AMERICAN STUDIES (AMST)

AMST 117. Exploring American History Through Biography. 3 Units.
This discussion and lecture class uses various forms of biography to explore issues of American identity throughout the course of American history. The class will discuss how certain biographies have created archetypal American identities, and how issues such as race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, and historical context have shaped the writing, reading and purpose of biography. The last third of the class will consider the process of "national memory," the way the United States has decide to remember its past. Here the "biography" is collective, and created by myriad strands of mass culture woven together to create a national mythology. We will explore the works of those striving to pull apart these different strands, and explore what these memories tell us about established national identity. Students will explore biographical process through their assignments, and consider such questions as: How do American biographies influence our understanding of what it means to be American? How does biographical medium affect the message? Can we accept biography as history? This course investigates biography as a constructed genre that comes in a variety of forms, including autobiography, biographical novels, oral histories, and film. Offered as AMST 117 and HSTY 117. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

AMST 270. American Art and Culture Before 1900. 3 Units.
Survey of the development of American art from colonial times to the present which explores how art has expressed both American values and American anxieties. Painting is emphasized, but the course also considers architecture, the decorative arts, film, literature, and music. Offered as AMST 270 and ARTH 270.

AMST 271. American Art and Culture: The Twentieth Century. 3 Units.
Survey of the development of American art from 1900 to the present (and the future) which will explore how art has expressed both American values and American anxieties. Painting will be emphasized, but the course will also consider architecture, the decorative arts, film, literature, and music. Offered as AMST 271 and ARTH 271.