

AUCA  
Fall 2011

## AMERICAN SOCIETY

**Course Code: AMS 260**

**Course Id: 1889**

**Course Credit: 3**

**Office hours: by appointment**

**AMS office: room 215, tel.: 66 33 09**

**Instructors: Assistant Professor Irina Y. Larionova, MA in English**

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### I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Many images have been, and are, attributed to the United States. People inside and outside the country have varied, and often opposing, viewpoints about it. The aim of this course is to promote a critical exploration of these views via a careful study and analysis of major aspects of the American life. It is designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the key political, legal, cultural, economic, and social aspects of the American society. In particular, the course is focused upon the evolution of American culture, demographic changes, economic trends, settler and immigration experiences, race relations, the role of women and minorities, development of political institutions and components of citizenship, state and local government, legal system, foreign policy, social services, education, religion, media, arts, sports, leisure and a range of other important issues. In short, the course examines the central social structures within which Americans operate, analyzes their historical growth and modern roles, and considers their underlying values.

Students will engage in the analysis of these important issues by reading, discussing and participating in a variety of in-class exercises. Most importantly, as this course is a *writing in the discipline* class, they will explore these themes by writing. In-class formal and informal writes will help students develop important skills of comparing/contrasting the issues, evaluating and analyzing them, and expressing their critical opinions about the variety of aspects of American social life. The writing component of the course will enable students to use the English language as a very effective tool of thinking and expressing their view points.

### II. REQUIRED READINGS

- *American Society* Reader (compiled from David Mauk and John Oakland, *American Civilization*, 3d. ed., New York: Routledge Publishing House);
- A collection of handouts to be distributed in class.

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to request the students not to use my email for turning in short writing assignments, papers and their drafts. Only hard copies of writing assignments and papers will be accepted. Feel free to send me an email message in case of emergency or if you need an appointment to discuss some issues related to the writing process.

### III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICY

- (1) The class will meet four times a week. Students are **expected to come to classes prepared and PARTICIPATE IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS! Active class participation is crucial for passing this course and for improving the course grade.**
- (2) Students are expected to **BE ON TIME** for classes. If a **student is 10 minutes** late, he/she will be marked as **absent for the whole class**, unless excused by the instructor.
- (3) **ATTENDANCE:** The **CLASS ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED!** Attendance concerns **ALL SESSIONS** of the course (both Monday, Thursday classes and Tuesday, Thursday sessions), as this is one course – not two. If a student misses a class with an excuse, he/she shall provide all necessary documents to prove it within a week after missing the class. If the requirements mentioned above are not observed, the student's absence is considered to be unexcused. If the student misses 3 classes without excuse or 50% of the whole course (with or without excuse), the student will be given an "X" grade for the course.
- (4) **INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS:** Each student is expected to make **1 individual and 1 group presentations** on the topics of his/her choice or the ones provided by the instructor. Students should deliver one presentation before the mid-term exam and the other following the exam. After doing a thorough research on a chosen topic, you will be given 15 minutes to present your research findings and to lead the class discussion on a fixed date. You need to study the topic thoroughly in order to deliver and explain your material effectively, answer your classmates' questions, and engage them into the class discussion.

Students must submit a **brief report on their presentation** in **HARD COPY** on the day of their presentation. The report shall include the major points covered during the presentation, materials used (e.g.: direct citations, supporting documents, statistical information, etc.) and a list of sources according to APA style (there must be at least 4 credible sources used). **An alternative to the presentation report is a printed out power point presentation with a list of sources (APA style).**

**Failure to deliver a presentation on the due date will result in the loss of points for students and the subsequent lowering of their final grades.** Extensions will be granted only in the case of a genuine emergency. A computer crash is **not a reason** for an extension (back up all work on at least one disk/flash card, preferably two, so that there will not be any problems).

**Required format for the presentation report:** Times New Roman 12, 1,5 spaced, documented in accordance with APA style (please, be consistent with the citation style used). Proofread carefully, since errors in grammar, syntax, punctuation, and spelling will lower your grade.

- (5) Students must observe the **AUCA ACADEMIC HONESTY** policy. All types of **academic dishonesty** (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) are **strictly prohibited**. If a student fails to observe this requirement, the instructor may assign an "F" grade for the work or for the whole course depending on the type of the assignment and gravity of the academic dishonesty. Students are expected to read and follow the section on the Student Academic Dishonesty of the AUCA Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct.
- (6) **MAKE-UP WORK:** Make-up examinations and make-up assignments will be given only in cases of extreme emergency. You are expected to notify me as soon as possible

and to discuss your circumstances with me. Do not otherwise assume that you will be permitted to take a make-up exam or complete a make-up assignment.

