

AMERICAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

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**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome to American Studies at Northumbria	1
News and Events	3
Introducing the American Studies Research Group	3
Music and Social Movements Conference	4
British Association for American Studies (BAAS) Postgraduate Conference, 2018	5
Literature, History, and Culture Speakers, 2018-19	5
American Studies Staff News	7
Grant Bidding Success	8
Postgraduate News	9
Oline Eaton, Early Career Visiting Scholar	9
Spotlight on American Studies Students	9
Spotlight on American Studies Modules	11

WELCOME TO AMERICAN STUDIES AT NORTHUMBRIA

Welcome to the 2018-19 issue of the Northumbria University American Studies newsletter. This is our sixth edition and I am delighted to use it to announce some exciting new opportunities to study things with an American flavour at Northumbria in the coming years.

During 2019-20 we will begin recruitment for two new undergraduate joint degree programmes with colleagues in the Humanities Department: English and American Studies, and History and American Studies. The first cohort on these programmes are due to join us in Autumn 2020. These initiatives will not only help us to capitalise on the exceptional quality of the academic staff across the whole of the Humanities Department at Northumbria, but are also a direct response to interest from teachers and their students.

Over the past few years we have worked very closely with schools, hosting a variety of A Level workshops and making dozens of visits to provide students and teachers with support and encouragement in their work. In the course of those visits, many students have enquired about the possibility of taking American Studies in conjunction with other subjects and that will soon be possible at Northumbria. In a related move, American Studies is also set to loom large within Northumbria University's Humanities Foundation Year Programme, where it will

become one of the ‘pathways’ students can choose to follow.

The success of these undergraduate programmes, like the success of our taught and research programmes for postgraduates, depends heavily on the commitment of our staff to excellent teaching and their reputations as cutting-edge researchers. In the pages that follow, you can read about their many accomplishments as well as those of our students.

Indeed, it has been a bumper year for Americanists at the doctoral level, with no fewer than six of our students completing their PhDs in topics that ranged from Climate Change and the Contemporary Western, via comparative urban history of the 18th and early 19th Centuries, from the gender politics of interwar US roots music to US State Department infighting during the Carter administration, and from anti-Vietnam War campaigns among British women activists, to the use of animated educational films by the US business and religious communities in the mid-20th Century. The vibrancy of our postgraduate community was also evident in November 2018, when Northumbria hosted the annual Postgraduate Conference of the British Association for American Studies.



Rebecca Wright

This year we were sad to say farewell to our colleague Randall Stephens, a lynchpin of the early years of American Studies at Northumbria, who departed to take up a post at the University of Oslo, where we wish him well. We were, however, delighted to welcome

to the staff Dr. Rebecca Wright, an expert on energy, the home and broader environmental issues in US history. You can read more about Rebecca’s new module “At Home in America” elsewhere in this Newsletter.



Brian Ward

Finally, last year I noted our increasing level of public engagement with schools and other partners outside of academia. It is good to report that this momentum has continued, not least with a schools outreach day, which brought 140 students to campus. Many American Studies colleagues were also involved in the effort to secure a plaque commemorating the visits to Newcastle of Frederick Douglass, the leading African American abolitionist of the 19th Century and we have been near the heart of efforts to re-establish a local branch of the Historical Association on Tyneside. While we are rightly proud of our research and teaching, it is also good to see our expertise making a real difference beyond the University.

With all good wishes,

Brian Ward
Professor in American Studies

NEWS & EVENTS

Introducing the American Studies Research Group!

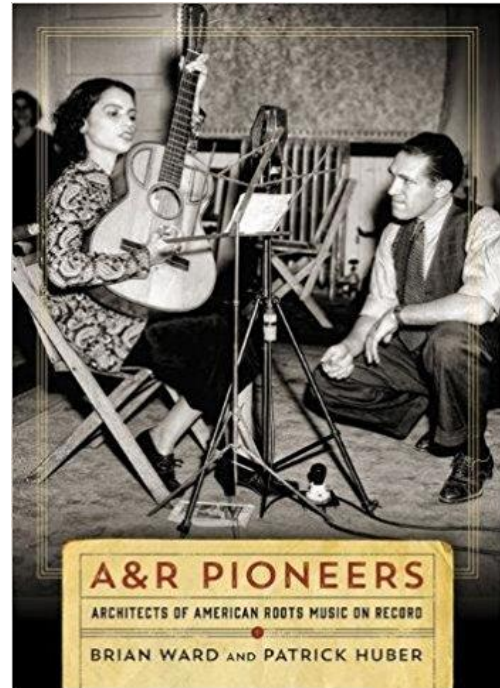
As part of a wider reorganization of the research groups within the department, the U.S. History Research Group was reborn as the American Studies Research Group. In keeping with the department's interdisciplinary spirit and ambitions, this group brings together Northumbria's diverse and growing community of Americanists. The group continues to host the American Studies Research Seminar and to contribute to the new Institute of Humanities Research Seminar (further details of both below). Follow us on Twitter: @NUAmStudies.

