U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES

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AMERICAN STUDIES AT HOME & ABROAD

FROM THE EDITORS

American studies, as a world-wide academic discipline, formulates answers to questions frequently asked about the United States. What do its people think, dream and create? How have customs, values and beliefs developed? It embraces such subjects as film, literature, history, popular culture, law, politics and education.

Since its emergence as an academic field some 60 years ago, the study of the United States has become a flourishing international collaborative effort.

This issue of *U.S. Society & Values* explores aspects of American studies teaching, at home and abroad. Specialists from across the United States and around the globe discuss the history and current state of this vibrant and evolving field.

As an aid to readers who teach or wish to learn more about American studies, most articles include a list of teaching resources suggested by the authors — books, articles and other materials that they have found useful in the classroom.

In addition, to facilitate dialogue, the authors' phone and fax numbers or electronic mail addresses accompany a number of selections.

The U.S. Information Agency has long been committed to the study of the United States overseas, believing firmly that increased understanding is an essential ingredient for successful relations among nations.

American studies scholars and their students overseas learn — by examining each others' cultures — to see their own countries anew. For as we study another culture, we are also looking at ourselves.

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AMERICAN STUDIES IN THE UNITED STATES

By John F. Stephens

An Introduction

During its 60 years of formal development in the United States, American studies has established itself as a distinct interdisciplinary field that promotes a broad humanistic understanding of American culture past and present, encourages scholars from diverse disciplines to exchange ideas on America, and examines the ways American life relates to world society. American studies is simultaneously multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary in character, serving as an arena in which scholars from a variety of disciplines share their particular areas of expertise, and as a staging ground for innovative topical pursuits.

In pursuing interdisciplinary ways of knowing, American studies seeks to integrate into its own work the newest research of other fields and to develop links among disciplines. In recent years, for example, feminist studies, communication studies, critical historicism, political cultural studies, international comparative studies, and other new fields have been incorporated into dynamic American studies programs and scholarship. In alliance with colleagues in newer interdisciplinary fields, such as ethnic and minority studies, American studies scholars are critically examining the myths and realities of U.S. society and seeking answers to complex questions about U.S. history and culture that cannot be adequately addressed within established disciplinary boundaries. These collaborations among interdisciplinary scholars are invigorating without displacing the traditional concerns of American studies with questions of culture and citizenship. In crossing so many disciplinary, chronological and subject boundaries, American studies has led all Americanists increasingly toward a conviction that U.S. history and culture must be understood in a global context.

American studies includes the experiences, values, perspectives, concerns and contributions of the diverse groups that make up the United States, as well as their encounters and conflicts. It seeks to understand how diversity has been constructed in a nation of conquered peoples and immigrants, who come not only from Europe, but also Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, the Near East and Latin America. But American studies recognizes that Americans also participate in a larger cultural heritage, a shared system of beliefs, behavior, symbols and material objects drawn from multiple sources throughout the world and shaped by democratic ideals and practices, through which Americans give meaning to their lives. It explores differences and commonalities, while preparing students for

citizenship in a diverse, democratic state.

The Appeal of American Studies

We study American culture to gain self-knowledge, to understand ourselves. The study of American culture fulfills the precept the Greeks set down long ago as the highest aim of human life: "Know thyself." Socrates tells us that "the unexamined life is not worth living." It is only when we examine our own nature that we become conscious of our human existence. But the study of human nature involves far more than the study of the individual human being. "I am part of all I have met." This quotation from Tennyson's *Ulysses* provides the key to the most important and general use of American studies. We have been shaped individually not only by our personal and family relationships, but also by a multitude of changes in social and cultural life, many occurring centuries ago. It is by the study of this cultural memory that Socrates' dictum, "the unexamined life is not worth living," gains its full meaning.

Our search for self-knowledge, for understanding ourselves as Americans, is a lifelong pursuit and takes place for the most part outside of the academy. This search takes different forms but leads inexorably toward the same end. In this search, we hope to make the best of the world we live in, to live well ourselves, and to work for the betterment of society. American studies encourages us to be sensitive to the different experiences of people. American studies teaches us to depend upon reason for the conduct of personal and social affairs, not to establish ultimate truth. To American studies students and faculty, education is perhaps the most important thing in the world.

For our democratic society to function, citizens must be able to reach some common understanding on complex issues. Education (in American studies) helps form these common understandings, a point Thomas Jefferson made long ago in his justly famous dictum:

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion."

The values, aspirations and purposes of American studies are central to a democratic society composed of a free people. At the outset, American studies was a movement energized by a sense of social purpose. It was bound up with a New Deal anti-totalitarian version of progressivism which called for economic as well as juridical and legislative democracy in American society. This democratic ideal must be sustained and renewed by each generation. A common instrument for renewal is the received and developing tradition of American culture studies. It is, therefore, a sort of inherent citizen-right to demand moral and intellectual excellence in American studies.

> **"American studies has led all Americanists increasingly toward a conviction that American history and culture must be understood in a global context."**

The History of American Studies

In the United States, American studies originally grew out of the dissatisfaction of individual scholars located primarily in history and English departments during the 1920s and 1930s. These individuals were frustrated with the preference for European history and culture at the exclusion of an examination of "native" forms of expression. The pre-institutional stage of American studies was characterized by the search for the uniquely American experience. By the early 1940s, George Washington University, the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard University, among others, established programs and offered courses in American studies. Yale University awarded its first doctorate in American civilization in 1933. During the 1950s, American studies began to institutionalize as individual courses evolved into departments and programs. By 1958, there were 100 American studies programs. American studies underwent its greatest transformation during the

1960s. By 1968, cultural strains brought about by the U.S. civil rights movement, the war in Vietnam and the women's movement illuminated the cultural diversity that is the strength of the United States. In response to these forces for change, American studies expanded its boundaries to include black studies, women's studies, popular culture, folklore and material culture. American studies helped to break down disciplinary boundaries to allow for a more inclusive and pluralistic curriculum and scholarship across the disciplines.

Currently, there are 261 programs and departments of American studies at colleges and universities across the United States. During the 1980s, American studies programs and associations were established on all continents as scholars throughout the world turned their attention to the history and culture of the United States. In most countries, American studies has a prestigious reputation, and many countries send scholars to the United States to investigate and understand American studies.

American studies in the United States is ideally suited for an academic environment in which competing forces of cost effectiveness and the quality of education often prove difficult to balance. The interdisciplinary nature of American studies means its contribution to a campus cannot be duplicated by any department or program. American studies offers a unique perspective because it transcends individual fields and provides an integrated educational experience for the student. American studies prepares the student for citizenship in a pluralistic democracy in which respect for, and understanding of, cultural difference is essential.

Major Programs and Curricula

American studies majors normally follow one of four curricular tracks — focused around the arts, social sciences, history and literature. In the arts, students may work with scholars in American architecture, art, dance, film, music and theater; in the social sciences with specialists in anthropology, geography, government, law and sociology. In history, students focus on different periods or regions, while developing thematic emphases on cultural, intellectual and social history. In literature, students examine writers inside and outside of the canon and seek connections between texts and contexts in virtually every period of American history. In all these areas faculty and students pursue ideas across conventional disciplinary boundaries.

Introductory American studies courses typically survey American culture from the conquest and colonization of America to the present day. These courses introduce the constituent disciplines, approaches, and perspectives relevant to American studies. Some introductory courses are devoted to a historic period of a decade or more (e.g. the American Revolution, Civil War and Reconstruction, and 1960s America) and approach the American past through a variety of scholarly works and contemporary texts that include films, fiction, music, painting, photographs, art and architecture. Other introductory courses are thematic, and follow one topic of culture through a longer period. Thematic topics include immigration, the family, American realism, and a series of regional courses on the U.S. South, the West and New England. Still other introductory courses are methodological (e.g., American autobiography or ethnographic approaches to U.S culture) and focus on the theory, methods and historiography of American studies.

During the two final undergraduate years, students typically focus on several themes or areas of interest that pertain to the American experience. Each student consults with a faculty adviser and develops a major concentration. Possible themes include popular culture, regionalism, race and ethnicity, gender roles, law and society, and expressive forms (e.g., visual arts, humor, folk culture). Students may also combine coursework in American studies with appropriate classes in one or two related fields such as African-American studies, anthropology, communications, English, geography, history, political science, psychology, religion, sociology and women's studies. American studies programs usually provide seminars during the final two years; typically, they explore the traditions of the field in greater depth through advanced readings and

provide students with the opportunity for independent research and writing.

Candidates for a master's as a terminal degree typically spend one academic year in residence and complete at least eight courses, no more than half of which may be in any one discipline. A faculty member designated as a graduate adviser helps the student design a program. Master's candidates satisfy the same requirements and standards as first-year doctoral candidates. Some master's programs require a supervised internship at an approved museum or other cultural institution. Usually master's students conduct original research culminating in a thesis.

The doctoral program awards the master's after the completion of eight core and elective courses. Doctoral students then concentrate their work on major and secondary fields. These fields are built on existing courses and independent readings and provide the basis for general, qualifying examinations, both oral and written, that may be required for the doctorate. They may be defined somewhat traditionally (e.g., American social and intellectual history, American literature to 1865) or they may approach the disciplines from thematic or theoretical points of view (e.g., American women writers, geography and region in American culture). Students design their own concentrations. For each concentration, the student has a faculty adviser to guide in the development of the field and to serve on the student's oral examination board.

The doctoral program normally involves two years of courses and preparation for the comprehensive examination, and at least a year of teaching experience, after which students go on to research and write their dissertations. Dissertations in American studies are expected to be significant contributions to scholarship and interdisciplinary in scope, conception, and methodology.

What American Studies Has to Offer

Because each major develops a coherent program of study on the basis of personal and intellectual interests, frequent faculty contact is required. The student-adviser relationship provides a context where a greater recognition and definition of the student's educational interests and goals may be achieved. Written work is emphasized — with grades based on essay exams, response papers and research assignments — and culminating in a senior or honors' thesis.

Careers in American studies vary widely, and ultimately depend on the interests and goals of the individual student. A bachelor's degree, as opposed to a master's or doctorate, is similar to other liberal arts degrees, insofar as it does not guarantee a specific job at the end of college. But it does offer important skills necessary to do professional work in any career: Students acquire the ability to do research, organize material and communicate their findings to others.

"The most creative moments for American studies have come in response to subsequent cultural, political and social challenges to American society."

Very few fields offer students such a wide exposure to learning, stimulating the critical and creative thinking essential for drawing connections among the diverse aspects of the American experience. A concentration in American studies challenges motivated students to think independently, offers them a well-rounded preparation for life beyond academia and provides essential training for careers such as teaching, law, journalism, social work, medicine, government, business, museum work, international service, city planning and many others.

With the broader analytical and writing skills that they gain majoring in American studies, students add specialized knowledge and technical skills to their repertoire. For example, American studies requirements are flexible. A student has the chance to take some courses in marketing, finance, statistics, journalism, education or communications. Students usually are required or encouraged to take

advantage of internship opportunities (with newspapers, law offices, legislators, research organizations) or summer employment, thus gaining work experience and practical exposure to possible careers.

Among the attractive career possibilities for American studies majors are public sector jobs, located in government agencies or publicly-supported institutions. We know that American studies programs are placing their students in various agencies, historical societies, museums and other cultural institutions at the federal, state and local levels. We also know from the number and variety of internships held by American studies students that they have marketable skills, whether or not they decide to seek careers in the public sector.

