### **Week 13: Independent Research**

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*Independently work on group presentations*

Monday, April 17  
Wednesday, April 19  
Friday, April 21

### **Week 14: Final Class Group Presentations**

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Monday, April 24  
Wednesday, April 26  
Friday, April 28

### **Week 15: Course Reflections & Wrap Up**

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Monday, May 1: Final Class Session

5pm, Monday, May 8: All coursework must be completed and submitted to instructor. No extensions for coursework will be granted beyond this deadline.