

AMERICAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

Northumbria University



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome to American Studies at Northumbria: American Highs	1
News and Events	2
US Presidential History Conference	2
HOTCUS Postgraduate Conference	3
“The American South” MOOC	3
Professor Brian Ward Elected Chair of BAAS	4
Literature, History, and Culture Speakers, 2015-16	4
American Studies Staff News	5
Grant Bidding Success	8
Postgraduate News	9
Simon Cooper, Early Career Visiting Scholar	10
Spotlight on American Studies Students	10
Spotlight on American Studies Modules	11
Why Study American Studies at Northumbria	12

WELCOME TO AMERICAN STUDIES AT NORTHUMBRIA: AMERICAN HIGHS

This was an especially important year for American Studies at Northumbria, as in July we celebrated the graduation of our very first cohort of students. The results were impressive, with everyone getting at least a 2:1. Congratulations to all our newly minted BAs, who are now better equipped to understand, or at least to deal with, the craziness that was the 2016 US Presidential Election. Special kudos, however, goes to Marie-Liz Hayton who secured an outstanding First Class degree and has decided to continue her studies at Northumbria at Masters level. Given that we already have an international reputation for world-leading scholarship on various aspects of the American Experience, it's good to be able to confirm that our teaching isn't too shabby either! Informal and formal feedback has been incredibly complimentary about the US-themed modules over the past three years and we certainly contributed to the extraordinarily strong scores achieved by English and History in the most recent National Student Survey, with satisfaction ratings of 97% and 99%, respectively.

This year also saw the graduation of the first two recipients of American Studies PhD studentships. Congratulations to Jon Coburn and Jude Riley, who can now call themselves doctor. With strong recruitment of students with US interests to the MA and MRes programmes in English and History adding to a growing cohort of doctoral students working

on US themes, there is now a vibrant community of Americanists doing postgraduate work and enhancing our research culture at Northumbria.



Professor Brian Ward

Other noteworthy happenings involving American Studies included the launch on October 31, 2016 of Northumbria University's first MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses). With

Michael Cullinane as project lead and me as academic lead, at the time of writing we have attracted over 4,500 learners from all over the world to a multi-disciplinary, all-singing, some-dancing, minimal-eye-gouging course on the American South that showcases one area of exceptional research and teaching strength among Northumbria's Americanists. And it has recipes. If you fancy some painless learning, either to supplement your school or university studies, or just as an end in itself, you can find the course at:

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/american-south>.

Within the pages of this, our fourth, American Studies newsletter, you'll find news of many other accomplishments by the staff and students involved in American Studies at Northumbria. Enjoy reading about them.

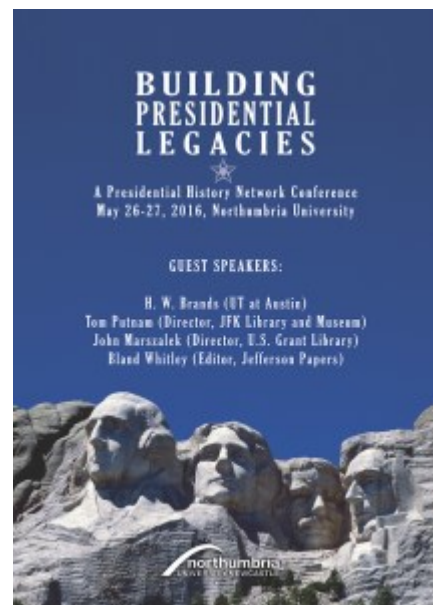
Sincerely

Brian Ward
Professor of American Studies

NEWS & EVENTS

Northumbria Hosts US Presidential History Conference

On 26-27 May 2016, Northumbria University hosted the US Presidential History Network Symposium, which focused on themes of "Presidential Legacy". Organised by Michael Cullinane (Northumbria), the "Building Presidential Legacies" conference provided a forum for leading scholars from the UK, US, and Europe to showcase their work on the most powerful political office in the world and the historical legacies of the men who have held it. H.W. Brands from the University of Texas delivered a lively and engaging keynote address, while panel papers ranged from the early republic to the late twentieth century: from Thomas Jefferson's presidential legacy to the recent revival of popular and media interest in the presidency of Lyndon Baines Johnson. Others, meanwhile, explored the Roosevelts (both Teddy and FDR) as particularly iconic American leaders.