Challenges Facing American Studies

The major challenges to American studies include the relationship between American studies and the traditional disciplines, the relationship between American studies and its subject (the United States), and the relationship between domestic American studies and its international variations.

The relationship between American studies and traditional disciplines is a dynamic and symbiotic one. The disciplines routinely challenge American studies scholars about the viability of the interdisciplinary field. Prospective students challenge American studies faculty to explain how the field will serve their intellectual purposes better than the traditional disciplines. At first, scholars in traditional disciplines may be uneasy with the subjects or topics of American studies, but they are invariably willing to adopt them. American studies is invigorated by the rigorous intellectual cross-examination of its methods and insights by colleagues housed in traditional disciplines. Those colleagues, often at the frontiers of their disciplines, also contribute much of the intellectual energy and scholarly publications of interdisciplinary American studies.

The most creative moments for American studies have come in response to subsequent cultural, political and social challenges to American society. These include challenges such as immigration, multiculturalism, ethnic and racial diversity, class and gender conflict and economic and technological change, to name a few. American studies scholars are demonstrating that much of the current outcry against immigration and multiculturalism fits into the same pattern as 60 or more years ago: innovation, resistance, and re-evaluation of what is fundamental to American culture. Contemporary attacks on Hispanic and Asian immigrant culture as not adaptable recapitulate the same predictions and rationales aimed at excluding earlier immigrant and minority groups. Traditional American studies concerns for social change and criticism are now reflected in examinations of the changing nature of citizenship in an era of globalization. Through cross-cultural as well as interdisciplinary ways of knowing, American studies scholars are seeking answers to the challenges to our democratic, cultural ideals raised by feminists, students of ethnic and racial diversity, and proponents of conflict models of social and cultural analysis. The current generation of American studies scholars is confronting new questions, issues and methods that represent only the latest in a long series of cultural challenges and possibilities.

Both the United States and the larger world of which it is a complex part have changed dramatically during the 60 year history of American studies programs and courses. As the influence of the United States has spread around the globe, Americans studying their own history, society and culture are increasingly challenged to see themselves as others see them. While American studies sometimes has supported exceptionalist notions of the United States as it became a more "global" enterprise, it has also been challenged to reveal some of the contradictions of the American democratic project and contested Cold War mentalities.

But change in the practice of American studies internationally is inhibited by different traditions of academic discourse. In many countries, American studies is an "area" study rooted in traditional disciplines like history, literature, government and

economics. In the United States, American studies is interdisciplinary but primarily in the humanities. Still, on the international level, American studies scholars increasingly are seeking to collaborate across national boundaries. This cross-national cooperation in turn is stimulating, elaborating, and even redefining the key questions in American studies. The end of the Cold War, however, has presented a serious fiscal challenge to international American studies. Its traditional governmental and foundation supporters are cutting back support precisely at the moment American studies domestically and internationally is striving towards a common ground and may be realizing its potential as a globally informed study of the United States. ■

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TEACHING AMERICAN STUDIES ABROAD: THE EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE

By Heinz Ickstadt

Although the study of the United States in Europe predates World War II, the war's damage to Europe's political, cultural and intellectual life helped spark increasing interest in the American experience. From that interest, American studies as an academic discipline blossomed. For just as the United States was interested in bringing its democratic cultural tradition to the shattered, and spiritually and morally exhausted continent, so did a new generation of Europeans turn to this young and vigorous culture to inspire them. From that genesis, the author discusses how American studies has evolved in Europe, its present challenges and prospects for the future.

The Beginnings

Despite a growing fascination with American life, the study of the United States after World War II began slowly. It surfaced across Europe mostly through professional organizations, study programs on campuses, in separate departments at a number of educational institutions, and in specialized institutions, e.g., the Salzburg Seminar in Austria, an important institution for spreading American studies throughout Europe after the war. In most cases it amounted to the establishment of a chair, or adding a lecturer to an existing English or (much more rarely) history department. Because traditional academic structures were resisting change, it was easier for scholars interested in teaching American subject matter and doing research on the United States to form national organizations of American studies. This, in turn, added weight to efforts to broaden the institutional basis of the study of the United States in universities.

It is interesting that the founders of these national associations of American studies were mostly historians, sociologists and political scientists — whereas the attempt to institutionalize the study of the United States was most successful in the area of literature. During the 1950s, in many universities in Germany and Great Britain, English departments split into English literature and American literature sections, with varying degrees of independence. In some cases, the dedication and energy of individual professors led to the establishment of large departments of American literature. The creation of interdisciplinary institutes for American studies came later. Until then, the study of the United States took place within individual disciplines such as philology, history and political science.

Occasionally, interdisciplinarity surfaced, as, for example, at the annual meetings of the German Association of American Studies, at which scholars from different fields lectured on the chosen conference theme. In the long run, however, that was not enough. The founding of American studies institutes in Germany (Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich), Great Britain (Nottingham, Keele), Poland (Warsaw) and, most recently, Denmark (Odense) resulted from the wish to bring different disciplines (in most cases literature and history) together under one roof.

The largest of these today is the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies at the Free University, Berlin, founded in 1963. It houses scholars from eight disciplines (culture, literature, language, history, political science, sociology, economics and geography). But even in countries without multidisciplinary institutes of American studies, such as France, small research teams or centers have been formed on university campuses. There, scholars from different fields cooperate in their research on the United States.

The teaching of American studies at European universities proceeded according to traditional methodologies. The full impact of the American studies movement came in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when a predominantly philological approach

gave way to a cultural and sociohistorical reading of texts. This "cultural turn" changed the teaching of American literature fundamentally. At multidisciplinary institutes like the Kennedy Institute (or in American studies departments of several British universities), it led to attempts to establish a fully integrated American studies master's degree program — attempts that were successful only in the 1980s.

In time, the field of American studies in Europe became highly diversified. It ranged from traditional approaches to American literature within an English department (still the dominant arrangement in Italy and France today) to a teaching of literature broadened by cultural studies (as in most departments of American literature in Germany), as well as the specialized treatment of American history, literature, society and culture at the several American studies institutes.

Why do Europeans Study American Literature and Culture Today?

The attitude of students during the 1980s and 1990s, for the most part, is a response to what went before. In the first wave, right after the war, the enthusiasm of American Fulbright professors and the efforts of an older generation of professors who returned to Germany after the Nazi period piqued young Europeans' interests. They were attracted to these knowledgeable mentors, who met the needs of that younger generation, impatient with the convictions and evasions of their parents, and with traditions and conventions that had been thoroughly compromised by recent German history.

Studying American literature and culture offered not only the charm of discovering a new body of texts but also that of encountering a relaxed, confidence-inspiring academic atmosphere, a distinctly American approach. I remember clearly that it was this liberating lack of academic rigidity — a rigidity traditional within the German university — that determined my choice of American literature as a major. Behind this decision, however, lurked the great attraction of a culture at once new, subversive and popular — for which my elders had little respect. It is this subversive power of American culture that still makes its study attractive today.

> **"it is this subversive power of American culture that still makes its study attractive today."**

Even within the ideological tumult of the 1970s, this attractiveness did not diminish. In Germany, as elsewhere, the United States antagonizes and fascinates because it seems to stand in contrast to one's own culture as much as it seems to anticipate that culture's not too distant future.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the attitude of students seems to have sobered. After periods of idealization and disillusion, European youth tend to look at the United States with open if abidingly skeptical eyes. Yet it remains true that whatever interests them personally and academically — women's rights, multiculturalism, the impact of the new media — comes from the United States. Even in today's unified Europe, students often find their native continent narrow and restrictive as compared to the United States, which they perceive as open and representing the future.

Is There a European Perspective in American Studies?

Obviously, American studies in its early phase in Europe had no problem with the American exceptionalism implicit in the American studies movement in the United States. On the contrary, this belief in the exceptional historical status of the United States only echoed European expectations of America — expectations of modernization and the growth of democracy. Methodologically, American studies in Europe followed traditional paths: studying the influence of European on American literature (or vice versa), or inquiring into American culture via the European tradition of intellectual history, or bringing rich philological expertise to the analysis of individual texts. As I have indicated, all this changed in the late 1960s and 1970s, to emphasize the analysis of a literary text not as an independent entity or even as part of a literary tradition but as an expression of a "whole culture." This made American studies an all-absorbing subject. It led to the discovery of unknown or neglected texts, and to an

ever more specialized study of popular culture, and of the literature and culture of women and ethnic minorities. As such, more or less, European American studies has been an echo of the development of American studies in the United States. Although European theories (structuralism and poststructuralism, or the sophisticated socialism of the Frankfurt School) had a considerable impact in the United States, they influenced American studies in Europe only after they had been absorbed and recycled as deconstructionism, or new historicism, or feminist theory.

Although the impact of the poststructuralist and multicultural American studies has been great (so much so that its "cultural turn" is now beginning to affect even the teaching of English literature), there are institutional limits to its duplication in Europe today. The relative scarcity of chairs in the field of American studies makes specialization in only one area rare and difficult. But it is not only institutional pressure that seems to assure a broader perception of the United States. It is the perspective from outside and from a distance that makes it easier to conceive of America as a culture distinctly American, although mediated through different cultures and cultural traditions. There is also a growing tendency to bring Europe onto the horizon of American studies by focusing on comparative issues in cultural and social history, thus acknowledging that if America is to a large extent a European creation, much of Europe has been created by America. This new comparativist interest results from a growing skepticism that a culture can ever be understood only in reference to itself. Whether this will amount to a "European" turn in American studies remains to be seen.

"the United States antagonizes and fascinates because it seems to stand in contrast to one's own culture as much as it seems to anticipate that culture's not too distant future."

Teaching American Studies in Europe: Models and Examples

It would be completely wrong, however, to assume that American studies in Europe is a homogeneous movement or that it has developed programs that can be easily coordinated. (A European master's degree in American studies remains a dream, even if the first steps are being taken to achieve it.) Rather, it is as dependent upon particular structural conditions as upon the distinctive intellectual and cultural traditions of each country. In most parts of Europe, especially the south and east, American literature and culture are taught as part of a course of studies that prepares students for a teaching certification in English literature and language. The small Americanist section within a large department of English is still the most common institutional frame for the teaching of American culture in Europe. This is one model — with a chair or section in American literature that offers a master's degree in what the Germans term *Amerikanistik* (covering American literature and culture), either as part of a master's in English or as an independent program of study.

In other parts of Europe, the development of master's degree programs and their appeal to growing numbers of students have strengthened tendencies toward independent American studies departments, institutes or programs. Thus, at the University of Alcalá, Spain, it is possible to study American literature within the frame of a large modern language department. There is also a Centro de Estudios Norteamericanos, which offers courses in economics, history and political science and has developed (in conjunction with the Casa de America in Madrid) a graduate program leading to a master's degree in American studies. This can be considered a second programmatic model: a chair in literature combined with one or two other departments, offering a degree centered on *Amerikanistik* studies with elements of the other disciplines included. The large department of American and Canadian studies at the University of Nottingham is a variation of this. It offers a broad education in the different areas of American studies but allows greater specialization in its several master's programs, including a master's program in literary and cultural theory.

The John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies is a similar case in point. Arguably the largest American studies institute in Europe, it owes its existence to the vision of Ernst Fraenkel, a political scientist who, forced to leave Germany in 1938, migrated to the United States. Returning to Berlin after the war, he worked with singular commitment and energy to found an area studies institute focused on the United States. That this happened in Berlin was, of course, not accidental. Although the decision to establish such an institute was taken before the Berlin Wall was built in 1961, it gained momentum and a special symbolic significance as a result of that development. What started as a loosely connected area studies institute has grown into a multidisciplinary institute of American studies with an integrated teaching program and areas of research, with about a thousand students and a library of more than 600,000 volumes. It represents the third model found in Europe — featuring an integrated degree in which all disciplines participate on equal terms. After master's degree candidates pass two required courses in American literature and history, they may combine any two of the eight disciplines represented at the school (such as literature and sociology, or culture and history).