Brian Ward Discovers the Architects of American Roots Music

In November 2018, **Brian Ward** and Patrick Huber of the Missouri University of Science and Technology launched their new co-authored book at the Taylor Swift Education Center in Nashville, Tennessee. Equally exciting, the formal UK launch of the book took place at the City Library in Newcastle as part of the annual Books on Tyne Festival.



Brian Ward and co-author Patrick Huber launch their new book at the Taylor Swift Education Center in Nashville's Country Music Hall of Fame.

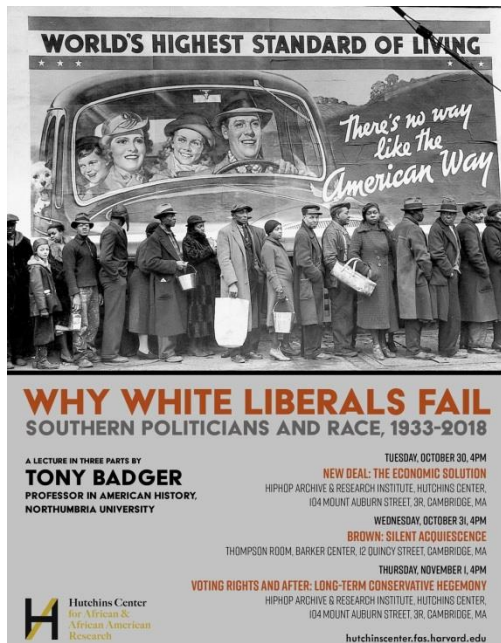


The cover of *A&R Pioneers* (2018)

The book, entitled *A&R Pioneers: Architects of American Roots Music on Record*, was the result of nearly a decade researching in archives across America and among the recordings of the early US recording industry to uncover the history of the men – and a handful of extraordinary women – who worked between the two World Wars and effectively invented the commercial music forms we have come to know as blues, jazz, gospel, Tejano, and country music. In the process, these pioneering figures helped to define a new cultural industry, making key decisions about what music was to be recorded by what kinds of artists – and then deciding what would be issued and how it would be marketed. These men and women not only invented the role of “record producer”, they also sowed the seeds for what would later become rhythm and blues, rock and roll, soul, rock and hip-hop music. “In some ways they were like the Simon Cowells of the interwar years,” explained Brian. “They were a pretty unscrupulous bunch who desperately wanted to sell as many records as possible, while making sure that they kept as large a slice of the royalties from song publishing, recordings and performances as they could.”

Professor Tony Badger delivers prestigious Nathan I. Huggins lectures

Over three consecutive nights in late October – early November 2018, Professor **Tony Badger**, Professor in American History at Northumbria, delivered the Nathan I. Huggins lectures at the Hutchins Center for African American Research at Harvard University.



Publicity image for Professor Badger's lectures (Hutchins Center)

The theme of these lectures was “Why White Liberals Fail: Southern Politicians and Race, 1933-2018.” Professor Badger joins a long line of distinguished scholars who have delivered these lectures, which were established to honour Nathan I. Huggins, the first holder of the W.E.B. Du Bois Professorship at Harvard. You can watch all three lectures on the Hutchins Center's website:

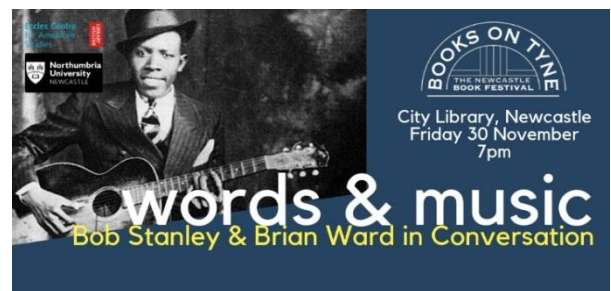
<https://hutchinscenter.fas.harvard.edu/event/tony-badger-nathan-i-huggins-lecture-series-1-3>

Music and Social Movements Symposium

On November 30, 2018, Northumbria's American Studies group hosted a one-day symposium on Music and Social Movements supported by funding from the US Embassy and the British Association for American Studies.