U.S. Presidential History Conference

The Presidential History Network was organized in 2013 to serve the needs of scholars interested in the United States' presidency, individual presidents, and related interests in the institutional, political or cultural history of the American polity. In 2016 it will

coordinate a UK survey of US presidents. With Donald Trump's shock victory in the recent presidential election and great uncertainty over what a Trump presidency will look like, it is a timely moment for these scholarly explorations into the leadership and significance of American presidents and their ability to shape not only the United States but the wider world.



The Presidential History Conference

Northumbria Hosts Postgraduate Conference of the Historians of the Twentieth Century United States

On September 9th 2016, Northumbria hosted the annual postgraduate conference of the Historians of the Twentieth Century United States. Megan Hunt, a PhD student in American Studies, is the current Postgraduate representative for the group and organised the event. Entitled 'Winning Minds and Hearts': Constructing National Identity in American History, the conference explored shifting issues of patriotism and belonging in the United States, and was well-attended by postgraduates and academics from across the UK and beyond.

The first half of the day took a conventional conference format, with themed panels of two or three twenty-minute papers. These panels fostered diverse discussions about different expressions of national identity, including American norms in the 1950s and 1960s, ideas of Americanism during the Vietnam War era, and the manifestation of American identity in the face of annihilation narratives. This part of the day thus facilitated a wide-ranging and

varied discussion of American identity as an ever-adaptive construct.

The second part of the day consisted of developmental roundtables, which delivered practical and applicable advice to postgraduate and early career researchers as they continued on their PhD journey and beyond. Northumbria colleagues Peter O'Connor, Randall Stephens and Michael Cullinane all participated in this part of the day.

Finally, Professor Simon Hall (Leeds University) delivered a keynote address entitled "Leonard Matlovich: Military Heroism and the Making of a Gay Rights Icon." This paper helped tie together many themes discussed throughout the day, as Prof. Hall reflected on the oftentimes-ambiguous nature of patriotism as a facet of national identity. As such, it proved a fitting way to end a lively and thought-provoking conference.

Northumbria University Launches MOOC on the American South

In an exciting new venture in digital history, Northumbria launched this year a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on the American South. The brainchild of Michael Cullinane and Brian Ward, the MOOC provides learners across the world with a virtual platform through which to study the fascinating history, culture, and politics of the U.S. South.

On 31 October 2016, over 4,600 learners across the world began this unique, five-week online education experience. Encouraged to ponder all things southern – from Martin Luther King, Jr. to the mint julep – learners explore this most intriguing yet often maligned region of the United States, guided by experts from the Institute of Humanities at Northumbria University. Learners read articles, watch videos, participate in quizzes and group discussions, and even undertake some southern recipes in their own kitchens.

Interacting with experts as well as each other, those enrolled on this free and distinctive course experience a truly interdisciplinary introduction to the history, climate, culture and politics of the former Confederacy, exploring its manifestations in literature, film, music, television and food. They consider the connections (and leaps) between ideas, stereotypes, and reality: how much of what we 'know' about the South is actually grounded in or relevant to the southern experience? Similarly, where and when does the South begin, end, and simply exist?

The course is the result of a Centre of Excellence Partnership between the Institute of the Humanities and [FutureLearn](#), the first UK-based platform for MOOCs. This partnership offered a fantastic opportunity to highlight the interdisciplinary foundation at the very heart of the Institute to a truly global audience. American Studies is, of course, interdisciplinary by its very nature, and the focus on the American South fitted well with Northumbria's research and teaching strengths. The MOOC is already proving a great success, with pockets of learners based in every corner of the globe, making for an incredibly international experience. Students are able to share ideas about the South's significance with people from a multitude of countries and cultures, reflecting upon the truly global importance of this most contested region. For more information, and to join the MOOC, see:

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/news-events/news/2016/09/discover-the-american-south-from-home-with-new-online-course/>

Professor Brian Ward Elected Chair of British Association of American Studies

In April 2016, Professor Brian Ward was elected Chair of the British Association for American Studies (BAAS). Founded in 1955, BAAS is the UK's leading learned society that focusses on the study of the United States.