American studies in Eastern Europe developed along different lines. There were America Institutes (like the prestigious Arbatov Institute in Moscow) which largely served the political, economic and historical study of the "class-enemy" or political antagonist. But at the universities, the institutional resistance of the older disciplines (philology or history) was strengthened by an ideological resistance that followed the party line: Together, they kept the teaching of American literature and culture on the academic margins, generally as a part of English philology. (And yet, for many of its teachers and students its marginal existence opened up an imagined "world elsewhere," a much wished-for alternative life.) The status of teaching American literature and culture naturally was affected by the progress of East-West relations and by the presence of Fulbright scholars across the educational landscape of Eastern Europe. The gradual improvement of the political situation in the late 1970s and 1980s paralleled intensified faculty and research exchange with the United States and with institutions such as the Kennedy Institute in West Berlin. As an official acknowledgment of improved relations, the biennial conference of the European Association of American Studies (EAAS) convened in 1986 in Budapest. It was the group's first session ever behind the Iron Curtain.

Today, in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall, a new chapter in the history of American studies in Eastern Europe is being written. The 20-year-old American Studies Center at Warsaw University, which launched a master's program in 1992, now has an enrollment of 400. After a preparatory first semester, students choose from among three tracks — American culture, politics or business. Through the American Studies Network — a subdivision of the EAAS — the Warsaw institute is linked with a number of American studies centers across Europe (including the Arthur Miller Center in Norwich, the Roosevelt Study Center in Middelburg, Holland; the Kennedy Institute in Berlin, the Salzburg Seminar, and the American Center in Alcalá). There is now a Polish Association of American Studies. And in 1996, the EAAS biennial conference was held in Warsaw.

The Future of American Studies in Europe

Compared to traditional disciplines, the study of the United States is still a small academic field. (However, it is larger than any regional studies, most of which have not been able to establish themselves as disciplines and therefore do not have coordinated studies or research programs, nor the organizational momentum of the American studies movement.) Although the study of the United States continues to draw interested students, the question of what these students will do with their degrees in American studies is a source of uncertainty for them.

There can be no doubt, however, that American studies is thriving in Europe at the close of this century. The EAAS, which began in 1954, is well on its way towards becoming the intellectual hub for Americanists throughout Europe. Its biennial

meetings are considered the most important American studies events for scholars, who meet to present and discuss their research. Although the EAAS officially recognizes only the various national associations as its members, its unofficial individual membership is more than 4,000, and continues to grow rapidly. At the recent Warsaw conference, the board unanimously admitted Greece and Turkey as new members. Poland, Hungary and an association consisting of Czech and Slovak Americanists previously were accepted. In some parts of the former Soviet Union, especially Russia, Belarus and Romania, national organizations are being formed. Soon, the group anticipates, there will be an Egyptian Association of American Studies. Israel already is an affiliate member.

What are the challenges for American studies today? Overall, I see two, especially in Europe. On the national level, there is a real danger that during the coming years of growing austerity and diminishing budgets in Eastern and Western Europe, old structures will be strengthened to the disadvantage of Americanist positions or institutions. On the trans-national level of European American studies, the greatest challenge will be the integration of new Eastern European members. Such expansion contains pitfalls as well as opportunities.

Considerable exchanges of opinion, plus a great deal of tolerance and a willingness to learn from one another will be vital during the next few years. Every element must be tolerant of different intellectual traditions and resources, interests and approaches — even different social and financial levels. I do not share the doubts of some of my American colleagues, who fear that the field has lost its original impetus and substance. I do not see such a loss of vitality. For throughout its history, American studies has been a catalyst for change in postwar Europe — partly because it has continued to change. Not having developed a methodology, it has never stopped questioning itself. Through that willingness and determination to reconsider its foundations, it has kept itself fresh and flexible. It is this resourcefulness that has made American studies (and the culture that it examines) attractive for so many countries, through so many different chapters of world history, and through so many phases of its own development. ■

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PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHING AMERICAN STUDIES ABROAD

Prepared by Charlotte Astor and Michael Bandler, with an Introduction by John F. Stephens

For many students overseas, American studies courses represent a focus for training in the traditional disciplines. At the same time, in response to global interest in the study of the United States, newer interdisciplinary American studies courses and programs have been developed at various institutions in almost every region of the world. Most students outside the United States still receive their initial academic experience with U.S. materials in departments of English literature. Increasingly, careers in our "global village" demand knowledge of and interaction with the United States, American institutions and American ideas. And students are asking a much broader range of important, complex questions about the United States — questions that cross disciplinary boundaries. Like their U.S. counterparts, they have become increasingly conversant in and influenced by new cultural and social theory, multicultural scholarship and popular culture and media studies.

Among teachers and scholars in other countries, there is enough of a common American studies enterprise for formal centers and professional associations, as well as to come together for workshops, meetings and conferences. Scholars from the United States travel abroad to teach discipline-based and interdisciplinary American studies, or to consult with their overseas counterparts who want to teach or research American subjects. At the same time, faculty, graduate students and undergraduates from overseas have been coming to the United States to research U.S. society and culture, and sometimes to teach American studies.

Thus, cross-cultural, globally-informed, interdisciplinary study likely will be the rule rather than the exception for the next generation of Americanists, both in the United States and in other countries of the world. In the following dialogue, scholars from the United States and a number of regions overseas give their perspectives on teaching American studies. -- J.F.S.

EDITOR'S NOTE: PARTICIPANTS ARE IDENTIFIED BY REGION OR COUNTRY RATHER THAN INDIVIDUAL NAME. COMMENTS OF MULTIPLE PARTICIPANTS WITHIN ONE REGION OR COUNTRY HAVE BEEN CONSOLIDATED. COMMENTATORS INCLUDE:

CHINA: **Dr. Zhang Youlun**, professor of history at Nankai University, Tianjin, China. Professor Zhang was a Fulbright scholar in 1982-83 at the University of Minnesota, where his research topic was "American Labor and Socialist Leaders, 1850-1900." He is president of the American History Research Association of China. Profesor Zhang can be reached at: Institute of History, Nankai University, Tianjin, PRC.

IVORY COAST: **Dr. Amani Konan** is associate professor of English at the University of Cocody (formerly known as the National University of the Ivory Coast). He was a Fulbright scholar at the University of Iowa and received his doctorate in 1992 from the department of English. Dr. Konan can be reached at: 22 B.P. 711 Abidjan 22, Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa; Phone/fax 225-42-55-72.

LATIN AMERICA: **Dr. Andrew Lakritz**, an American studies specialist and consultant, holds a doctorate in English from the University of California at Irvine. He was a visiting professor of American studies at the University of Brasilia, Brazil, in the fall of 1996. Dr. Lakritz can be reached at: 1200 N. Veitch St., Apt. 1225, Arlington, VA 22201.
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Dr. Pablo Pozzi is head of the American studies program at the University of Palermo in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Started in 1993, it is the only full-time American studies program in Argentina. He also holds the U.S. history chair at the University of Buenos Aires. Professor Pozzi has a doctorate in history from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. He specializes in late 20th-century labor history of both the United States and Argentina. He can be reached at: Ecuador 1185, 8 piso, Buenos Aires, (1425) Argentina;
E- mail: Pablo@Pozzi.satlink.net; Phone/fax 54-1-961-7738.

POLAND: **Dr. Andrew Lakritz** (see above) was a Fulbright lecturer at the University of Silesia in 1990-91.

INDIA: The following scholars are in the vanguard of American studies in South India, which has pioneered innovative American studies programs. Pondicherry University offers a master's level interdisciplinary American studies program; Loyola and Madras Christian colleges offer interdisciplinary courses, and more programs are being finalized at other schools in the region. **Dr. Bernard D'Sami** is a senior lecturer in history at Loyola College in Madras. **Dr. M. Suresh Babu** is professor of public administration at Madras Christian College. **Dr. A. Marudanayagam** is chairman of the department of English and comparative literature at Pondicherry University.

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Q: In your geographic area, who are the American studies students?

POLAND: Those taking one or more American studies courses tend to be language students, or teachers of English who want to improve their skills. Also, there are some who are studying English for use in careers in business and diplomacy, or in education — in national universities or in the private colleges and schools that have sprouted all over Poland in the last few years.

LATIN AMERICA: In a number of institutions in Argentina, the students are either history or literature majors, a majority female. The average age is 23. At the University of Palermo, students are a mixture of business majors, teachers and businessmen taking courses in our continuing education program, and history majors who are taking a minor in U.S. studies.

At the University of Brasilia, most students are drawn from the language departments, although several other disciplines — among them international relations, history, political science and sociology — are heavily dependent on American studies.

INDIA: Students opting for the survey courses in American studies at Loyola and Madras Christian Colleges generally are majoring in such other disciplines as mathematics, physical and biological sciences, communication, commerce, English literature and computer science.

Q: What attracts students to American studies, and how do they expect to use it in their careers?

IVORY COAST: Some former American studies majors have found jobs with American companies. Most are high school teachers. The main reason may simply be that it reflects their admiration for the United States and a desire to know more about it. Certainly the American Studies Association, linking students and professors, attracts many undergraduates to the field through its conferences, English conversation sessions, film programs and social events.

INDIA: In a way, the courses offered at various institutions satisfy the curiosity of the students to learn, in a holistic manner, about the world's sole superpower — a curiosity whetted by the print and

electronic media. Also, the students are guided by instructors who have an abiding interest in teaching about the United States. As to the possible use of the training, indications are that students intend to pursue such careers as education, journalism, and civil and foreign service — all of which would benefit from a knowledge of the United States. But since interdisciplinary American studies courses are relatively new, it remains to be seen what the future impact might be.

"There is a keen interest in Poland's own multicultural past and present; through the study of U.S. history and culture, Poles can find a valuable route to exploring these issues on a comparative basis."

LATIN AMERICA: In Brasilia, many students who are language and translation majors plan to teach English at various colleges or language schools. For them, the American studies interdisciplinary approach is crucial, affording an opportunity to survey intensively American life and institutions, history and culture, thus clarifying and deepening their knowledge of the language.

In Buenos Aires, others are interested in securing jobs in the United States, or complementing their business skills with knowledge of the United States that might help them professionally. Still others simply seek to round out their training, especially in learning new perspectives, theories and hypotheses.

CHINA: At the bi-national Nanjin University-Johns Hopkins University Center for U.S.-Chinese Culture Studies, junior graduate students are prepared for the teaching profession and for advanced studies. The center enrolls dozens of students annually, most of whom are pursuing research in American history.

Q: What subjects are included in the program?

POLAND: Students of English engage in a variety of course work that ranges from language and linguistics, conversation, grammar and pedagogy (the teaching of English) to such subjects as philosophy and Polish and European history. Because Polish universities are more fragmented than those in the United States, a student of language who wants to enroll in business or economics courses, for example, must take those courses in separate institutions. Music studies are confined to conservatories; athletics and physical education courses are found in their own institutions, and so on. Thus English-language students, and students of U.S. culture and society, are more highly specialized than their American counterparts.

LATIN AMERICA: At the University of Palermo, students are taught history, literature, media, art, economics, foreign relations, women's studies, government and politics in this program. Specializing requires at least 10 courses in U.S. studies.

