

AMST 345 Comps Exam Reading List for Class of 2012
Prof. Audrey Russek - Spring of 2011

Can “American Studies” develop a method? In 1957, Henry Nash Smith posed this foundational question in the title of his seminal essay in *American Quarterly*. Smith envisioned the expansion of areas and methods of scholarship as central to the emerging field of American studies, and he called upon practitioners of American studies “to widen the boundaries imposed by conventional methods of inquiry”: “The defining characteristic of American Studies is not the size of its problems but the effort to view any given subject of investigation from new perspectives, to take into account as many aspects of it as possible.”

Recent work in American studies has focused on the efforts of individuals and groups to resist essentializing narratives of U.S. history or explanations for current cultural and political events that minimize economic disparities, racial and ethnic prejudices and hierarchies, persistent gender role expectations, etc. This essay asks you, as an American studies scholar, to continue this trajectory.

Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler, eds., *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* (NYU Press, 2007)

Mark M. Smith, *How Race Is Made: Slavery, Segregation, and the Senses* (UNC Press, 2008)

Carolyn de la Peña, *Empty Pleasures: The Story of Artificial Sweeteners from Saccharin to Splenda* (UNC Press, 2010)

John A. Kouwenhoven, “What’s „American“ about America,” in *The Beer Can by the Highway* (Doubleday & Co., 1961)

Warren Susman, “Culture and Commitment,” in *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (Pantheon, 1985)

Janice Radway, “What’s In a Name? Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, 20 November, 1998,” *American Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (March 1999)

Carole L. Palmer and Laura J. Neumann, “Results” in “The Information Work of Interdisciplinary Humanities Scholars: Exploration and Translation,” *Library Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (January 2002)

Katy Bennett, et al., “Selecting Topics for Study” in *Doing Cultural Geography*, ed. Pamela Shurmer-Smith (Sage Publications, 2002)

Tim Cresswell, “Geography, Ideology, and Transgression: A Relational Ontology,” in *In Place/ Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression* (University of Minnesota Press, 1996)

Connie Chiang, “Monterey-by-the-Smell: Odors and Social Conflict on the California Coastline,” *Pacific Historical Review* 73, no. 2 (May 2004)

Susanne Friedberg, “Refrigeration: Cold Revolution” in *Fresh: A Perishable History* (Harvard University Press, 2010)

Katheryn Krotzer Laborde, “Introduction” in *Do Not Open: The Discarded Refrigerators of Post-Katrina New Orleans* (McFarland, 2010)

Kevin Gaines, "Of Teachable Moments and Specters of Race," *American Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (June 2010)

Kevin Gaines, "Duke Ellington, *Black, Brown, and Beige*, and the Cultural Politics of Race," in *Music and the Racial Imagination*, ed. Ronald Radano and Philip V. Bohman (University of Chicago Press, 2000)

R. Murray Shafer, "Listening" in *The Soundscape: Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Destiny Books, 1994)

Burton W. Peretti, "Music: The Composed Sound," in *History Beyond the Text*, ed. Sarah Barber and Corinna M. Peniston-Bird (Routledge, 2009)

Philip Deloria, "Music: The Hills Are Alive...with the Sound of Indian," in *Indians in Unexpected Places* (University Press of Kansas, 2004)

Christina Klein, "Musicals and Modernization: The King and I," in *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (University of California Press, 2003)

Jeffrey Richards, "Film and Television: The Moving Image," in *History Beyond the Text*, ed. Sarah Barber and Corinna M. Peniston-Bird (Routledge, 2009)

Joel Dinerstein, "Second-Lining Post-Katrina: Learning Community from the Prince of Wales Social Aid and Pleasure Club," *American Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (September 2009)

Lisa Blenkinsop, "The Internet: Virtual Space," in *History Beyond the Text*, ed. Sarah Barber and Corinna M. Peniston-Bird (Routledge, 2009)

Susan Willis, "Learning from the Banana," *American Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (Winter 1987)

Thomas Schlereth, "Material Culture and Cultural Research," in *Material Culture: A Research Guide* (University Press of Kansas, 1985)

Thomas Schlereth, "Mail-Order Catalogs as Resources in Material Culture Studies," in *Cultural History and Material Culture* (UMI Research Press, 1990)

Silvia Spitta, "Writing the Natural History of Our Destruction: From P.T. Barnum's National Histrionics to Contemporary, Post-Apocalyptic *Wunderkammern*," in *Misplaced Objects: Migrating Collections and Recollections in Europe and the Americas* (University of Texas Press, 2009)

Susan Sontag, "In Plato's Cave" in *On Photography* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1973)

Laura Wexler, "The Missing Link" in *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of Imperialism* (UNC Press, 2000)

Anne McClintock, "Paranoid Empire: Specters from Guantanamo and Abu Gharib," *Small Axe* 13, no. 1 (March 2009)

Vicki Ruiz, "Citizen Restaurant: American Imaginaries, American Communities," *American Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (March 2008)

Kirsten Silva Gruesz, "Lexical Snacks at the Citizen Restaurant," *American Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (March 2008)