Brian will serve a three year term and will be working closely with universities, colleges, schools, and independent scholars to promote the aims of the association in partnership with a range of external bodies, including the American Embassy and the Eccles Centre (British Library). This is a highly prestigious role and it reflects Brian's tireless work as a scholar and champion of American Studies in the UK and abroad.

Literature, History, and Culture Speakers, 2016-17

Thu 29 September

Adam Kelly (University of York), "Autonomy, Economy, Sincerity: Ben Lerner and Contemporary Aesthetics", 4.30, Lip. 303.

Mon 21 November

Seth Fein (Seven Local Film), "Between Neighborhoods" [Film Screening], 5.00, SQ 020A.

Wed 7 December

Professor David Woolner (Mary Ball Washington Professor in American History, University College Dublin), "The Only Thing We Have to Fear is, Fear Itself": FDR, Donald Trump, and the Future of American Progressivism," 4.30, Lip. 121.

Date TBC.

Reetta Humalajoki (Early Career Visiting Scholar, Northumbria University), "Termination as Cold War Settler Colonialism: U.S. Federal American Indian Policy, 1953-1970), 4.30, room TBC.



Queens, NY, in Fein, *Between Neighborhoods*

American Studies Staff News

This year, **Brian Ward** crowned his entire academic career by publishing an entry on West Ham's legendary Bermuda-born striker Clyde Best, in *The Dictionary of Caribbean and Afro-Latin American Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2016). He also appeared alongside Frank Skinner and Suzy Klein in BBC 4's *What a Performance!: A History of Music Hall*, gave a public lecture on "The Sex Pistols in America" as part of the British Library's Punk at 40 series of events, and taped an interview with Danny Fields, manager at various times of the Doors, Iggy Pop, and the Ramones, for the Library's oral history collection. He wrote a couple of pieces on music and American politics for the online newsmagazine *The Conversation*: "Sounds Presidential,"

(<https://theconversation.com/sounds-presidential-2016s-candidates-are-struggling-with-campaign-songs-54020>) and "Are the Beatles Still More Misunderstood than Jesus?" (<https://theconversation.com/are-the-beatles-still-more-misunderstood-than-jesus-62751>)



Professor Brian Ward with Danny Fields

In April, Brian was elected to a three-year term as Chair of the British Association for American Studies and he continues to serve on the steering committee for Freedom City 2017, a major programme of events on Tyneside to mark the 50th Anniversary of Martin Luther King's visit to the city.

Randall Stephens, reader and associate professor of history and American studies, completed several projects, conducted research, and gave seminar papers and lectures

while on his sabbatical in autumn 2015. In 2015-16 he published the following articles: "It has to come from the hearts of the people': Evangelicals, Fundamentalists, Race, and the 1964 Civil Rights Act," *Journal of American Studies* (August 2016); "Where else did they copy their styles but from church groups?' Rock 'n' Roll and Pentecostalism in the 1950s South," *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* (March 2016); "'Religious Liberty' and the Origins of the Evangelical Persecution Complex," *Religion Dispatches*, January 12, 2016; "From Abolitionists to Fundamentalists: The Transformation of the Wesleyan Methodists in the 19th and 20th Centuries," *American Nineteenth Century History* (May 2015); "Understanding the Prosperity Gospel," *Fides et Historia* (Summer/Fall 2015); and "Of Gods, Presence, Abundant History, and the Challenges of Studying Everyday Religion," *Fides et Historia* (Winter/Spring 2016). In that same time he gave lectures and seminar papers at Emory University; Missouri State University; the Southern Historical Association meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas; the University of Missouri, Kansas City; Sewanee University, Sewanee, Tennessee; Mercer University, Macon, Georgia; and an Organization of American Historians Distinguished Lecture at Columbia College, Columbia, Missouri.

