



# AMERICAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

## Northumbria University

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**Northumbria  
University**  
NEWCASTLE

## WELCOME TO AMERICAN STUDIES AT NORTHUMBRIA

### A Cool Million and More

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Welcome to the latest, appropriately sanitized and socially distanced, issue of the Northumbria American Studies Newsletter.

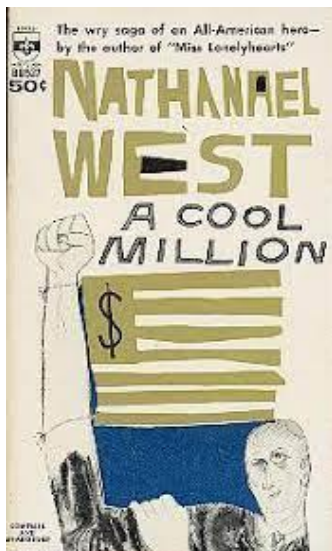
Despite the many challenges posed by multiple strains of COVID over the past year, American Studies staff and students at Northumbria again have much to celebrate.



Professor Brian Ward

Special congratulations are due to David Gleeson, who secured a £685,000 Research Grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) for his project *Civil War*

*Bluejackets: Race, Class and Ethnicity in the United States Navy, 1861-1865*. You can read more about this pathbreaking, interdisciplinary project inside the newsletter. Two more of our Americanists with international research projects, Victoria Bazin and Melanie Waters, also had major funding success with the AHRC. Victoria and Mel won a £499,002 award for their project, *Liberating Histories: Women's Movement Magazines, Media Activism and Periodical Pedagogies*, which focuses on the publications and publishing cultures of the British second wave women's liberation movement. To borrow from Nathanael West, an American literary giant of the interwar years, that amounts to more than "a cool million" in external income secured by American Studies-affiliated staff to support research activities at Northumbria. It is a tremendous indication of the quality of our staff and the esteem in which they are held.



Cover of Nathanael West's 1934 satirical novel, *A Cool Million*.

Of course, winning grants is only one measure of the strength of American Studies at Northumbria. American Studies staff have continued to publish high quality, ground-breaking research – often to international acclaim, as reflect in Elsa Devienne's receipt of the Organization of American Historians' prestigious Willi Paul Adams Award for the best book on US history published in a foreign language for *La Ruée Vers le Sable: Une Histoire*

*Environnementale des Plages de Los Angeles au XXe Siècle [The Sand Rush: An Environmental History of Los Angeles Beaches in the 20th Century]*. Our staff have also been involved in a wide range of public-facing projects and events, and engaged with an impressive range of professional organizations and government agencies with interests in the US.

Above all, however, we have continued to teach students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels with enthusiasm, compassion, and a great deal of success. Those students have shown remarkable resilience, adaptability, and commitment to their studies during very trying times and we are very grateful to them. Meanwhile, feedback shows student appreciation of staff efforts to make their experiences and education at Northumbria the very best it can be, whether in the classroom or virtually, by hosting social events around Thanksgiving and Mardi Gras.

With undergraduates now enrolled on three separate BA degree programmes (American Studies; English Literature and American Studies; History and American Studies) we look forward to building an even stronger sense of community in what will hopefully soon be a more normal, unmasked future. Certainly, there is every reason to believe that study of the American experience in all its many, sometimes alarming, always intriguing, and frequently globally influential incarnations, will continue to fascinate students and researchers alike.

Finally, it is always bittersweet to say farewell to colleagues who have given much to the programme, just as it is always a delight to welcome new staff. At the end August 2021, Tony Badger retired after some seven years at Northumbria. A hugely influential and distinguished historian of US politics, race relations, the New Deal, and the South, Tony fittingly signed off just as Jack Hodgson, his final PhD student, passed his viva. We all wish Tony well in his retirement and thank him for an excellent shift. At the same time, we are

delighted to have Juliet Shields join us from the University of Washington in Seattle. Juliet's expertise in the literatures of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century Atlantic world enhances our strength in transnational and 'early' American Studies. You can learn more about Juliet's research – and about much more beside – elsewhere in this newsletter. Enjoy!