Organised by **Joe Street**, ably assisted on the day by colleagues **Henry Knight Lozano** and **Leona Skelton**, the event brought together scholars of popular music and politics from all over Britain with Joseph Connell from Cardiff University giving a keynote address on the Live Aid concert.

The day ended with “Words and Music” - a public event at the Newcastle City Library as part of the Books on Tyne festival co-sponsored by the Eccles Centre for American Studies at the British Library and Northumbria University. Nearly 150 people attended as Brian Ward and Bob Stanley (co-founder of the group Saint Etienne and author of *Yeah, Yeah, Yeah*) discussed the challenges of writing about popular music.



Publicity image for the “Words and Music” event that concluded the symposium.

British Association for American Studies (BAAS) Postgraduate Conference, 2018

On 3rd November 2018, Northumbria PGR students **Rowan Hartland**, **Simon Buck**, **Natasha Neary**, and **Gabriel Hogg** hosted the annual BAAS PGR conference on the antecedents and legacies of 1968. The U.S. Studies Online (USSO) keynote address from **Dr James West**, a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at Northumbria, gave valuable insight into the 1968 presidential ambitions of Black candidate and comedian Dick Gregory. With panellists from across the country and abroad, and in different stages of their academic careers, papers ranged from gay folklore, Black dockworker strikes, and amateur women's photography.



James West presents his keynote address at the BAAS Postgraduate Conference.

Breakout sessions included ‘speed networking’, a talk on impact and engagement from Dr Leona Skelton, and a roundtable on PGR and ECR pay, job security, workload and health and well-being. Funding from BAAS and Northumbria University made the event possible, and, for the first time at a BAAS PGR conference, crèche facilities were made available. A review of the full conference proceedings, including a podcast of the keynote, is available on the USSO website. <http://www.baas.ac.uk/usso/baas-pgr-conference-review-2018/>



Conference delegates participate in the ‘speed networking’ event.

American Studies Research Group Hosts Schools Outreach Day

In December 2018, the American Studies Research Group hosted a schools outreach day on the theme, “Uniting States? The American Experience Since 1865.” A mix of sample lectures and seminar activities, the event was

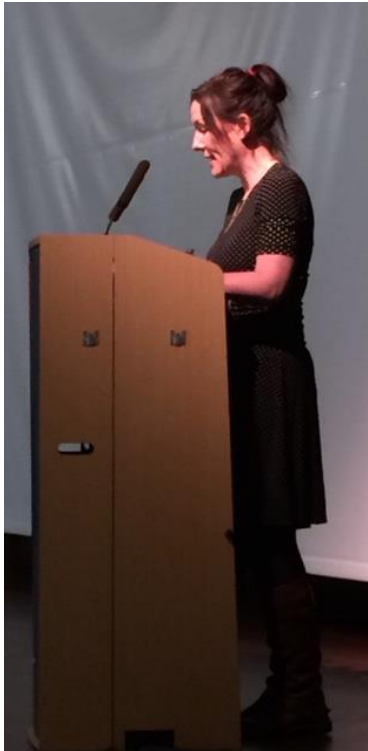
attended by 140 students from eight schools across the North East. Staff and graduate students alike were involved in making this day a success, including **Patrick Andelic, Brian Ward, Rebecca Wright, Henry Knight Lozano**, our visiting scholars **Devin Fergus** and **Lynn Itagaki**, and PhD students **Simon Buck** and **Rowan Hartland**.

Remembering Frederick Douglass and Transatlantic Abolitionism on Tyneside

On February 26, 2018, a plaque was unveiled on the wall of 5, Summerhill Grove in Newcastle, to mark the house where Frederick Douglass and many African American anti-slavery campaigners stayed with the Richardsons, a Quaker family active in many social justice campaigns in the mid-19th Century. **Brian Ward** and former Northumbria American Studies student Adam Sharp had worked closely with Newcastle City Council and the Friends of Summerhill group to secure this public memorial to the most important African American leader of the 19th Century and to celebrate Tyneside’s historic links with the African American freedom struggle.