He's currently finishing his book manuscript, titled, *The Devil's Music: Rock and Christianity since the 1950s* (under contract, Harvard University Press). Randall also spent some time in the last year writing for the larger public in the pages of the *Independent*, *Salon*, and *Quartz*.

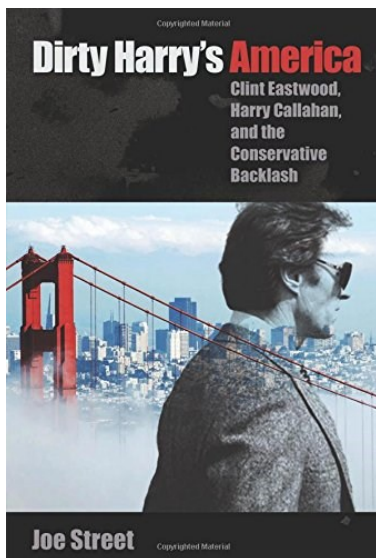
In April 2016 Randall gave a keynote lecture to the Gyldendals fagdag for engelsklærere (high school English teachers) in Oslo, Norway. The event was sponsored by one of the country's largest textbook publishers. His talk, "What's so Different about the 2016 Election?," and Q&A session afterward with over 100 teachers, dealt with U.S. election history and some of the more unusual and unprecedented aspects of the 2016 presidential campaign. Feedback from participants included: "the speakers

knew their subjects and made their talks interesting”; “looking forward to passing on the knowledge”; and “Excellent!”



Randall Stephens Lecture in Oslo

February 2016 saw the publication of **Joe Street's** *Dirty Harry's America* (University Press of Florida), a groundbreaking study of Clint Eastwood's Dirty Harry films. It argues that the five films in the series shed critical light on the culture and politics of the 1970s and 1980s, and particularly over the debate concerning law and order. Harry Callahan's home city, San Francisco, becomes the battleground where defenders of law and order such as Callahan wage war against liberals who (in Callahan's view) elevate the rights of criminals over the rights of law-abiding citizens. The book pays particular attention to the ways in which the films reference real events and political



Dirty Harry's America (Street)

struggles while offering a conservative representation of the cultural and political milieu of the time. The book also details the echoes of Callahan's ideology in political discourse during the Reagan-Bush

years and the many references to Callahan in popular culture, from Eastwood's later cinematic and political career, to television, graphic novels and fan-fiction, demonstrating that Callahan's shadow looms large in American politics and culture. Described as 'by far the most comprehensive, sustained, and detailed discussion of the Dirty Harry phenomenon' the book is an ideal birthday or Christmas present for the Eastwood fan in your life!

In April 2016, Joe was reelected to the Executive Committee of the British Association of American Studies, where he will continue to chair the organization's Publications Committee.

In addition to organising the U.S. Presidential History conference and the MOOC, **Michael Cullinane** has been completing a forthcoming book with EUP/OUP entitled, *The Open Door Era: United States Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century* (with Alex Goodall). In 1899, U.S. Secretary of State John Hay wrote six world powers calling for an 'Open Door' in China that would guarantee equal trading opportunities, curtail colonial annexation, and prevent conflict in the Far East. Within a year, the region had succumbed to renewed colonisation and war, but despite the apparent failure of Hay's diplomacy, the ideal of the Open Door emerged as the central component of U.S. foreign policy in the twentieth century. Just as visions of 'Manifest Destiny' shaped continental expansion in the nineteenth century, Woodrow Wilson used the Open Door to make the case for a world 'safe for democracy', Franklin Roosevelt developed it to inspire the fight against totalitarianism and imperialism, and Cold War containment policy envisioned international communism as the latest threat to a global system built upon peace, openness, and exchange. In a concise yet wide-ranging examination of its origins and development, readers will discover how the idea of the Open Door came to define the American Century.