At the University of Brasilia, most students pursue linguistics, pedagogy, theories and practice of translation, the history of the English language, and language study — including grammar, conversation and reading comprehension.

INDIA: The four colleges offering across-the-board interdisciplinary survey work at the undergraduate level present such courses as American literature, history, politics, science/technology and sociology. Madras Christian College offers a two-semester survey course entitled `The United States of America: Ideas, Process and Administration,' taught by faculty members from the departments of English, public administration and political science. The graduate master's program at Pondicherry University offers extensive courses in American literature, history,

politics and government, international relations and American philosophical thought.

IVORY COAST: Within the department of English, first- and second-year students take American civilization, covering mostly history and what it is like to live in the United States. Third-year students begin working towards their bachelor's degree, which actually consists of two certificates. One, called *Lettres Etrangères*, or "foreign letters," is required of everyone. There is a choice for the second certificate from among African, British and American literatures and civilizations, linguistics and communication. Advanced degrees also are available in these subject areas. Students of American literature cover drama, fiction, essays and literary history, focusing on such representative authors as William Faulkner, James Baldwin, Eugene O'Neill, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Louise Erdrich, Lorraine Hansberry, Amiri Baraka, Toni Morrison and Robert Frost.

CHINA: In the graduate division of Nankai University, in which American history is deemed one of the key academic subjects, courses range across the spectrum. Examples: the history of American diplomacy, U.S. cultural history, the U.S. social and labor movements, women in the United States, American historiography, America's ethnic groups, the meeting of four civilizations in the Americas, and a comparative study of Sino-U.S. cultural institutions.

Q: What is the approach taken to teaching American studies in your region or at your institution?

IVORY COAST: We generally use the subject-by-subject approach, although we try to make it more interdisciplinary by relating literary trends to historical events.

INDIA: The main emphasis is on an interdisciplinary approach in all institutions.

LATIN AMERICA: In Buenos Aires, although the courses are taught subject-by-subject, they are all mainly interdisciplinary, with heavy emphasis in cultural studies. Students use sociological and historical backgrounds to delve into the subjects. In terms of methodology, we combine written articles, books and texts with films, novels and poetry.

At the University of Brasilia, American studies is taught as a literary course and is not interdisciplinary. However, one of the lead teachers in the department is working to organize a nucleus that would draw faculty from different departments into an American studies program. The University of Sao Paulo already has such an American studies nucleus. Many scholars in history, literature, anthropology, sociology and other disciplines throughout the country teach courses with American studies content. As for the active American Studies Association in Brazil, the group tends not to be interdisciplinary in the United States sense.

"... when American studies courses are established, we expect that it will lead to the eventual development of several other similar programs."

POLAND: At the University of Silesia, interdisciplinarity is a very important component of English and American studies. Many senior professors have extensive backgrounds in both literature and philosophy. Individual professors often combine literary studies with historical, economic, political and social studies. In addition, the program introduces students, of necessity, to cross-cultural or multicultural perspectives, even if these perspectives

have a different look than those in the United States. There is a keen interest in Poland's own multicultural past and present; through the study of U.S. history and culture, Poles can find a valuable route to exploring these issues on a comparative basis.

Q: If American studies is one of several area or regional studies being offered at educational institutions in your region, what are the others?

LATIN AMERICA: The University of Palermo also offers *especializaciones* in European, Asian and Latin American studies. But American studies is by far the most successful, with the most demand.

INDIA: There are no area study programs of any kind. However, when American studies courses are established, we expect that it will lead to the eventual development of several other similar programs. We see, as one of the best arguments for the creation of an American studies course, the fact that it might be part of a much-desired area studies concentration.

Q: In the United States, American studies is a full-time enterprise for students, often leading to advanced academic degrees. Is this the case at your institution, or in your region?

LATIN AMERICA: At this time, there are no full-time American studies programs anywhere in Brazil. To my knowledge, only two American studies programs exist in all of Latin America — a master's program at the Universidad de las Americas, in Puebla, Mexico, and, of course, the program at the University of Palermo in Buenos Aires.

IVORY COAST: Those who choose American studies for their second B.A. certificate go on to full-time master's programs. Several students and professors are writing theses on American studies topics.

INDIA: Today, only Pondicherry University offers such a full-time course of study, leading to an M.A. in American studies. But Annamalai University is preparing a curriculum for an interdisciplinary full-time master's degree program in American studies that, it is anticipated, will be offered as of July or August 1997. ■

TEACHING AMERICAN VALUES AT HOME AND ABROAD

EDITOR'S NOTE: IN THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE, THE AUTHOR HAS POSED A VARIETY OF TOPICS AND EXPLORED THEIR USE AS ELEMENTS OF PROVOCATION TO ENGAGE STUDENTS FROM VERY DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES. THE ISSUES AS CAST ARE NOT INTENDED AS DEFINITIVE EXAMINATIONS OF HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION.

By Susan Armitage

The challenge of teaching American values is a global one. How can we effectively teach across the world's many ethnic and cultural divisions? During the past five years, I have taught a global range of students in places as different as India, Russia and Pullman, Washington (the home of my university, Washington State). Each audience, it seemed to me, brought its own culturally-specific skepticism to this well-worn topic, challenging me to find a way to reach through the skepticism to understanding. I did it by going "back to basics." Using the Declaration of Independence as my basic text, I explored several aspects of its historical meaning in ways that I hoped were appropriate to my particular audience. Here, I provide some of the text of my basic lecture, annotated with discussion points:

America's fundamental political values were first and most famously expressed at a moment of profound change: the beginning of the Revolutionary War against Britain in 1776. That revolution was justified to the world by America's most famous document, the Declaration of Independence, which contains words that many Americans know by heart:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

(America's anti-colonial origins were an important discussion point in India, where that country's successful colonial revolt against Great Britain is a major source of national pride. Until the end of the Cold War, during which India persistently remained unaligned, the United States was widely regarded in India as an imperialist power. Beginning a lecture with the reminder that the United States was the first colony to successfully revolt against the British was a way to make a connection between Indian and American history that avoided the Cold War legacy. When teaching American students, comparisons with 20th-century anti-colonial struggles provided a way to introduce some suspense and excitement into a story they take for granted. Comparison with contemporary new nations that are still struggling for stability gives them a new appreciation of the success of the American Revolution.)

This set of vague but powerful values is basic to American national identity. The very existence of such a specific ideology makes America distinctive among nations, most of whom have developed their sense of nationhood more out of a shared cultural history than out of a set of abstract political principles.

(In Russia, this point provides a starting place for a discussion of Cold War rivalries. Rather than beginning with a one-sided emphasis on Soviet ideology, the frank statement about American ideology and the reasons for its existence cleared the air and allowed us to discuss Cold War ideological conflicts in an honest but nonconfrontational manner. Conversely, with American students, the notion that ideology does not always come with the modifier

"communist" opened up discussion beyond the standard responses.)

How, you may ask, has it really worked in practice? How have Americans measured up to their expressed creed during the two centuries since the Declaration of Independence?

(*This is the obvious question, so it is wise to raise it immediately. I learned the value of this approach in India, where an initially hostile listener confessed later that my honesty in confronting American failings "disarmed" him and made his planned line of critical questioning unnecessary. The portion of the lecture below illustrates one of these.*)

Let us take the most fundamental value first — liberty, or freedom. We know that the signers of the Declaration of Independence did not take the phrase "all men are created equal" literally, because they continued to allow black slavery.

(*With American students, at the undergraduate and graduate level, I discuss the economic importance of slavery in the 18th century and the divisiveness of the slavery issue at the Constitutional Convention in 1787. Most foreign students are more interested in contemporary race relations, and I offered as background the following explanation of a complex and difficult topic*:)

Slavery began in America in the early 17th century, when the first captives were shipped from Africa. It remained legal in 15 states in the American South until the end of the U.S. Civil War in 1865. After the Civil War, 4 million black people, former slaves, were free, but they were not equal. Most remained in the American South, in a system that kept them segregated from society until after World War II. In the 20th century, many black people migrated to northern cities, but the majority of the black population still lived in the South.

Beginning in the 1950s, black people rose up peacefully in nonviolent resistance to demand their civil rights. It was a great moment in American history, a confirmation of American values, for black people based their protest on the fact that they were denied their basic American right to equality, and most white Americans agreed with them. Nevertheless, the civil rights movement still continues, for although great changes in race relations have occurred in America since the 1960s, much remains to be done.

(*As I had expected, students in India were least willing to accept the above statements unquestioningly, because India is a multiracial nation which, like the United States, is struggling with the difficulties of trying to legislate equality. Some Indian students ask for specific details about how nondiscriminatory policies have worked in the United States. In my experience, pointed questions such as this are rare, and occur only when the American example has a very close analogue in the home country.*)

Another key American value is individualism and its political expression, democracy. Americans think of themselves first as individuals and only second as members of groups such as ethnic group, social class, local community or family. This extreme emphasis on individualism reflects the importance of individual rights summarized in the words of the nation's founders. It was also reinforced by the concurrent development of industrial capitalism, with its opportunities for individual success and wealth. As it developed in the United States, industrial capitalism replaced a family-based system of production, encouraged mobility away from one's own original community, and demonstrated that the single (almost always male) wage-earner could prosper through hard work rather than from the patronage or influence of someone else.

Closely tied to individualism, then, is a strong belief in competition and in the free enterprise system. You get ahead by competing with others

rather than cooperating with them. The best economy, most Americans believe, is the free enterprise economy, in which companies and individuals compete freely with each other without government interference. Never mind for now that the American economy does not really work that way. Many people believe that it does, and that "interference," especially from the government, is wrong. Thus "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" become defined as one's own self-interest, rather than wider social goals or even the goals or needs of one's own family. The belief that one has control over one's own life is a major value. One of the most admired figures in American life today is the entrepreneur, the man who works for himself. Especially admired is the successful entrepreneur, who is always believed to be, in a telling phrase, a self-made man.

(*In formerly communist or socialist countries, capitalism, and the attitudes of mind that accompany it, are new and very alluring. I deliberately introduced the topic in a way that provoked discussion of the tension between individualism and traditional family systems of economic and social obligation. Naturally, students are strongly attracted to the freedoms they see in American television programs and advertising. I would never waste my time lecturing them about dangers and false promises, but I did try to help students in Russia and India understand that their current strong family support systems would be tested by the transition to capitalism, and that they would experience that change as a loss. Conversely, with American students, it is often a struggle to get them to imagine a pre-modern, less individualistic way of life. I try to get this point across by immersion techniques: detailed description, film and video re-enactments, visits to living history sites.*)

If competition is so valued, what happens to the idea of equality? Americans believe not in absolute equality but in equality of opportunity: Everyone should have an equal chance to succeed. If they do, it will be because of their own hard work, because the system itself is fair. Conversely, those who do poorly in life have only themselves to blame. The oft-called "American Dream" tells us that if we work hard, we will get ahead. Immigrants, today as in the past, are some of the strongest believers in the American Dream.