Brian Ward with the Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Linda Wright, and Tim Gerhardson of the US Embassy at 5, Summerhill Grove



Clare Elliot at the Discovery Museum talking about Frederick Douglass as a Black Atlantic Celebrity and Author.

Following the unveiling ceremony, Brian was joined by fellow Americanists **Brycchan Carey, Claire Elliott** and **David Gleeson** and several distinguished guests, including local MP Chi Onwurah, ex-Newcastle United football legend Shola Amoebi, and pupils and staff from St. Paul's School in the Discovery Museum for a public event to discuss Douglass's life and legacies.



Shola Amoebi joined students from St. Paul's School at the Discovery Museum to share their thoughts about Frederick Douglass and his relevance in the 21st Century.

American Studies Staff at Northumbria Provide Online Resources for School Teachers

In 2017, **Brian Ward** and former Northumbria American Studies PhD student **Megan Hunt**, worked together with colleagues from Newcastle University to produce a fabulous, free-to-download teaching resources pack inspired by Martin Luther King's historic visit to Newcastle in 1967.

The pack explores the legacy of Dr King and the US civil rights movement, but unlike most similar resources it approaches King from a UK perspective, reflecting on important social, political and economic issues facing this country, both in King's day and in the 21st Century.

Different parts of the pack are aimed at Key Stages 2, 3 & 4. It includes high-quality full lesson plans, hand-outs, worksheets, homework tasks, music recordings and presentation slides for lessons in History, RE, Geography, English, PHSE, Music, Drama, Art and even Chemistry. It also includes material for assemblies. All materials are free at the *Times Education Supplement* website: <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/martin-luther-king-in-the-uk-complete-resource-pack-for-work-unit-and-assemblies-over-ks2-3-and-4-11710703>

Literature, History, and Culture Speakers, 2018-2019

Semester 1

23 October

Malcolm Craig (Liverpool John Moores), "Nuclear Swords in Muslim Hands: The United States, Nuclear Proliferation, and the Greater Middle East in the 1970s and 1980s", 4-30, Lip 335.

13 November

Panel with Devin Fergus (Missouri and Northumbria), Sarah Liu (Newcastle), and Jon

Coburn (Newcastle), “Reflections on the 2018 U.S. Midterm Elections”, 4-30, Lip 232.

14 November

Eilidh A. B. Hall (Aberdeen), “Latinx Indigenous Resistance: Reading Negotiation as Resistance in Contemporary Xicanx Writing”, 4-00, Lip 121. [Also part of the Institute of Humanities series]

December 4

Lynn Itagaki (Missouri and Northumbria), “Civil Racism: From the 1992 LA Rebellion to Trump’s America”, 4-30, Lip 335.

Semester 2

30 January

Michèle Mendelssohn (Oxford), “Oscar Wilde: From Irish Eccentric to Global Icon”, 4-30, Lip 121. [Also part of the Institute of Humanities series]

26 February

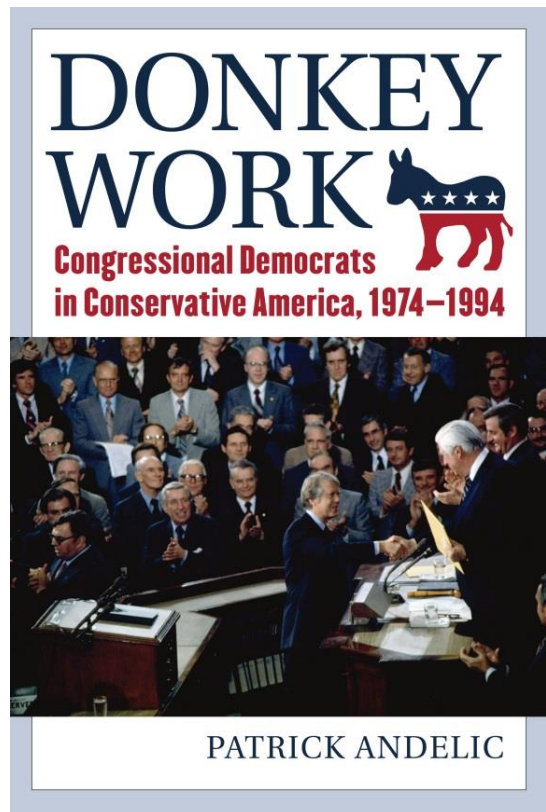
Devin Fergus (Missouri and Northumbria), “Title TBC”, 4-00, San 301.