(7) **CELL PHONES** and any other electronic devices should be either turned off or kept on silence.

(8) **E-MAIL:** You must check your e-mail regularly for new assignments, changes in assignments, and other announcements. You are responsible for any information conveyed via e-mail.

#### IV. GRADING

There will be one grade given by both professors. Your final grade will be determined on the following basis:

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| ▪ Class participation (in-class assignments, quiz results) and attendance | 10% |
| ▪ Presentations   | 20% |
| ▪ Written assignments   | 20% |
| ▪ Mid-term exam   | 20% |
| ▪ Research paper  | 30% |

*Note: The date of the exam will be determined by the group. We give students a choice to have it either before or after fallbreak.*

*Students can earn a bonus of up to 15% for their active class participation as determined by the instructor at the end of the semester.*

#### GRADING PERCENTAGE SCALE

A 93-100%	C 73-76%
A- 90-92 %	C- 70-72%
B+ 87-89 %	D+ 67-69%
B 83-86 %	D 63-66%
B- 80-82 %	D- 60-62%
C+ 77-79%	F 0-59%

#### GRADING EXPLANATION

A, A-	Excellent work
B+, B, B-	Good, above average work
C+, C, C-	Average work
D+, D, D-	Poor, below average work
F	

#### V. COURSE CONTENT

**Note: The instructors reserve the right to introduce changes to the syllabus. Any changes will be announced during class. It is your responsibility to stay informed of any adjustments.**

Reading/Discussion Schedule Mon., Thurs. 9:25	Writing Schedule Tues., Thurs. 14:10
<b>Week 1</b>	
<u>The People: Settlement and Immigration</u>	
<p><b>Aug. 22</b> – Introduction, syllabus and course requirements <i>Assignment: read pp. 43-54</i></p> <p><b>Aug. 25</b> – Waves of immigration <i>Assignment: read pp. 54-66; handouts</i></p>	<p><b>Aug. 23</b> - Writing process. Active reading as a transition to writing. Paraphrasing. <i>Assignment: write a summary of the reading.</i></p> <p><b>Aug. 25</b> - Writing definitions. Describing causes and effects. <i>Assignment: exercises, p.65.</i></p>
<b>Week 2</b>	
<u>The People: Settlement and Immigration</u>	
<u>The People: Minorities</u>	
<p><b>Aug. 29</b> – Waves of immigration (cont.); select immigrant problems <i>Assignment: read p. 68, pp. 74-83</i></p> <p><b>Sept. 1</b> – Native Americans <i>Assignment: read handouts on Native Americans</i></p>	<p><b>Aug. 30</b> – Believe &amp; Doubt Exercise.</p> <p><b>Sept. 1-</b> Short Writing assignment # 1. Pointing out motives and effects. Evaluating motives and effects. <i>Assignment: drafting SWA#1.</i></p>
<b>Week 3</b>	
<u>The People: Minorities</u>	
<p><b>Sept. 5</b> – Native Americans <i>Assignment: read p. 68, pp. 83-88; handouts on African Americans</i></p> <p><b>Sept. 8</b> – African Americans <i>Assignment: read Martin Luther King’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” “I have a dream” and Malcolm X’s “The Ballot or the Bullet”</i></p>	<p><b>Sept. 5</b> - Peer revision of draft 1. <i>Assignment: Develop a clear thesis statement for your short assignment.</i></p> <p><b>Sept.8</b> – Writing a critical overview of “I have a dream” speech. <i>Assignment: Work on Final Short Write #1.</i></p>
<b>Week 4</b>	
<u>The People: Minorities</u>	
<p><b>Sept. 12</b> – African-Americans. <i>Assignment: read handout on the race-based affirmative action program in the U.S. higher education</i></p> <p><b>Sept. 15</b> – African-Americans. <i>Assignment: read pp. 88-92, handouts</i></p>	<p><b>Sept.13 Due: Final Revised Short Write#1.</b> Comparing/contrasting issues. <i>Assignment: Drafting SWA #2.</i></p> <p><b>Sept. 15</b> – Attitudinal writing. Revision of SWA #2 draft. <i>Assignment: Work more on SWA #2.</i></p>
<b>Week 5</b>	
<u>The People: Minorities</u>	
<u>The People: Women</u>	

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**Sept. 19** – Asian Americans.  
*Assignment: read pp. 68-74, handouts*  
**Sept. 22** – Women.  
*Assignment: read pp. 99-111, U.S. Constitution and its amendments*

**Sept. 20** - Peer revision of SWA #2 draft.  
*Assignment: Work on Final Short Write #1.*  
**Sept. 22 – Due: Final Revised Short Write #2.** Creating/identifying problems.  
*Assignment: process writing.*