(*I found immigration to be a rich discussion topic in both India and Russia, for almost everyone knew or had heard of someone who had recently emigrated to the United States. They also knew people who had been refused visas or had been forced to wait a number of years for entry. Rather than discuss current U.S. immigration policy, I tried to convey a complex message: The American Dream is alive and well and embodied in the American lives of many immigrants, but immigration always entails cultural loss as well as economic opportunity. Most of the students I encountered — young, hopeful and still firmly rooted in family and in place — had never considered the question of cultural loss. It seemed only fair to warn them. With American student audiences, the topic of immigration confirms the dual nature of the process. While some students [perhaps 20 percent] have detailed family genealogies and strong inherited ethnic values, another 40 percent have little knowledge of or particular interest in their family history and cultural traditions. This contrast within the group itself provides a good opportunity to discuss different ideas about the value of ethnic identity versus society's needs for uniformity. Among American student audiences, immigration is a good starting point for discussion of the nature and value of ethnicity and multiculturalism.*)

America has always been, and continues to be, a nation of immigrants. The process by which an immigrant becomes an American is starkly simple. Immigrants in time give up their native language, their ethnic customs (except, perhaps, for food), and, in the second or third generation, often marry someone of another ethnic group. This is the famed American "melting pot" by which all distinctive ethnicities are dissolved and a composite emerges. Why have immigrants been willing to undergo this challenging experience? Because, for some, the fable about America as the place where the streets

were paved with gold was more or less true. There was much more economic opportunity in America than in the home country. Yet sometimes there is a price paid for economic success: some loss of family, group and ethnic history, which can lead to a sense of rootlessness.

Still, immigration is a major shaper of American life. When you consider not only immigration but the high rates of internal migration, you come quickly to understand that starting over is the most common American experience. Americans are optimistic, hopeful people who welcome change because they believe that it is controllable and will lead to improvement in their economic position.

(*My American students take optimism for granted, so it is a valuable discussion tool to ask where it came from. For the foreign students, who may have a less optimistic view of the world, the answer is obvious, and lies in the historical development of the United States, with its grounding in the positive aspects of change and optimism about the future.*)

While many immigrants feel pressure to change, immigration and relatively unrestricted opportunity have made many Americans more tolerant of difference and diversity. Americans come from different origins, and this has contributed to tolerance. Open space, open economy and rapid growth have meant an ability to absorb new populations; this also helps to produce tolerance. The tolerance has limits, which are both racial and behavioral, but compared to many other nations, we are still more open, less discriminatory.

(*The above, in my opinion, is the greatest lesson we have to teach abroad and to cherish at home.*)

Our differences have also shaped our politics. Because we do not share a common cultural past, we have agreed as a nation to be future-oriented, to look forward rather than backward. This has worked well when Americans believed they had a clear future, such as settling the continent in the 19th century or taking a major role in world leadership in the 20th century. It works less well when the future is unclear, as it is at the moment.

(*The contrast between politics in the United States and politics in more tradition-bound countries can often be great, and this is one way to explore it.*)

Nevertheless, today most Americans believe that the spectacular success of their large, rich and diverse country has been the result of the American values of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." The values of individualism and democracy are shared more fully among its citizens than any other country in history. Most Americans are proud of our country's history as they understand it, of its values and of the way it has used its power to support those goals in the world. They view the current spread of American music, fashions and television throughout the world as confirmation that what is often called the American way of life is suitable for everyone, everywhere.

(*Is the American way of life suitable for everyone, everywhere? Students usually think so, but their parents disagree. I visited India shortly after Star TV brought the U.S. melodramatic serial "Santa Barbara" into middle-class Indian homes, and many parents were shocked at the attraction U.S. commercial values held for their children. As a teacher, I was aware that if students viewed me as parental on this issue, my audience was lost. A much better tactic, I found, was to join with the students to deconstruct the television program or advertising billboard to discover the values it conveyed. Gender roles were one obvious place to start. In the second part of this exercise, I asked the students to teach me, the foreigner, how the advertising values compared with their own cultural values. Only then can we move on to a discussion of the values themselves.*

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I hope readers find this account of my approach to the teaching of American values at home and abroad useful. I have tried to teach what I believe, which is

that America's most basic values are lofty goals for which we must continually strive. In that sense, we will always be a nation in the process of becoming. If, in our teaching, we can describe that process, we transform American values from remote, hallowed ideals to matters of everyday life, at home and abroad.) ■

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ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN AMERICAN STUDIES

By Stephen J. Whitfield

The ascent of the ideal of diversity in American studies has, over the course of the last generation, transformed the way the subject is taught.

Nothing is more influential today than the notion of multiculturalism: Awareness that the United States is a multi-ethnic, multiracial society has broad implications for the approach that American studies scholars take in their classrooms. An historical overview of American studies may suggest the significance of the shift in the role of diversity.

The effort to comprehend the United States as a cultural unit, and to examine it from more than one angle, is thought to have begun at Harvard University by the end of the 1930s. At that time, two faculty members were embarking on their most ambitious projects. Historian Perry Miller elucidated the complex religious system of the New England Puritans. He made it impossible merely to disdain puritanism as repression, as the denial of pleasure. Likewise, literary critic F. O. Matthiessen was finding such artistic subtleties in mid-19th century New England writers that he called their achievement an *American Renaissance* (1941).

These two professors stimulated their students — and their readers beyond Harvard — to deem American culture worthy of analysis and appreciation. The theologians and poets whom Miller and Matthiessen profiled could no longer be belittled as dubbed versions of their authentic counterparts across the Atlantic.

This emerging discipline presumed a national habit of mind that was distinctive, and a set of practices that diverged from elsewhere on the planet. Such a vision of the United States was holistic rather than pluralistic. Classroom teachers sought to explain what unified Americans rather than divided them, and what made their history continuous rather than disruptive. American studies became especially vibrant in the 1950s, when it was enlisted in the Cold War, as teachers and lecturers helped Americans and foreigners understand how one nation had become so powerful, prosperous, and often so attractive.

The ablest scholars sometimes devoted themselves to tracing how a single idea or myth could, over the course of two or three centuries, sum up “the American Way of Life” (a phrase normally used in the singular).

David Potter’s *People of Plenty* (1954) claimed that faith in abundance separated Americans from others. The material comfort his fellow citizens took for granted might account for much that would otherwise be puzzling, such as wastefulness of resources. R.W.B. Lewis investigated “innocence” in *The American Adam* (1955). He analyzed key texts (mostly from the 19th century) that defined America as exempt from the tragic historical choices and burdensome institutions that crippled other nations. Leo Marx showed the ambivalence with which 19th-century Americans responded to nature. Their compulsive reliance upon technology in mastering the land suggested that *The Machine in the Garden* — the title of his 1964 volume — could link very different imaginative works.

Thus were the syllabi of American studies shaped and enriched.

But a 1961 volume composed according to the premises of the dominant “myth and symbol” school would help discredit it. William R. Taylor’s *Cavalier and Yankee* juxtaposed two character ideals in the antebellum era: one was Southern, the other Northern; one agrarian and leisurely, the other industrial and industrious; one partaking of human bondage, the other based on the free market. So clashing were these ideals, and the systems they were intended to personify, that *Cavalier and Yankee* made sense of something that the “myth and symbol” school could not otherwise explain. For if Americans adhered to the same values, why did the Civil War erupt, and why was it so devastating? Taylor not only supplied an answer — he pointed to

the problem of race that the civil rights movement was introducing into the politics of the 1960s. That struggle challenged the singular definition of the American Way of Life — and inevitably affected how it was presented in the classroom.

For example, Edmund Wilson's last great book, *Patriotic Gore* (1962), is a somber meditation on the literary and ideological impact of the Civil War. He does not mention the brilliant black abolitionist and orator Frederick Douglass (1817-95). Douglass' thought is not considered even in slightly later works by scholars who became astute critics of the heritage of racism: George Fredrickson's *The Inner Civil War* (1965) and Daniel Aaron's *The Unwritten War* (1973).

Yet this former slave now occupies his own prominent place in the canonical *Library of America*. In fact, professors now prefer to cite Douglass as a mid-19th century contrast with Abraham Lincoln to clarify Lincoln's positions on white supremacy and slavery. In this respect, Douglass has surpassed Sen. Stephen Douglas, the Illinois Democrat who engaged the racially liberal Lincoln in a historic series of debates in 1858. Otherwise the United States' family album might be dismissed as a white album.

That is still not enough for journalist Michael Lind, who concedes that "Lincoln was a great man; but Douglass was a greater man, because he went further, against greater odds." Indeed, "a case can be made," Lind speculates, that Douglass "was the greatest American of all time."[1] Beginning in the 1960s, such revisions of the past accelerated, as the political context radically changed what teachers would address and assign.

Also during the 1960s, the feminist movement emerged as a significant force, and in 1965 the U.S. Congress abolished immigration restrictions against many developing countries. The coloration of the entire U.S. society thus seemed to alter, and what once animated the teaching of American studies nearly collapsed.

What kept Americans together came to matter less; the ideology of democratic rights seemed only to conceal the persistence of injustices. Race, class, gender and ethnicity became categories that undermined the Jeffersonian faith in humanity as a unit that had been created equal. Relations of power once taken for granted, with well-to-do white men of Anglo-Saxon heritage and breeding on top, became contested. American studies professors challenged the very notion of normality; what looked natural they depicted as artificial. And if unfair relations of power were not innate but only a social invention, they were not inevitable. They sprang from historical conditions, not from reality.

"The historian can only express astonishment at the shift in the national ethos, as diversity has ceased to be something to be feared and has instead become something to be celebrated."

Race as a way to understand the national past and present became more important than ever. But many teachers of American studies defined it as a social construct that was pliable, rather than as a genetically-determined biological fixity. Such a shift struck me the first time I taught American history, at Southern University, an all-black school in New Orleans, Louisiana. I was among the first whites permitted to teach in a system of higher education that, before 1965, had been rigidly color-coded. All the undergraduates whom I taught had grown up under segregation. Once, while I was walking on campus in 1966, a student called out to me: "Hey, man, you go to St. Aug?" At first I was taken aback, suspecting that he and his friends were having some fun at my expense. With my Caucasian coloring, how could anyone take me for a graduate of St. Augustine, a black parochial school? But it later occurred to me that, despite the evidence of the senses, I *had* to be black: At Southern University, who *wasn't*?

My reflection was confirmed later that year, when students decided to stage Lorraine Hansberry's haunting drama, *A Raisin in the Sun*, in which the only white is a devious realtor who blocks the Younger family's search for a home in a new neighborhood. To recruit me for the cast was

therefore logical. While we were rehearsing, the chairman of the chemistry department came over and, eschewing the impeccable English he had always used with me, exclaimed: "Hey, Whitfield, I didn't know you was blood!" Sheepishly I replied that I was not. Nevertheless, I had learned a lesson that would mark American studies itself: Race, however decisive in affecting lives, is a matter partly of perception by others, a social convention.

The historian can only express astonishment at the shift in the national ethos, as diversity has ceased to be something to be feared and has instead become something to be celebrated. In the United States itself, as well as on reading lists, the ideal of heterogeneity has displaced homogeneity. Though nativism has hardly vanished, its support is weak, unable to gain traction when one of every 12 Americans is foreign-born — and increasingly unlikely to have immigrated from Europe. In Boston, Massachusetts, founded by Puritans, a leading health plan to which I belong recently surveyed its members. The inquiries were conducted in the following language options in addition to English: Cantonese, French, Haitian Creole, Khmer, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese. Among major newspapers an adjective like "multicultural" and its variations showed up in 40 articles in 1981, but in more than 2,000 only 11 years later.[2]

Any academician who would now begin a book, as Perry Miller did in 1939, by assuming national homogeneity ("I have taken the liberty of treating the whole literature as though it were the product of a single intelligence") might halt a promising career. The United States may once have been the land of the Pilgrims' pride, the land where our fathers died, but not anymore, and not for everyone. Donna Shalala, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, has acknowledged: "My grandparents came from Lebanon. I don't identify with the Pilgrims at a personal level."[3] At the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, the team nickname of "Minuteman" has been attacked as "too macho, white and violent — 'If you're a woman or a person of color, he really can't represent you.'"[4] The multiculturalist mystique has enabled feminist Gloria Anzaldúa to elevate the status of other homosexuals, praising them as "the supreme crossers of cultures. ... We come from all colors, all classes, all races, all time periods. Our role is to link people with each other — the Blacks with Jews with Indians with Asians with whites with extraterrestrials [*sic*]."