3 April

Rebecca Wright (Northumbria), “The Politics of Heat: Energy, Health and Networks of Power in New York City, 1918-1968,” 4-30, Lip 121. [Also part of the Institute of Humanities series]

American Studies Staff News

Patrick Andelic published a new article in the *Journal of Policy History*, “‘The Old Economic Rules No Longer Apply’: The National Planning Idea and the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Act, 1974-1978.” His first monograph, *Donkey Work: Congressional Democrats in Conservative America, 1974-1994*, will be published with University Press of Kansas in May 2019.



The cover of *Donkey Work* (2019)

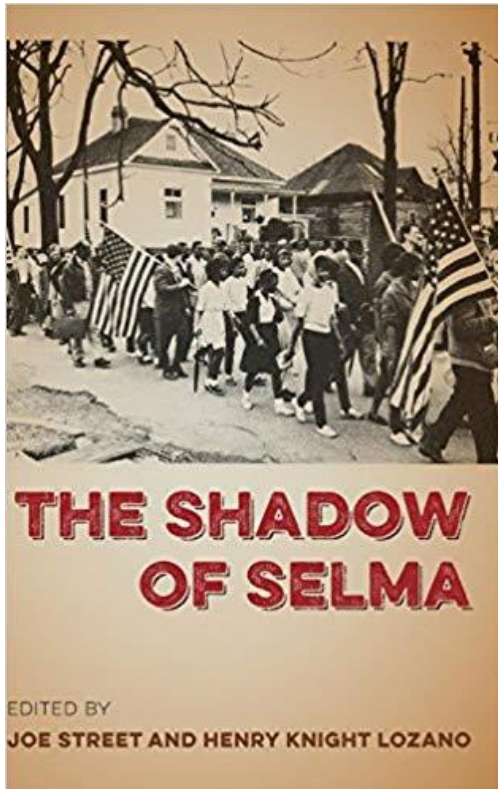
Brycchan Carey published a new co-edited collection, *Literary Histories of the Early Anglophone Caribbean: Islands in the Stream*, with Palgrave Macmillan. This collection, the first specifically focused on the literatures of the early Caribbean before 1850, demonstrating that the region had a rich ‘native’ literary culture well before the postcolonial period.

Brycchan also submitted the manuscript of his next monograph, *Unnatural Empire: Slavery and Atlantic Natural History, 1650-1840*, to Yale University Press. This book will be published later in 2019.

Joe Street was promoted to Associate Professor of American History. He also published a co-authored article on the ‘Silicon Valley Novel’ which appeared in *Literature and History*.

A new collection, co-edited by **Joe Street** and **Henry Knight-Lozano**, *The Shadow of Selma*, was published by the University Press of Florida. This book includes historical analyses of the long-term significance of the great civil

rights demonstrations in Selma, Alabama in 1965, events that are often considered to be the peak of the civil rights movement. Contributors include academics from the UK and the US, including many leaders in their field such as Aniko Bodroghkozy, Tony Badger (of Northumbria), Devin Fergus and Lynn Itagaki (both visiting professors at Northumbria), and Megan Hunt whose PhD was completed at Northumbria.



The cover of *The Shadow of Selma* (2018)

Brian Ward continued to serve as Chair of the British Association for American Studies and was awarded a short-term research fellowship from the Kentucky Historical Society.

In 2018 Brian published *A&R Pioneers: Architects of American Roots Music on Record*, a book co-authored with Patrick Huber and jointly published by Vanderbilt University Press and the Country Music Hall of Fame.

Brian was also heavily involved in helping his colleagues Connal Parr and **Tony Badger** reboot a local branch of the Historical

Association, a relaunch marked by a stirring event featuring renowned historian and television presenter/producer David Olusoga.