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**Week 6**

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Political Institutions

**Sept. 26** - Historical origins; constitutional framework.

*Assignment: read pp. 111-131, handouts*

**Sept. 29** – Branches of government; system of checks and balances.

*Assignment: read pp. 173-183, handouts*

**Sept. 27**- First thoughts about the text.

*Assignment: Find in the text and respond to a passage important to you.*

**Sept. 29** – Sharing your responses to an important passage. Responding to a passage important for the author.

*Assignment: Write as many questions as possible about the text. They should explore the core ideas of the text.*

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**Week 7**

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The Legal System

**Oct. 3** – Legal history and system.

*Assignment: read pp. 183-188, handouts*

**Oct. 6** – Sources of U.S. law; doctrine of judicial precedent; court system.

*Assignment: read handouts*

**Oct. 4** – Dialogue with the author. What would the author respond to your questions?

*Assignment: What does the text remind you of?*

**Oct. 6** – What is not said in the text?

*Assignment: Does the author of the text have any prejudices? Explain them/*

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**Week 8**

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The Legal System

**Oct. 10** – Federal and state court proceedings; moot court.

*Assignment: read pp. 188-195, handouts*

**Oct. 13** – Crime and punishment: general state, death penalty, gun control.

*Assignment: read pp. 151-168*

**Oct. 11** – Identifying research paper topics. Writing an informal paper topic proposal.

*Assignment: Develop preliminary thesis statement for your research paper.*

**Oct. 13** – Starting from the conclusion, what does the text say?

*Assignment: Write an informal paper topic proposal and do library research on your topic.*

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**Week 9**

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**October 17<sup>th</sup> – October 21<sup>st</sup> FALL BREAK – NO CLASSES**

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**Week 10**

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The Economy

**Oct. 24** – Economic history, American economic liberalism.

*Assignment: read pp. 197-220*

**Oct. 27** – Contemporary economy: industry and manufacturing, service

**Oct. 25** - Paragraphs & Introductions.

*Assignment: Drafting SWA #3.*

**Oct. 27** – Conclusions and citations.

*Assignment: Revision of SWA #3 draft.*

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industries; financial and industrial institutions.

*Assignment: read a handout on the foreign direct and portfolio investment in the U.S.*

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**Week 11**

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The Economy

**Oct. 31** – Investment.  
*Assignment: read pp. 245-268*

**Nov. 1** – Dialectical response notebooks.  
*Assignment: Work on Final Short Write #3.*

**Nov. 7** – No class.

**Nov. 3 - Due: Final Revised Short Write #3.**

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**Week 12**

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Foreign Policy

**Nov. 7** – Historical overview of American foreign policy; US foreign policy from 1776 to 1830.

**Nov. 8** – Writing together. Collaborative Essay writing.

*Assignment: read handouts*

*Assignment: First draft of research paper.*

**Nov. 10** – U.S. foreign policy from 1830 to 1914.

**Nov. 10** – Selecting quotes for research papers.

*Assignment: read handouts*

*Assignment: Paragraphing.*

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**Week 13**

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Foreign Policy

**Nov. 14** – U.S. foreign policy from 1914 to 1945.

**Nov. 15** - Summary & Exegesis. Review Essay Assignment .

*Assignment: read p. 168-172, handouts*

*Assignment: Second draft of research paper*

**Nov. 3** – U.S. foreign policy from 1946 to the present.

**Nov. 17** – Structure of argument.

*Assignment: read pp. 197-220*

*Assignment: Work more on the second draft of your research paper and bring it in class for peer revision.*

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**Week 14**

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Education

**Nov. 21** – American educational history; higher education, problems and policy debates.

**Nov. 22** – Claims of value and claims of fact.

*Assignment: read pp. 291-310*

*Assignment: Radical revision of research paper.*

**Nov. 24** – No class (Thanksgiving Day)

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**Week 15**

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Religion

Media

**Nov. 28** – Religious history; church, state and politics; religion and education; attitudes to religion.

**Nov. 29** – Development of claims.

*Assignment: read pp. 269-289*

*Assignment: reference literature list APA style.*

**Dec. 1** – Supportive evidence.

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**Dec. 1** – Media history; freedom of media.  
*Assignment: read handouts*

*Assignment: Evaluating the validity of argument  
in the research paper.*

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**Week 16**

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Media

The arts, sports and leisure

**Dec. 5** – Investigative journalism;  
contemporary state of U.S. media.  
*Assignment: read handouts on jazz*

**Dec. 6 – DUE: Research Paper.**  
*Assignment: Research paper process write.*

**Dec. 9** – Jazz: origin, historical development,  
current state.

**Dec. 9** – Process writing.

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