" ... to put race and ethnicity at the heart of 'diversity' diminishes the role of region in shaping national identity."

Back on planet Earth, however, who gets classified as a minority is subject to caprice as well as bigotry, to self-definitions as well as federal policies. In 1860 the census split the white population into "Native," "Foreign," and "Irish" — a sign of anxious prejudice no less telling than the application form for admission to Emory University's dental school, which as late as 1961 offered candidates only three "races" to choose from: Caucasian, Jew, Other.[5] More than three decades later, when asked about their race, most of Anzaldúa's fellow Hispanics tell the Bureau of the Census that they consider themselves white, thus compounding the complexities of defining the status of a minority.

Who is now entitled to announce his or her ethnicity? That noun, in its current sense, is scarcely half a century old, thanks to sociologist Lloyd Warner's *Yankee City* volumes. Yankees are even counted among the 106 entities (from Acadians and Afghans to Zoroastrians) in the indispensable reference work, the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (1980). Yet, the most important historical survey written according to multiculturalist premises, Ronald Takaki's *A Different Mirror* (1993), mentions the English, once at the center of the national experiment, only in passing — mostly for oppressing the Irish.

The index to *A Different Mirror* links the British only with "colonialism," and Abraham Lincoln gets only

as many citations as Los Angeles, California, motorist Rodney King.[6] King, a black man, was beaten by four white policemen in 1991. The subsequent acquittal of his assailants by a California jury sparked widespread looting and arson in south-central Los Angeles in 1992. Such an interpretation looks narrower than almost any "Eurocentric" account that Takaki's influential volume is designed to replace. Yet multiculturalism has triumphed so fully that a good thing may have gone too far. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., has warned against the separatism lurking behind much of the search for roots. Yet even he claims to favor multiculturalism, in contrast to his father, also a distinguished historian, who had listed the "melting pot" — the amalgamation of immigrants — as one of the United States' 10 most important contributions to civilization.[7]

Regional expression and variation were once unavoidable in the American studies classroom. But to put race and ethnicity at the heart of "diversity" diminishes the role of region in shaping national identity. Even John Hope Franklin, the most honored of black academicians, has called himself a scholar of the South, and did not even teach African-American history in the last three decades of his career.[8] Franklin has analyzed pride of place, not only pride of race. But regionalism had been subjected to serious challenge as early as Oscar Handlin's *The Uprooted* (1951), which made the saga of immigration — rather than the westward movement of the frontier — into the national epic. The policy of the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* still honors the influence of region, however, with separate essays on "Appalachians," "Mormons" and "Southerners" (though not on "Westerners," "Easterners" or "Okies").

Indeed, white Southerners — a group that cherishes its past and was cohesive and embattled enough to try to smash the Union — may be the trickiest test for the current politics of multiculturalism.

"Redneck," complains historian C. Vann Woodward, is "the only opprobrious epithet for an ethnic minority still permitted in polite society."[9] In 1991, a Harvard undergraduate from Virginia flew a Civil War-vintage flag of the U.S. Confederacy outside her dormitory window. Black students objected, denouncing it as a symbol of slavery. Her own ethnic or regional pride was not endorsed because, at least at Harvard, some heritages merit less celebration than others.

Those of us who teach about diversity — and accept its legitimacy — not only have to decide whether some totems are taboo. We cannot ignore the rest of the world either, though contemporary multiculturalism tends to do so. Unlike scholars who once subscribed to a faith in American "exceptionalism" and in the goodness of a redeemer nation, today's devotees of diversity rely less on an international framework.

When the thrust of American studies was holistic rather than pluralistic, teachers paid greater attention to how Americans differed from foreigners than to how Americans differed from one another. Because multiculturalism does not try to show the uniqueness of the United States, too little has been added to comparative understanding. An awareness of the fate of other peoples may complicate, if not enfeeble, the adversarial stance often associated with multiculturalism, as I once learned from a conversation in Bucharest. There, an American studies professor had conveyed the severity of the Ceausescu dictatorship by translating Frederick Douglass' autobiography into Romanian. Its readers were thus able to infer Communist economic mismanagement, because the meat rations which Douglass was given as a slave were superior to what Romanians were allotted before 1989. Too strong an emphasis on diversity in the United States may obscure the diversity of nations. ■

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AMERICA AND THE WORLD: THE CHANGING ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

By George Eisen

The 1990s exemplify the often-quoted Dickensian passage,
" ... it was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness ... '' During the last six years, two major external developments in the political and economic arenas have prompted, if not a complete revolution, at least a reform in the structure and mission of international programs around the world. One of these crucial developments was the dissolution of the Soviet Union, bringing about the end of an era we remember as the Cold War. As with the conclusion of all wars, however, the end of the Cold War has created as many problems as it resolved. Jubilation was soon replaced by worry over a new world order, more unpredictable and unmanageable than the old. The outward manifestations of this political metamorphosis have entered homes daily through television. Our minds combine the pictures of tearing down the Berlin Wall with the ferocity and magnitude of ethnic cleansing and genocide in many parts of the world.

The second development, paralleling this political upheaval, has been a dramatic economic realignment from national to trans-national (global) economies. The creation of huge economic blocs such as the North American Free Trade Agreement and European Union has already altered the global business landscape and culture. Rapid changes in the economic balance of the world posed similar challenges to economists, politicians and students of international relations. That China would assume such an economic pre-eminence, with a huge trade surplus with the United States, was unthinkable even 10 years ago. Equally, no self-respecting scholar would have predicted that such "developing" countries as South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, and even tiny Singapore, would evolve into economic powerhouses. Though deriving from different needs, U.S. universities and many universities outside the United States responded to these new geopolitical realities by re-examining their attitudes and priorities regarding international education. An almost instantaneous result was a thorough evaluation of the essential purpose of international education in defining the United States' role as a political and economic entity in a "new world order."

As a consequence, global studies programs set out to formulate a corresponding educational policy that could integrate the United States in an emerging global economic system. Simultaneously, many countries abroad embarked on a concerted effort to gain a better understanding of America. With the expectation that the world's largest democracy and most powerful economy can serve as a guiding example to emerging democracies and market economies, universities across the globe were often encouraged by their governments to establish American studies programs.

Thus, the 1990s have seen an unprecedented growth in international/area studies at home and American studies programs around the world.

In the United States, the first order of business for higher education was the identification of new approaches toward international learning. This led to a reorganization of existing programs and implementation of new ones that could address global needs. The last decade of the 20th century has sewn together a frightening quilt of frayed allegiances, atrocities and a new world "disorder." Suddenly, the quest to understand a confusing world has become not a luxury but a burning necessity, posing questions about how to sustain the United States' leadership role in the world. On Oct. 19,

1994, Stanley J. Heginbotham wrote in "Shifting the Focus of International Programs," in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, that "the end of the Cold War will have a far greater impact on the way that international programs in American universities are organized and financed than many people involved in those programs now realize." His observation has since been felt nationwide. In this re-evaluation process, three major factors emerge as essential in the revitalization of international studies in the United States:

1. Promotion of an integrated and interdisciplinary focus in global education. The first factor relies on the premise that in an increasingly complex world, only cross-cultural and thoroughly interdisciplinary programs can successfully prepare U.S. students for the complex world of the 21st century. These programs must study different regions of the world as trans-nationally and organically interactive entities. Countries of a specific geographic region, the Baltics or Southeast Asia for example, must be viewed as not only a geographic unit but one generically bound together by historical and cultural forces, traditions and economic interests. Beyond the study of culture, this knowledge must include these countries' complex interaction, their economics, political systems and people. Thus, traditionally "international" academic disciplines such as history, literature and political science are complemented by courses in business, political economy, environment, administration, journalism, sciences and even architecture.

2. Presentation of multi-dimensional and comprehensive internationalization for the entire campus community and the community at large. The second major philosophical direction leads toward a comprehensive process of international learning that harnesses the intellectual and scholarly energies of the entire campus community. The new orientation of these programs conveys the idea that international knowledge is neither an esoteric academic subject, relegated to diplomatic circles, nor the sole property of foreign policy experts. In many ways, the old-line attitudes toward international learning as preparation for a cultural elite are outmoded. The modern world demands education for the masses — the preparation of globally competent "world citizens." In addition to offering academic degrees, international programs are entrusted with diffusion of international knowledge across all segments of the campus community. Thus, a wider circle of students, and the general community (through continuing educational opportunities) reap the benefits of international education. An example is development of curricula that introduce international knowledge into all course offerings, reaching across academic disciplines.

3. Introduction of "problem-focused" programs. Finally, one of the most tangible proofs of rethinking global education in U.S. universities is the recent movement from area-centered toward "problem-focused" — think-tank oriented — academic studies. In a new market-oriented education, as Heginbotham noted, "those who finance international programs are turning their attention from traditional area studies to problem-focused programs." This development presents the philosophical premise that American educational institutions must play an active role in alleviating societal problems, providing regional instead of country-wide solutions. In this frame of mind, the public expects practical benefits from international programs, such as expertise that could assist government in policy-making or conducting business. It is hard to argue with the idea that, as Heginbotham wrote, "governments in search of advice look to think-tanks ... rather than Oxford or Harvard," creating bridges between theoretical knowledge and the practical needs of the general and business community.

Economic and political necessities have promoted a global consensus that the example of the United States could be instructive for many countries, especially the emerging new democracies in Eastern Europe. Educational institutions and political leaders in these regions have come to realize that to transform their political, legal and social institutions and ensure their assimilation into a global economic system, they must learn from the U.S. experience. In Eastern and Central Europe, for example, the

implementation of democratic ideas, institutions, and governance became a prerequisite to economic restructuring. In various countries of Asia, on the other hand, American economic and business practices took precedence over democratic ideals. In both cases, American studies programs have become a key ingredient in the transmission of knowledge for a political and economic transformation.

Thus, the sudden collapse of a bi-polar world and the U.S.-Soviet rivalry precipitated an educational upheaval. One result was the emergence of American studies as the fastest-growing and most popular academic discipline today in Eastern Europe and Asia. It is accepted that beyond their academic value, American studies programs abroad must serve as models for modern educational principles, playing a significant role in assisting many countries in reshaping and restructuring their social and economic systems. In a world where the language of communication, sciences and business is American English, to conform to U.S. educational and economic practices has become a priority. These programs provide a multi-faceted approach toward utilizing U.S. knowledge, democratic principles, culture and political processes. They also serve as models for other educational units in applying market economic principles to education in expanding their missions toward such practical domains as community outreach, entrepreneurship, service to the business community, income-generation and self-sustainability. Finally, these programs teach new generations about the United States' popular culture, diversity, energy management and ability to sustain a livable environment.

In conclusion, there are distinct differences between the reasons for maintaining international programs on campuses in the United States and American studies programs abroad. The purpose of traditional academic programs on the U.S. campuses is, for the most part, to learn about the world and how the United States fits into an emerging global order. In contrast, centers or departments of American studies abroad transcend their immediate educational utility and serve as practical bridges transferring American knowledge and know-how to every corner of the globe. However, there are important commonalities that bring together the United States and the world.