Rebecca Wright joined the Humanities Department as Lecturer in U.S. History. Her research examines cultural histories of energy in the United States, with a particular focus on energy use in the home. Since arriving at Northumbria, alongside teaching, she has contributed to a report published by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre on energy practices and sustainability, attended a workshop at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, and co-organised a public event for the Manchester Science Festival as part of the Lates programme at MOSI Manchester.

Grant Bidding Success

Patrick Andelic received a grant from the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation (\$900) to conduct research in their archives, as part of a project titled *Mr. Chairman: Henry Waxman and the Transformation of American Liberalism*.

Brian Ward received a Fellowship from the Kentucky Historical Society (\$1500) to conduct research into links between the music and life-writing of Loretta Lynn and the health environment in Eastern Kentucky in the mid-20th Century.



Brian on the porch of Loretta Lynn's childhood home in Butcher Holler, Van Lear, Kentucky.

Postgraduate News

We are delighted to report that an unusually high number of our PhD students have successfully passed their vivas over the past year. This is a testament to their considerable potential as scholars and to the support they receive from the American Studies community at Northumbria. A full list of the successful candidates, along with the title of their theses and the names of their supervisors, is below.

Sarah Collins, *A Comparative Study of Urban Space in Newcastle Upon Tyne and Charleston, South Carolina, 1740-1840*. Supervisors: David Gleeson and Brycchan Carey.

Natasha Neary, *Fun and Facts About American Business: An Animated Education in the Free Enterprise System*. Supervisors: Brian Ward and Randall Stephens.

Sophie Roberts, *British Women Activists and the Campaigns against the Vietnam War, 1965-1975*. Supervisors: Daniel Laqua, Ruth Lewis, Michael Cullinane and Sylvia Ellis.

Allan Symons, *Male Control and Female Resistance in American Roots Music Recordings of the Interwar Period*. Supervisors Brian Ward and Randall Stephens.

Chris Wallis, *The Thinker, The Doer and the Decider: Zbigniew Brzezinski, Cyrus Vance and the Bureaucratic Wars of the Carter Administration*. Supervisors: Joe Street, Michael Cullinane and Sylvia Ellis.

Jack Weatherston, *How the West Was Warmed: Climate Change in the Contemporary Western*. Supervisors: Julie Scanlon and Julie Taylor.

Oline Eaton, Early Career Visiting Scholar, 2017-18

Oline Eaton was the Early Career Visiting Scholar in American Studies at Northumbria for 2017-18.

Oline completed her PhD at King's College London. Her dissertation – entitled “*Solving the Jackie Mystery*”: *Celebrity, Emotion and Everyday Life in Critical and Creative Practice* – was an ambitious and methodologically innovative exploration of popular biographical writing, in relation to celebrity and culture, through the life of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. She has published her research in the *Journal of American Studies* and the *Journal of American Culture*, and she is currently working on a book on Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, *An Alarming Life*.

Oline is also a founder and co-host of *The Way Up*, a trans-Atlantic feminist podcast which explores culture, equality, and life. You can find out more about Oline's research and interests on her website (<https://olineeaton.com/>) or by following her on Twitter (@oline_eaton).

While visiting, Oline gave a research seminar on ‘Working Over Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis: Writing Women's Work Lives in Cultural Context’ and helped deliver the ‘Kennedy Week’ on Brian Ward's America in the 1960s module.

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.

Spotlight on American Studies Students: Carys Vickers, 2nd Year

Carys is a Second Year student in American Studies. She will be spending part of this year studying at Montclair State University in New Jersey.

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

C: I grew up with an interest in American culture as my mum was born in the States and I have a lot of family members over there. I loved reading the *Little House on the Prairie* books and watching *The Waltons* when I was younger, and I really enjoyed studying the American West for GCSE History. What really sparked my interest a couple of years ago though was the musical *Hamilton*! I absolutely fell in love with it, and it inspired me to write my A-Level History coursework on the American Revolution. This was one of the most enjoyable parts of my A-Level studies, so I decided I wanted to continue learning more!



Carys at a performance of the musical *Hamilton*.

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

C: I particularly enjoyed the first-year module Contemporary America, where we could write three blog posts on any aspect of contemporary American culture we wanted. I took this as an opportunity to analyse some of my favourite books and films; my personal favourite was a blog post comparing *Pirates of the Caribbean* to classic Western movies. I'm

also very interested in learning more about the Civil War, and the 1800s more generally, as I found this period in the From Sea to Shining Sea module fascinating.

