

1. AMERICAN CULTURE

1. Keywords of early American culture: covenant ideas of Puritanism, Antinomianism, religious dissent, evangelical democracy.
2. Keywords of modern American culture: American exceptionalism, the myth of individualism, the feminine mystique.
3. Reinterpreting the “sacred texts” of America (The Declaration of Independence, The Declaration of Sentiments; the speeches of Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, John Wannaucon Quinney, Chief Red Jacket, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, Woodrow Wilson, John F. Kennedy, etc.).
4. Manifest destiny and manifest domesticity.
5. The American dream.
6. Class in American society.
7. The intellectual history of women: Puritan subversion, separate spheres, women's history, female relations in the 19th century, the gender of individualism.
8. Paradigms and paradigm changes in American Studies.
9. The “pictorial turn”
10. Visual culture versus art history
11. The social construction of the visual and the visual construction of the social in American culture
12. Race, gender and visual representation (empowerment and disempowerment of vision)
13. Elite/popular culture vs. mass culture theories
14. Representation of race and gender in popular culture and mass media
15. Major tropes, genres, and media in American popular culture (Frontier and the Western; romance and the romantic comedy; sitcoms: suburbs, family and domesticity; the fantastic and utopia/dystopia; social media, culture and identity construction; choose one for detailed analysis)

2. AMERICAN LITERATURE

1. 19th century American poetry: Whitman and Dickinson. Discuss the most important features of their poetry, representative works, and respective modes of innovation.
2. The American Renaissance: its literature and philosophy. Discuss the main principles, philosophical background, and at least four representative texts (one from Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, and Melville each).
3. Nature and the frontier in American literature. Discuss representative early and mid-19th century fiction and essays by Cooper, Emerson, and Thoreau.
4. 19th century women writers: discuss relevant topics and perspectives, with examples from Gilman and Glaspell.
5. Two traditions of modernism in American poetry: discuss high modernism and radical modernism by highlighting the relevant tenets as expounded in essays and practiced in poetic texts.
6. The high realism of Henry James. Discuss at least one novel and one short story.
7. Traditions of modernism in American fiction: discuss tenets and modes of writing; bring examples from at least three novels and three short stories written by Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Faulkner, and Stein.
8. African American modernism: discuss tenets and modes of writing; bring examples from at least two novels and two short stories written by Wright, Hurston, Larsen, and Johnson.
9. 20th century women fiction writers: discuss tenets and modes of writing; bring examples from at least one novel and two short stories written by O'Connor, McCullers, and Morrison.
10. The passing novel in 20th century American fiction: discuss race and gender passing; bring examples from at least three major texts written by Johnson, Larsen, Hwang, and Roth.
11. Formalism and New Criticism
12. Structuralism and narratology
13. Poststructuralism: postmodernism and deconstruction
14. Feminist, gay and lesbian criticism
15. Performative theory and intersubjective theory

3. AMERICAN LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS

1. History of American English: Major historical periods in the development of American English
2. Social-cultural influences on the development of American English
3. Dialects in American English
4. Style in American English
5. Characterizing American English vs. British English: Systematic differences between British and American English
6. Categories in thought and language
7. Frames and image schemas
8. Metaphor
9. Metonymy
10. Alternative conceptualization
11. English grammar from a cognitive perspective
12. Mental spaces
13. Conceptual integration
14. Linguistic relativity
15. American English, cognition, American culture

4. AMERICAN HISTORY

1. "A New World": Colonial America
2. "A New Nation": Causes and Consequences of the War of Independence
3. "America's Manifest Destiny": The Significance of the Westward Movement
4. "One Divided Nation under God": American Society Before and After the Civil War
5. "The Rebirth of the Nation": The Reconstruction
6. The Fate of the Amerindians
7. "The Gilded Age": Economy and Society at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Centuries
8. "A Nation of Immigrants": The Role of Immigration in U.S. History
9. "The Loss of Innocence": U.S. Foreign Policy at the Turn of the 19th-20th Centuries
10. The U.S. in World War I and in the Peace-making Process
11. The Great Depression: Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the New Deal
12. "The Arsenal of Democracy": The U.S. in World War II
13. The Bipolar World: The U.S. in the Cold War
14. Domestic Policy in Cold War U.S.
15. The U.S. and the Post-Cold War World