With all good wishes,



Brian Ward  
Professor in American Studies

## NEWS & EVENTS

### Professor David Gleeson Awarded Prestigious AHRC Grant for New Project on US Civil War-era Navy

**David Gleeson** has been awarded a £685,000 Research Grant from Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) for the project *Civil War Bluejackets: Race, Class and Ethnicity in the United States Navy, 1861-1865*. *Civil War Bluejackets* (CWB) will increase understanding of common United States Navy sailors (known as 'Bluejackets' for their short shell-jacket uniforms) in the American Civil War, opening new research avenues to understanding race, class, and ethnicity in mid- and late-nineteenth century America.



Crew of the USS *Hunchback*, c. 1864-65 (U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command)

In collaboration with University of Sheffield Information Scientists, Morgan Harvey and Frank Hopfgartner, the project will use publicly available digitised ship muster rolls, which included information such as name, age, and place of birth, and other records, such as pension files, in innovative ways to provide a new history of the 118,000 or so sailors (30 percent of whom were British or Irish, and c.15 percent of whom were African American).



Crewmembers of the USS *Miami*, c. 1864 (U.S. Naval Historical Center)

Working with project partners, the Cooperative Institute for Climate, Ocean & Ecosystem Studies (CICOES) and the US Naval Academy Museum, CWB will produce a new crowdsourced Civil War Sailor Internet Resource to promote research in the history of sailors, the Civil War, and the social history of the nineteenth century. The resource will also be useful for those interested in family history, particularly African American genealogists, because many of the formerly enslaved first appeared in their own right with full names on ship musters as they claimed equality through naval service.

CWB provides a mass analysis of all digitised sailor data, opening research avenues that simply are not possible through traditional direct archival research. Along with historians, project outcomes will also benefit many scholars working on information retrieval, digital archives, and the wider digital humanities. The project begins in March 2022 and culminates with final conference at the US

Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, in February 2025. A pilot study which gathered some initial research on six gunboats which served in the Navy's 'Brown Water' [Internal rivers] Squadron, available at [www.civilwarbluejackets.com](http://www.civilwarbluejackets.com), indicates some of the valuable information in these records. Follow the project too on Twitter [@BluejacketsWar](https://twitter.com/BluejacketsWar)



An unidentified African American sailor during the Civil War (Library of Congress)

### Professor of American History, Anthony J. Badger, Retires

In August, Anthony J. Badger retired from his post as Professor of American History. During his time at Northumbria, Tony has contributed to undergraduate modules such as *Contemporary America* and *From Sea to Shining Sea: The History of the United States, 1776-2008*, supported a number of PhD students to viva success, and oversaw the rejuvenation of the local Historical Association branch. He continued to publish field-leading work in that time, with his most recent work being a biography of Senator Albert Gore, Sr. His next book, *Why White Liberals Fail: Race and Politics in the American South from FDR to Trump* will be published with Harvard University Press in Spring/Summer 2022. Tony started his career at Newcastle University before moving to the University of Cambridge to take up the post of Paul Mellon

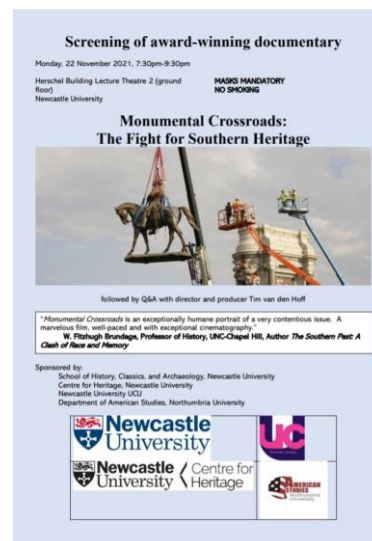
Professor of American History and subsequently becoming Master of Clare College. In 2014, he took up the post of Professor of American History at Northumbria University. Tony leaves as an esteemed scholar and a valued colleague and will be greatly missed in the department.