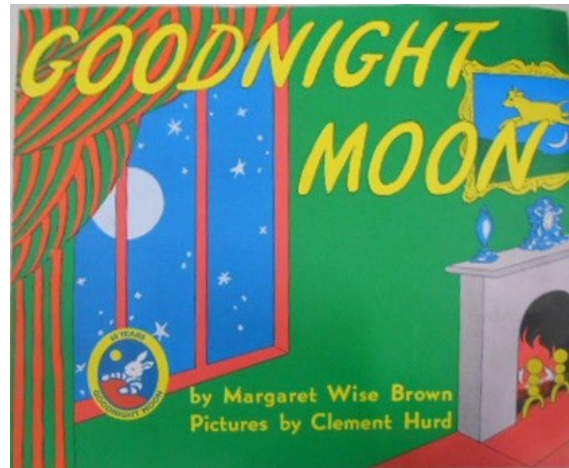


TR Island in Washington, DC

Michael has also been working on a documentary on Theodore Roosevelt Island. Today, most people observe the island from their car as they cross the bridge over the Potomac River in Washington, D.C. The memorial plaza attracts few visitors, despite the island's proximity to the national mall. Few people know the island's place in Washington's history or the way it has influenced Roosevelt's public memory. This project will produce a documentary on the history of the island as a memorial to Roosevelt to invigorate public engagement. The documentary will begin with an examination of the TRA's plan to erect a memorial at the tidal basin site and their ultimate failure to do so. It will include a short history of Theodore Roosevelt Island prior to the TRA's purchase in 1931 before exploring Frederick Law Olmsted's landscape design for a conservationist memorial and the construction of the 1967 monument. It will conclude with the NPS plans for revitalization on the island and the forthcoming centenary of Roosevelt's death and 50th anniversary of the memorial's dedication.

Michael is also developing a new book series with EUP entitled *New Perspectives on the American Presidency*. This series invites submissions for monographs and cohesive collections of essays that explore the American presidency through fresh and innovative approaches.

What do James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Gertrude Stein all have in common? Apart from being famous for the difficulty of their experimental writing, they all wrote books for children – books that have remained largely ignored by literary scholars. And, just as these famously esoteric writers turned their hands to children's literature, many children's authors of the mid-twentieth century found inspiration in the most challenging literature of the avant garde. **Julie Taylor**, Senior Lecturer in American Studies/Literature at Northumbria, is currently researching some of these connections, starting with the case of Gertrude Stein and Margaret Wise Brown.



Brown, *Goodnight Moon*

Gertrude Stein, who is most famous for her experimental poem *Tender Buttons* (1914), was invited to write a children's book by the young Margaret Wise Brown, who later became well-known by children and parents across the world for her story book, *Goodnight Moon* (1947). Stein was Brown's favourite writer, and we can see the influence of her unusual rhythms and repetitions on books like *Goodnight Moon*. Yet while Stein cultivated a 'childlike' or 'childish' persona in her work for adults, it is perhaps surprising that such a notoriously challenging and inaccessible writer would inspire works designed for the most novice readers. However, Stein accepted Brown's offer with alacrity and wrote her own work for children in 1938, a beautiful blue and pink picture book called *The World is Round*. Although Stein's next two attempts at

'children's' books were deemed unsuitable by her publisher and did not make it into print in her lifetime, *The World is Round* appears to have been a hit with the children who read it. Stein even had hopes that Disney would turn the book into a movie, and she was particularly excited about plans to produce a range of tie-in nursery furnishings. Although many adults continue to find Stein's writing difficult to the point of unreadability, she always said that, for children, her work didn't seem to pose any problems at all.

Rosie White has a chapter entitled, "Roseanne Barr: Remembering Roseanne", in the forthcoming edited collection, *Hysterical: Women in American Comedy* (University of Texas Press). She also published an article, "Funny Peculiar: Lucille Ball and the Vaudeville Heritage of Early American Television Comedy" in *Social Semiotics*.

In August 2016, **Henry Knight Lozano** and **Joe Street** completed the manuscript of their edited collection, *The Shadow of Selma*. Building on the success of the 2015 conference of the same name held at Northumbria, the volume, which will be published by the University Press of Florida, includes contributions from a collection of internationally renowned academics including Aniko Bodroghkozy, Devin Fergus, Alma-Jean Billingslea Brown, Lynn Itagaki, Peter Ling, and Northumbria's own Tony Badger and Megan Hunt.