In the final account, the simultaneous international educational initiatives in the United States and growing American educational influence abroad are parallel in their timing and closely aligned in their quest for global understanding and a livable world. The newly organized international programs at home and American studies abroad act in a concerted manner to bring the world to the United States and the United States to the world. After all, the central mission of those programs on two sides of the Atlantic and the Pacific is to provide unique opportunities to open and expand intellectual horizons. ■

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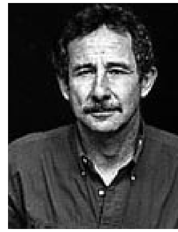

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PRE-COLLEGIATE AMERICAN STUDIES

By Brooke Workman

Recently, I accepted a request from the American Studies Association (ASA) to make a presentation in Kansas City, Missouri, on my teaching of an American studies course at West High School in Iowa City, Iowa.

This might seem to have been an ordinary event in the world of national academic conferences. But it was not. It was, in fact, an extraordinary invitation: Only since 1993 have any American secondary-school teachers been invited to make presentations at the ASA annual meetings, and to sit on the governing board of directors.

With this in mind, it is not surprising that few American secondary-school teachers have even heard of the American Studies Association, which is dominated by college and university professors.

Nor would it be surprising if some readers of this article were unclear about the role of American studies on the secondary-school level in the United States.

This confusion is to be expected because the United States is a country of 50 states and does not have a national curriculum. The essential responsibility for determining the course of education in the United States resides at the state and local levels.

Though Washington has an impact on American education, the shape of the American school and curriculum is largely determined by school administrators and locally elected school boards.

When I began teaching secondary-school classes in 1958 in Waterloo, Iowa, I taught American literature in the English department and American history in the social studies department. While I was given some freedom with daily lesson plans, the prescribed approach was survey/chronological, from colonial times to the present.

While I wanted my students to share my own enjoyment of literature and history, I felt some obligation to the “standard” literary and historical interpretations. And I felt a concern for what educator E.D. Hirsch has called “cultural literacy” — that students know names, dates and titles, key lines and quotations — and that they read the classics.

I followed what I thought was the accumulated wisdom of those who had come before me. I used their lecture outlines and textbook questions, their worksheets and tests, their concern for properly formatted paperwork. And I kept my three class sections (a total of 140 students) seated in straight rows facing my lectern.

This was a familiar pattern with my colleagues. And it was unsettling. By the end of that first year, my students were much like tourists at the end of a whirlwind overseas tour — overloaded with souvenirs and largely confused about where they had been.

By 1968, I was teaching in Iowa City. While students at a nearby university were busy with sit-ins and other social protests, I began my own quiet revolution: I began teaching an American studies course in the English department at West High School.

All secondary schools in the United States teach American history and English, which are core subjects in any American studies curriculum. However, it is not possible to determine how many of these schools offer an interdisciplinary American studies program such as West High’s, which has attracted attention and inspired curricular innovation in a number of U.S. secondary schools.

The program at West High School is the product of the freedom and trust extended to its classroom teachers. As chairman of the English department since 1971, I have been given the freedom to develop a series of American studies classes and seminars over the years.

The American studies course I now teach, called “American Humanities,” is offered to 16- to 18-year-olds. It is an in-depth, interactive and

interdisciplinary study of American civilization, designed for students who wish to learn a method of understanding our culture — past and present.

These classes do not use a textbook. The essential methods and materials are taken from my two National Council of Teachers of English publications: *Teaching the Decades: A Humanities Approach to American Civilization* (1975) and *Teaching the Sixties: An Indepth, Interactive, Interdisciplinary Approach* (1992).

Buckminster Fuller, the radical American architect who so impressed his young followers in the 1960s, built his geodesic dream houses with a sense of the past. He understood the strength of the triangle — the triad that still holds the weight of ancient domes. American humanities, built on theory and practice, reflects the strength of its triangle:

An
In-depth
Interactive
Interdisciplinary
Humanities Approach

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEACHING AND LEARNING

American studies is based on the idea that we live in an interdisciplinary world and learn life's lessons in context. From birth, from childhood, we learn the facts, the content of this world from many teachers and from many settings.

Until we enter a place called "school," the teaching and learning seem very natural.

But when we go to school, we find ourselves in separate buildings, in separate rooms, on separate floors, with people called teachers. While the interdisciplinary world is always there, we enter another world where teaching and learning are often defined by boundary lines, disciplines and departments.

The American humanities course embraces the concept that life is not really compartmentalized. Human beings cannot escape the variety of their cultural jigsaw puzzle, the search for what it means to be alive. Of course, students and teachers know all that.

American students instinctively understand that concept. They love variety. They seem to resent the term "content course," which suggests that facts of the world must be memorized, notes taken, tests scored. Students are delighted by the heresy of interdisciplinary overlap. They know that learning is always about people, about themselves. They enjoy the challenge of theorizing about their world, past and present.

Teachers know these things as well. They are always searching for new ways to prepare their students for the larger interdisciplinary world.

IN-DEPTH LEARNING

During the course, students undertake an intensive 90-day study of a particular decade. They also make an in-depth 24-week analysis of one historical period, such as the American 1920s, 1930s, 1945-60 or 1960s. This in-depth study weaves in and out of the decade study and culminates in a presentation. Course content includes literature, history, media, architecture, art, dance and music. Methods of learning include artifact analysis, small groups, audio-visual presentations and field trips.

When the course is over, students should have a method for understanding and appreciating the American way of life.

INTERACTIVE LEARNING

In my classroom, students' desks are arranged in a circle. This configuration conveys the message of interactive learning: "We are going to learn together." The in-depth study of a decade involves developing and testing theories in a climate of mutual respect for the ethnic, racial and religious diversity of the participants.

Learning occurs best in open, active classrooms where students are empowered by their own reading and writing, sharing, questioning, creating and performing. While the teacher establishes the climate, activates prior memory and shares the stories of the culture, the students also teach each other.

For 90 days, students engage in an intensive study of a dynamic decade, designed to lead to a larger understanding of American culture. Before undertaking this decade study, they are urged to reflect on American values, past and present. They

are challenged to look closely at their world — the artifacts, the people and their experiences.

The following lessons taught during the semester exemplify interactive learning:

1. The Idea of Culture: Students share and analyze artifacts of American culture, such as the 10 most popular weekly television programs, in terms of 15 dominant American values, such as achievement and success.

2. The Historical Period: Small groups develop 10 theories about a modern decade based on historical readings.

3. Popular Culture: Students share and defend position papers on popular books and Hollywood films as decade artifacts.

4. Architecture and Paintings as Artifacts: (a) Students work in teams to write analyses of decade community buildings in eclectic, organic and international value styles. (b) Students study and teach decade paintings to the class in terms of art and artifact, as well as write a values analysis on a decade painting in our community art museum.

5. Poetry and Plays as Artifacts. (a) Partners create anthologies of decade poetry based on one theme, as well as write their own poem consistent with that theme and share their anthologies in small group settings. (b) Small groups discuss, perform and analyze decade plays.

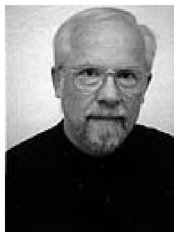
6. Dancing and Music. (a) Teacher and students dance and theorize together. (b) Small groups teach the class about music or develop and evaluate lyric analysis assignments.

7. The Project. The in-depth project reveals how students share the knowledge that they have produced alone or in teams. They share the products of authentic learning — from original research papers to creative, interdisciplinary, multi-media responses that have considerable interest to their peers. They teach, perform and interact. They reveal creations that go far beyond mere proving of competence.

For example, Dennis was a talented musician, a member of my 1930s decade class. He played in the school jazz band, the orchestra, and the pep band. His world was tied to performance, though he had begun to study music theory.

After two conferences with me, he decided to do something very ambitious. Instead of writing a term paper, he wrote a composition in the style of Aaron Copland, called "Springtime in Iowa," and directed the school orchestra's performance. Today, Dennis holds a doctorate in music and has performed at the White House. ■

Dr. Brooke Workman, chairman of the English department at West High School in Iowa City, Iowa, is a pioneer in the teaching of American studies at the secondary-school level. He received a doctorate in American civilization from the University of Iowa in 1968. He began teaching in Iowa public schools in 1956, and has also taught American studies in Germany and Belgium, and in college and graduate-level workshops.



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BIBLIOGRAPHY

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT. . .

American Studies on the Internet
The American Studies Crossroads Project — an International Internet and Curriculum Development Project. Co-sponsored by Georgetown University's American studies program and the American Studies Association (ASA), this is a key comprehensive web resource for the professional American studies community. This site contains numerous links to various American studies organizations and university departments, classroom resources and research, online courses, bibliographies, a syllabus library of graduate- and undergraduate-level courses, and ASA publications. A subject map to the field of American studies is forthcoming.
http://www.georgetown.edu/crossroads/

The American Studies Web: A Guide to American Studies Resources on the Internet. Formerly housed at Yale University, this subject-based hotlist for a large variety of American studies sub-disciplines is now a subdirectory of the reference and resources section of the American Crossroads site. It includes annotations and is searchable by subject or key word.
http://www.georgetown.edu/crossroads/asw/

American Studies Syllabus Library. A collection of more than a dozen syllabi from graduate- and undergraduate-level American studies courses at universities throughout the United States. Examples include Brown University's "Society and Culture in America," and the University of Maryland's "Ideas and Images in American Culture."
http://www.georgetown.edu/crossroads/as_syllabi.html

Cultural Maps. Researchers at the University of Virginia's American studies department suggest that old maps "can provide insights into the memories and desires, anxieties and assumptions" that any mapmaker "projects upon any terra incognita." This collection now includes about a dozen maps illustrating the nation's territorial expansion between 1775 and 1920. In the future, maps showing settlement patterns of immigrants and ethnic groups will be included. This site features an extensive guide to historical maps that are available online.
http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MAP/map_hp.html

American Literature On-Line. This compilation contains an unannotated list of links to American literature resources — web sites, archives, electronic texts, photographs and discussion lists.
http://www.missouri.edu/~engmo/amlit.html

American Memory Project: Historical Collections for the National Digital Library Program. The Library of Congress' American Memory project "consists of primary source and archival materials relating to American culture and history." The collections can be viewed by type — prints and photographs, documents, motion pictures and sound recordings — or searched by key word.
http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/ammem/home.html

American and British History Resources on the Internet. An extensive list of electronic journals, texts, and archives covering ancient times to the 20th century, this site also includes numerous historical collections arranged thematically, and a reference collection composed of maps, treaties, documents, statistics and bibliographies.
http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rulib/artshum/amhist.html

Resources for American Literature. Consisting of two parts — the American Literature Survey Site and the American Reader — this site from the University of Texas at Austin is a good example of using the web as a medium of course syllabi, materials, and web-based student projects.
http://www.en.utexas.edu/~daniel/amlit/amlit.html

Connections: American History and Culture in an International Perspective. Jointly published by the American Studies Association and the Organization of American Historians, *Connections* is a "global forum for professionals and students to share their interests and needs within the broad framework of internationalizing American history and culture."