Q: You will be spending part of your second year studying in the US. Where will you be studying and what are your expectations for the experience?

C: I'm going to Montclair State University in New Jersey for a semester. I'm very excited to explore the area around New Jersey and New York, and to get the chance to experience American culture for myself! I'm particularly looking forward to my classes, as the modules I've chosen are all really unique and interesting (such as the History of Broadway and Native American Religion). It will be amazing to learn about America first-hand and gain a new perspective from what I get in the UK.



Carys with appropriately themed birthday cake.

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

C: I would say to go for it! It's an amazing course because you get to study so many

different facets of American society, and already in the second semester you have a lot of freedom to explore your own interests. As someone mainly interested in History, I was concerned that I wouldn't enjoy the English Literature aspects of the course, but although they have been challenging I've generally found them enjoyable and rewarding. Northumbria has some amazing Study Abroad links in America, the lecturers are all so friendly and knowledgeable, and I can honestly say that I've never enjoyed studying as much as I do at the moment!

Spotlight on new American Studies Modules

“States of Nature: An Environmental History of the Americas” (Explorations in American Studies III)

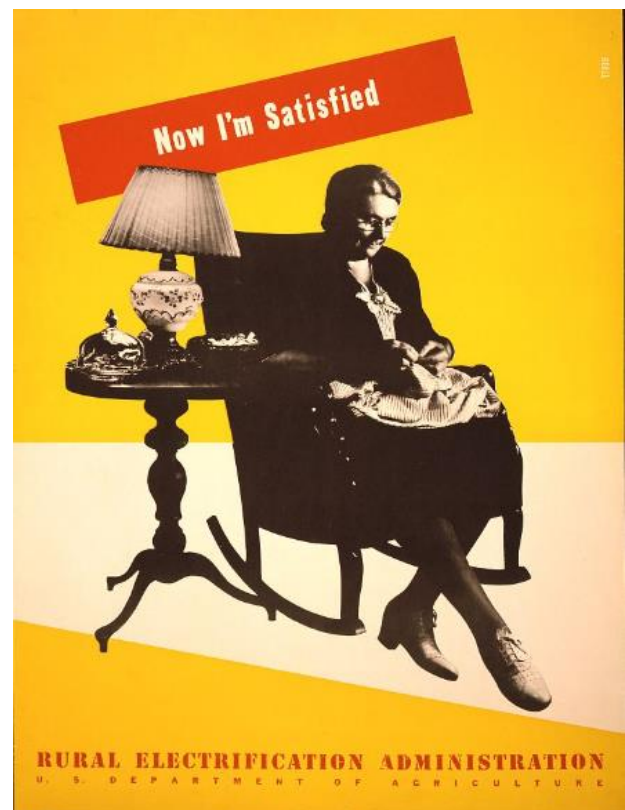
Focusing on the Americas, this module examines the interaction between humans and the environment throughout history. It explores the ways in which various peoples experienced their environment: how they attempted to change it, how they were limited by it, and how they thought about nature. The module examines the relationship between humans and nature in the period before European expansion in the Americas and the ecological impact of European colonialism.

It examines the physical changes that humans have wrought through activities such as farming, as well as the impact of floods, hurricanes and climate change. It traces the spread of cities, the role of their hinterlands and the creation of national parks. The module also examines the manifold impacts of consumer culture (including waste and pollution) as well as the rise of environmentalist movements that were critical of humans' ecological footprint.

“At Home in America: Society, Politics and Environment in the Home, 1860 to the present”

This module will consider the wider social, political and environmental forces that shaped where, how, and in what type of dwellings different Americans lived, since 1860. The module examines the forces that transformed American homes---from debates about poverty and social welfare, to economic policies surrounding homeownership, the mechanisms of racial segregation, changing sex and gender roles, and rising domestic consumption and its environmental impact.

The module will complicate definitions and understandings of the American home---revealing its contested meanings, construction, and lived experience across different races, genders and classes. In asking these questions the module shall probe, how far being “at home in America” has depended upon changing understandings of the home, and its relationship to American identity?



Poster from the Rural Electrification Administration, c. 1930s
(Library of Congress)

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 2017-18, 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. Patrick Andelic (patrick.andelic@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>