In addition to conducting a productive archival research trip at the University of Hawaii in June 2016, part of a book project provisionally entitled, *California/Hawaii Bound: Promotional Visions and Perilous Ties in an Americanizing Pacific, 1848-1945*, Henry published articles with *Environmental History* and the *Journal of American Studies*. The latter explored the racial dynamics of the tourist phenomenon of "Afromobiling" in Jim Crow Florida: a resort activity in which white guests were pedaled around in a wheelchair powered by an African American hotel employee. "Water in Paradise: California, Florida, and Environmental Rivalry

in the Gilded Age," meanwhile, demonstrated how the abundance and the scarcity of water became a crucial factor in the promotional development of California and Florida, respectively, as American homelands and tourist destinations. It argues that arid California held important advantages over "wet" Florida in attracting settlers anxious over these distinctive climates and environments. Elsewhere, Henry shared his teaching experience of using iPads in class with American Studies students and topics: <http://www.baas.ac.uk/usso/teaching-american-studies-with-ipads/>



'Watery' Florida (1882 promotional image)

Grant Bidding Success

American Studies staff continue to put in major group and individual bids to support research, teaching, and public engagement.

Brian Ward won a British Academy/Leverhulme Small Research Grant for a scoping project on *The Sick South: Disease, Disability, Dying and Death in an American Region*.

Michael Cullinane secured Arts and Humanities Research Council "Follow On Funding" (£67,000) for his project "Call to Action: Raising Awareness of Theodore Roosevelt Island." This exciting multimedia public history initiative derives from his earlier AHRC-funded work on "Memorial Communities and Presidential Legacy: Remembering Theodore Roosevelt."

Randall Stephens, Reader and Associate Professor in History and American Studies, received a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) fellowship to take part in a seminar on “Problems in the Study of Religion.” The grant amounted to £2,081 and was for a three-week session. The NEH University of Virginia seminar brought together college and university faculty, as well as advanced graduate students, from the many disciplines that have a stake in understanding religion and culture. Fellows spent their time at UVA working on their own research projects in the extraordinary collections in the university’s libraries and taking part in discussions and debates about the field.

Henry Knight Lozano, Senior Lecturer in American Studies, was awarded a British Association of American Studies Founders’ Research travel award of £1,000 towards his archival research work in the Special Collections at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Postgraduate News

In February 2016, **Jon Coburn** successfully defended his PhD thesis in American Studies, entitled “Making a Difference: The History and Memory of ‘Women Strike for Peace’, 1961-1990”. The panel recommended that the thesis be passed without corrections – a truly impressive achievement. Jon was supervised by Michael Cullinane and Sylvia Ellis.

Second-year PhD student **Natasha Neary** won research funding (£500) from the Royal Historical Society. Natasha's project is titled: "Fun and Facts about American Business: An Animated Education in the American Free Enterprise System." She intends to use the funds to help with travel to an important archive at Harding College in Searcy, Arkansas, which holds key material for her project. Her supervisors are Randall and Brian.

Now Second Year PhD Student, **Beth Davidson** was awarded the Eccles Centre

Postgraduate Fellowship in North American Studies 2016 in February. The Fellowship was awarded for her on-going thesis researching the transformation of trade and commercial policy between the United States and Latin America during the Theodore Roosevelt Administration. The Fellowship, supported by the British Library and the British Association for American Studies will assist with research trips to the BL, St Pancras where she will have access to crucial government documents and newspapers. Beth was invited to attend the joint BAAS/IAAS conference held at Queens University Belfast, 7-9 April where she was presented with her award at Belfast City Hall by Eccles Centre Director, Professor Philip Davies.