More than 24,000 copies of the electronic and print versions are distributed to an international audience in 87 countries in conjunction with the United States Information Agency. Announcements cover conversations, research, pedagogy, books, journals, publishing opportunities, awards, fellowships, calls for papers, meetings, exchanges and housing.
http://www.georgetown.edu/crossroads/asanews/connects.html

H-Net: Humanities OnLine. A collaborative online project sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities and Michigan State University, this site contains a searchable directory of more than 75 electronic discussion lists for a broad variety of scholarly networks. Examples include H-AMSTDY (described below), H-Pol (U.S. Politics), H-Teach (Teaching American History), H-USA (International Study of the USA), H-West (History and Culture of the North American West and Frontiers), and H-South (History of the United States South). Instructions for subscribing to each discussion list are included.

Other sections of *H-Net* offer a range of resources for the American studies scholar — academic announcements; job openings; "teaching project" files, which provide information, course descriptions, syllabi and evaluations of teaching materials at all levels; reports from the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History; other Internet sites, and original book, media and software reviews.
http://h-net2.msu.edu/

H-AMSTDY — American Studies Discussion List. A moderated discussion list dealing with issues related to American studies. Includes conferences in the field, peer review of scholarly papers, and fellowship and employment opportunities.
http://h-net.msu.edu/~amstudy

Electronic Archives for Teaching the American Literatures.
"The Electronic Archives contain essays, syllabi, bibliographies, and other resources for teaching the multiple literatures of the United States. The Archives are designed as a complementary resource to the electronic discussion list, *T-AMLIT*." [They] are created and maintained by the Center for Electronic Projects in American Culture Studies (CEPACS) at Georgetown University's American Studies Program, and are sponsored by Georgetown University and the D.C. Heath Publishing Company." Instructions for subscribing to *T-AMLIT* are included on the website.
http://www.georgetown.edu/tamlit/tamlit-home.html

United States Information Agency (USIA). Educational and Cultural Exchanges. The Study of the United States. "This site includes information about programs in American studies. It also provides resources to assist in the development of high quality, integrated, American studies programs at educational institutions worldwide. Activities include U.S.-based academic study programs for foreign educators, promotion of linkages between U.S. scholarly organizations and foreign Americanists, and support for a variety of host-country or regional efforts to promote understanding of the United States. U.S. studies books, materials and collections are available for use at educational institutions, libraries, and U.S. studies centers abroad."
http://www.usia.gov/education/int-l/amst-int.html

USIA's Branch for the Study of the United States (E/AAS) also produces the publication, *Internet Resources: A Brief Guide to U.S. Studies Materials.* To request a copy, please send an e-mail message to: amstudy@usia.gov.

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American Studies: An Annotated Bibliography. 3 vols. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986. Together with the following supplement, these volumes provide a comprehensive bibliography in the field of American studies.

American Studies: An Annotated Bibliography, 1984-1988. Supplement. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Guide to American Studies Resources, 1996. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. This biannual reference work lists relevant journals, American studies programs, electronic resources, grant information, and conference announcements.

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American Quarterly. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1949- .

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Critical Inquiry. Quarterly. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974- .

Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Quarterly. Cambridge, Mass.: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1955-.

International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society. Quarterly. New York: Human Sciences Press, 1987-.

Journal of American Studies. Three times a year. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1967-.

Journal of Popular Culture. Quarterly. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University, 1967- .

Prospects: The Annual of American Cultural Studies. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975- .

Social Science Quarterly. Austin: University of Texas, 1920- .

Books

The list below is a sampling of recent winners of the John Hope Franklin Publication Prize, awarded annually to the best published book in American studies. Each book also won "best book" prizes in one or more of the constituent disciplines of American studies.

Fuchs, Lawrence H. *The American Kaleidoscope: Race, Ethnicity, and the Civic Culture*. Hanover, N.H.: Wesleyan University Press, 1990.

Hall, Gwendolyn Midlo. *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992.

Hatch, Nathan O. *The Democratization of American Christianity*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989.

Lunbeck, Elizabeth. *The Psychiatric Persuasion: Knowledge, Gender, and Power in Modern America*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Miller, Angela. *The Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics, 1825-1875*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Orvell, Miles. *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880-1940.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989.

Rediker, Marcus. *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Upton, Dell. *Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia*. New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1986.

ARTICLE ALERT

SOME RECENT ARTICLES OF SPECIAL INTEREST OFFERING INSIGHTS INTO U.S. SOCIETY AND VALUES

Graglia, Lino A.; and others. THE LONG HYPHEN: BLACK SEPARATION VS. AMERICAN INTEGRATION (Society, vol. 33, no. 3, March/April 1996, pp. 7-47)
This symposium section of the March/April issue of *Society* contains nine articles by American scholars that discuss the effects of the Supreme Court's 1954 landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the intent of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the continuing debate about affirmative action.

Hackney, Sheldon. THE NEXT AMERICAN NATION: A CONVERSATION WITH MICHAEL LIND (Humanities, vol. 17, no. 2, May/June 1996, pp. 4-8, 42-45)
Sheldon Hackney, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, interviews Michael Lind, author of *The Next American Nation*. They discuss multiculturalism and ethnicity in the United States, giving a historical perspective to race and class relations today.

Speer, Tibbett L. A NATION OF STUDENTS (American Demographics, vol. 18, no. 8, August 1996, pp. 32-38, 45)
Forty percent of the adult population of the United States takes adult-education courses, according to a 1995 survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics. "Because of rapid changes in the way the world does business, higher education is becoming more necessary in keeping jobs and keeping up with them," the author says. Academic institutions have responded to the needs of older, working students by opening off-campus facilities, offering flexible class schedules, and increasing high-tech delivery of course material via computer, television and video.

Trueheart, Charles. WELCOME TO THE NEXT CHURCH (The Atlantic Monthly, vol. 278, no. 2, August 1996, pp. 37-58)
While many mainline American churches sit nearly empty on Sunday morning, a new kind of church is attracting large crowds — in some cases, more than 10,000 people in a weekend. Collectively dubbed "the Next Church" by the author, these congregations draw huge numbers of people by offering a variety of worship services, social activities and opportunities to perform community service. Trueheart describes several Next Church congregations around the country, and offers a rationale for their existence and growth.

Viteritti, Joseph P. STACKING THE DECK FOR THE POOR: THE NEW POLITICS OF SCHOOL CHOICE (The Brookings Review, vol. 14, no. 3, Summer 1996, pp. 10-13)
A controversial issue in American education today is school choice: Should parents be allowed to decide which school their child attends and should the government provide financial assistance to those who choose private school over the local, taxpayer-supported public school? The author describes the debate and some approaches to school choice that are being tested. He believes that one new model, which provides public assistance to students on the basis of economic need, "promises to create a level of opportunity for all children that was once the exclusive prerogative of the middle class."

MacManus,Susan. AN AMERICAN MICROCOSM (The World & I, vol. 11, no. 8, August 1996, pp. 36-41)
Florida's political landscape is changing from a Democratic stronghold to a blend of nearly equal proportions of Democrats and Republicans, with a sizable number of independents and a few minor-party identifiers. The author discusses the reasons for the shift in affiliation. She adds, "Many analysts describe Florida as the best and largest microcosm of the nation's increasingly diverse racial and ethnic voting-age population." These factors combine to make the state a testing ground for themes that politicians hope to "take national."

Walker, Chip; Moses, Elissa. THE AGE OF SELF-NAVIGATION (American Demographics, vol. 18, no. 9, September 1996, pp. 36-42)
A new survey reveals that although Americans share some common values, a new values structure is

emerging as younger people emphasize personal choice and self-reliance. "Self Navigators share the achievement and power values of their Post-Yuppie elders. But they balance these values with an emphasis on close personal relationships, security, and fun," the authors say.

Courtwright, David T. VIOLENCE IN AMERICA (American Heritage, vol. 47, no. 5, September 1996, pp. 36-51)
History professor David Courtwright traces the roots of violence in the United States to times and places in which the population has been largely young, male, and single. "Men who have become stuck in bachelorhood ... are much more susceptible to violent and disorderly behavior," Courtwright says. He points to California during the gold rush in the mid, 19th century as a classic example of an extremely violent society and compares those conditions with inner-city life in the 1990s.

Seldes, Marian. ALBEE AND ME (American Theatre, vol. 13, no. 7, September 1996, pp. 24-26, 74)
Playwright Edward Albee's *Three Tall Women* is currently touring North America, and the Broadway revival of *A Delicate Balance* received three Tony awards this year. In this article, Marian Seldes — actress, writer, and a longtime member of Albee's "theatrical family" — offers an intimate portrait of the playwright and his work.

Wilson, August. THE GROUND ON WHICH I STAND (American Theatre, vol. 13, no. 7, September 1996, pp. 14-16, 71-74)
In an impassioned speech, delivered to the 11th biennial Theatre Communications Group National Conference in June 1996, playwright August Wilson appeals for financial support for African-American theaters. "Black theatre in America is alive ... it is vibrant ... it is vital ... it just isn't funded," Wilson says. "Often where there are aesthetic criteria of excellence, there are also sociological criteria that have traditionally excluded blacks."

Dawson, Marie. RETURNING TO THE VALLEY (The World & I, vol. 11, no. 9, September 1996, pp. 128-137)
Marie Dawson tells the story of Native-American Tom Porter, a Mohawk chief who three years ago left the Akwesasne Reservation on the U.S.-Canadian border. Porter had spent several years organizing other Mohawks and trying to raise money to purchase land off the reservation. In 1993, with the help of an anonymous benefactor, Porter and his friends bought a 300-acre (120-hectare) parcel of land in upstate New York at auction. There, they have established the Mohawk Community Farm, where they hope to grow and prosper, while preserving Mohawk traditions and culture.

Traub, James. PASSING THE BATON (The New Yorker, vol. 72, no. 25, August 26-September 2, 1996, pp. 100-105)
The author profiles New York's Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, which defied tradition 25 years ago by setting up a workplace democracy in an authoritarian world. Unlike most concert orchestras that are ruled by an omnipotent conductor, Orpheus plays with NO conductor and rotates the leader positions of concertmaster and "first-seat" players. The musicians themselves interpret the music and come to agreement on how a piece will be played. Traub describes the evolution of the group and the rewards and pitfalls of Orpheus's unconventional system.

Chambers, Karen S. BLOCKBUSTER EXHIBITIONS: HYPE OR HELP? (The World & I, vol. 11, no. 9, September 1996, pp. 106-107)
Art historian and writer Karen Chambers presents the dilemma faced by the true art aficionado who attends one of today's blockbuster exhibitions, such as recent shows on Monet, Picasso, and Cézanne that have visited the United States. In this mildly sarcastic essay, Chambers laments the crowds and the media hype that accompany such exhibitions, but values the opportunity of seeing the real thing.

Ponick, T. L. CAPITAL ASSETS: WASHINGTON OPERA ENTERS A NEW ERA (The World & I, vol. 11, no. 9, September 1996, pp. 96-101)
With Plácido Domingo at the helm and plans for a new hall, the Washington Opera is poised to become a major force in opera, while helping to revive downtown Washington, D.C. This article chronicles the history of opera in the nation's capital and the Washington Opera. Ponick describes efforts to purchase a former department store building that will become the Washington troupe's new home, and discusses plans for the next few seasons on-stage and for educational outreach programs for the community.

Rodriguez, Richard. TRUE WEST: RELOCATING THE HORIZON OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER (Harper's Magazine, vol. 293, no. 1756, September 1996, pp. 37-46)
In this essay, native Californian Richard Rodriguez muses on the "location" of the American West, as viewed by people he has met and observations he has made in different geographical regions, at different times in his life.

U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES
VOLUME 1 ELECTRONIC JOURNALS OF THE U.S. INFORMATION AGENCY NUMBER 15

AMERICAN STUDIES AT HOME & ABROAD