This year, **Megan Hunt** continued in her role as Postgraduate Secretary for the Historians of the Twentieth Century United States (HOTCUS). It is her job to raise and promote postgraduate issues, and participate in general committee duties, usually at the Institute of the Americas at University College London. In September, she organized the annual HOTCUS PG conference here at Northumbria, which featured academic panels, developmental roundtables, and a keynote address from Professor Simon Hall (University of Leeds). Additionally, she participated in HOTCUS’s other events this year in Middelburg, the Netherlands; and the University of Dundee. She has also been involved in teaching on our new Foundation year for Humanities students, and has served as an ‘educator’ on Northumbria’s first Massive Open Online Course (MOOC). She was responsible for monitoring the discussion forums each day, responding to learner questions, and offering encouragement to those contributing great discussion and further links to interesting content. She also recently submitted a chapter on race relations and civil rights melodrama in the 1980s and 1990s, as part of an edited volume on post-1970 southern history in film, due to be published next year with the University Press of Kentucky.

Simon Cooper, Early Career Visiting Scholar, 2015-16

Simon Cooper was the Early Career Visiting Scholar in American Studies at Northumbria for 2016. Simon's PhD thesis, which was completed at Newcastle University in 2013, was entitled, "Radical Politics and Literary Form in 20th Century American Writing." During his fruitful visit at Northumbria, Simon gave a research seminar on the poet, Charles Reznikoff. He also delivered a workshop with American Studies postgraduate students on "Blues Agency, New Music." The workshop raised important questions about methodology and the study of the blues. In addition, Simon worked with the first-year American Studies undergraduates in a session focused on the 1935 Horace McCoy novel, *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*

An annual appointment, Northumbria's American Studies Early Career Visiting Scholarship is an exciting, funded opportunity for early career American Studies scholars to share their research at Northumbria while also developing their teaching experience with both American Studies postgraduate and undergraduate students.

US-Hawaii Mini-Symposium in 2017

In May 2017, Northumbria University plans to host a small symposium on the United States and Hawaii. The event seeks to bring together a number of UK-based scholars whose work explores different elements in the complex historic relationship between America and the Hawaiian Islands. These include the cultural and social impact of American missionaries and the importation of new diseases to Hawaii in the early nineteenth century, and the significance of Hawaiian statehood in the 1950s and 1960s to U.S. Cold War ideals and multicultural identities.

The United States' only island state, Hawaii's "place" in American Studies is sometimes a peripheral one. The "Paradise of the Pacific" is

often overlooked in scholarly focuses on the continental United States, including the traditional 'frontier' West. The symposium will highlight not only the importance of the United States to Hawaii's history, but the reverse: how the mid-Pacific archipelago has affected the United States, socially, politically, and culturally, in myriad ways over the past two centuries.

Spotlight on American Studies Students: Joe Leighton, BA Student

Joe is in his second year of a BA in American Studies at Northumbria

Q: Could you tell us a little about your background and how you became interested in American Studies?

My background is mainly in mathematics and the sciences. Throughout my education I always studied humanities subjects on the side for my own interest. I studied history in high school and philosophy in college. After leaving a biology degree I decided to study something I was truly interested in and when I saw the American Studies programme it was everything I wanted! My interest in American Studies stems from my philosophy course where I read the works of people such as Thomas Paine and James Baldwin.

Q: What research and writing have you undertaken in your American Studies modules that have sparked your interest?

I found the module on Abraham Lincoln really interesting. It really exemplified the best of what American Studies has to offer. As well as studying the historical background of Lincoln and the era, you look at how his life and death influenced literature at the time, why he is still such a pervasive figure in politics today, and it is great at displaying how historical focuses change over time. The English modules are also something I have enjoyed a lot more than I expected to. I even chose to write my

extended essay at the end of the first year on the American author Raymond Carver.

Q: Do you have any advice for someone who is considering choosing American Studies at Northumbria?

I would tell someone considering American Studies to go for it! If you have an interest in history but want to keep other research options open it's the perfect course. The modules are interesting and engaging and there are lots of opportunities to research and write on topics that you are personally interested in. The extended essay modules help you work up to your dissertation in the final year by developing your research and writing skills gradually over the course. The ability to pursue your own interests is what I've found most valuable. The tutors are also helpful and easily reachable if there are any issues with the work.

Q: What are your future plans beyond the degree programme?

My future plans are constantly up in the air, but right now I am considering applying to study for a master's degree.

Spotlight on new American Studies Modules: The American West

American Studies students at Northumbria have the opportunity to study a range of interdisciplinary modules that explore the United States through its history, literature, politics, and culture. Lecturers offer module options that closely relate to their research expertise: these can range from the U.S. in the 1960s to Religion and American society to literary modernism. In January 2016, Henry Knight Lozano launched a new second-year option, open to American Studies students, entitled, "American Frontiers: The West in U.S. History and Mythology."

The West holds a special place in the American imagination. With its real and imagined

associations with frontier individualism, 'open' land, Native Americans, violence, and freedom, the West, as historian Clyde Milner writes, is like "America, only more so." And like America, the West holds powerful mythic elements that are vital to understanding its history.



Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show (1893)

The new module explores the history and mythology of the American West from the nineteenth century to the present. While broadly chronological, the focus is also thematic, taking into account key factors in the development and meaning of the West. Students work with a diverse range of sources, from Native American testimonies to frontier shows, mining letters to newspaper editorials on 'cowboy presidents'. Throughout students consider how and why the U.S. West became such an alluring yet contested space in American history; how it represents both a place and a place in the imagination; and ultimately how it shaped U.S. society, politics, and culture in myriad ways.

Student feedback at the end of the Semester was hugely positive with 100% student satisfaction with the module. Student comments included: "Had an interest in the

American West before this module, but the module convinced me it was an idea I'd like to study further in the dissertation next year"; "I enjoyed the focus on primary reading in the seminar every week as well as the different tasks to get us thinking how we would use it in an exam"; and "I've really enjoyed this module, and I feel like I have learnt a lot. Would highly recommend."

Why Study American Studies at Northumbria?

Intellectually challenging and hugely enjoyable, American Studies is an ideal subject to study at university if you want to learn more about American life and culture, wish to develop your critical, imaginative and communication skills, and have an interest in multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches to studying the American experience and its global significance. In American Studies at Northumbria University you will receive an excellent education in a friendly environment, in partnership with an exceptional collection of internationally acclaimed scholar-teachers. Through a variety of lectures, smaller group seminars, and guided individual study, our staff will help you develop your skills, work towards a successful degree and prepare yourself for life beyond the university. Our commitment to teaching excellence was recognized at the Northumbria Student Union's Student-Led Teaching Awards for 2015-16, where many members of the American Studies staff were commended for their engaging teaching and overall commitment to their students' education.

Employment and Study Abroad

Many careers require self-motivated, creative, and ambitious individuals with a dynamic skill set. American Studies graduates are especially valued because of their excellent communication skills and ability to think intelligently, critically, and laterally as they draw on a wide range of disciplinary perspectives and skills to analyze and interpret the American experience. The American Studies programme at Northumbria University will

enable you to develop into this type of graduate. American Studies graduates are attractive to employers in such fields as teaching, publishing, journalism, cultural administration, advertising, public relations, the civil service, heritage management, social research, non-governmental organizations, public history, and the Foreign Office.

As part of an innovative, new "Your Graduate Future" module many of our students will hone their employability potential. Here students will build resumes, refine experience for future careers, and link their work in American Studies to the job market.

Students also have the opportunity to spend a period of time studying abroad during their second year. American Studies has established links with a large number of institutions in North America, including Florida Atlantic University, Georgia State University, the University of Arkansas, Middle Tennessee State University, and Montclair State University (near to New York City). This exchange programme is covered within the existing tuition fee structure.

TEACHERS – WE NEED YOU AND YOUR STUDENTS! If you or your students would like to learn more about American Studies, or to participate in events at Northumbria University that offer you and your students the latest insights into US history, literature, and politics in preparation for GCSE, A-Level or International Baccalaureate Exams, please contact: Dr. Henry Knight Lozano (henry.knight-lozano@northumbria.ac.uk) or Dr. Julie Taylor (Julie.taylor@northumbria.ac.uk)

For more information on American Studies at Northumbria, please visit us at:

<http://northumbria.ac.uk/americanstudies>