Prof. Tony Badger interviewed by *MTSU On the Record*, Middle Tennessee State University, on his biography, *Albert Gore, Sr.: A Political Life*, 2019 (Source: YouTube).

### Newcastle and Northumbria American Studies Colleagues Sponsor Screening of Award-Winning Documentary

In November, the American Studies Research Group joined with Newcastle University's School of History, Classics, and Archaeology, the Centre for Heritage, and the Newcastle University UCU branch to sponsor a screening of the award-winning documentary, *Monumental Crossroads: The Fight for Southern Heritage*.



Poster for the screening of *Monumental Crossroads*, November 2021

The screening was followed by a Q&A with the director, Tim van den Hoff. This screening was part of a campus tour that has taken the film to audiences across the USA and Europe. Further details on the film can be found at: <https://monumentalcrossroads.com/>

## Literature, History, & Culture Speakers, 2020-21

### Semester 1

Kate Dossett (University of Leeds), *Black Theatre and the Archives of Surveillance: An Alternative Repertoire?*, December 1, 2021  
POSTPONED

### Semester 2

Joe Street (Northumbria University), *The Internship: Unconscious Critique in Hollywood's Silicon Valley*, March 9, 2022

Aaron Sheehan-Dean (Louisiana State University), *An American Cromwell: Americans' Uses of the English Civil War and Vice Versa*, March 24, 2022

## American Studies Staff News

**Patrick Andelic** published a new article, "Wine and Cheese Liberals": Mo Udall's 1976 Presidential Campaign and the New Suburban

Democrats,' in the *Journal of Arizona History* (62:3, Autumn 2021).

**Patrick Andelic** submitted the manuscript of a forthcoming edited collection, co-edited with Robert Mason (University of Edinburgh) and Mark McLay (Lancaster University), *Midterms and Mandates: Electoral Reassessments of Presidents and Parties* (forthcoming, Edinburgh University Press, 2022). The collection will be published as part of EUP's New Perspectives on the American Presidency series.

**Elsa Devienne** published a new article, 'Decarbonizing the US History Survey: The Case of "Postwar Affluence",' as part of a new roundtable in the *Journal of American Studies*, 'Teaching Environmental American Studies in a Time of Crisis' (55:5, December 2021).

**Elsa Devienne** was featured in the TV show, *Making History*, for their episode on 'The Parasol and Beach Culture,' broadcast on French and German stations in September 2021. That episode is available to stream (with English subtitles): <https://www.arte.tv/en/videos/098870-006-A/the-parasol-and-beach-culture/>

**Elsa Devienne** was awarded the prestigious Willi Paul Adams Award, given biennially by the Organization of American Historians (OAH), for the best American History book published in a language other than English, for her book *La ruée vers le sable: Une histoire*



Elsa Devienne features in an episode of *Making History* on 'The Parasol and Beach Culture' for Arte, September 2021.

*environnementale des plages de Los Angeles au XXe siècle [The Sand Rush: An Environmental History of Los Angeles Beaches in the 20th Century]* (Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2020).

**Clare Elliot** published a new article, 'Writing Across Lines: Frederick Douglass, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Charles Dickens in the Black Atlantic,' in the *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* (20:1, March 2022).

**Joe Street** signed a contract with Edinburgh University Press to publish *Silicon Valley Cinema*, a monograph that probes Hollywood's critique of the tech industry in the 2010s in a variety of popular films from *The Social Network* to *Venom*.

**Brian Ward** was involved in several local events to mark Black History Month in October 2021. He gave a public lecture for North Tyneside Libraries at Whitley Bay Customer First Centre ("Beyond Jimi, Martin and Muhammad: Celebrating Two Hundred Years of African Americans on Tyneside") and another at Newcastle City Library ("Buses and Blues, Guns and Guitars: Tyneside and the African American Freedom Struggle of the 1950s and 1960s").



Brian Ward revisited Tyneside's connections to African American music and politics during the 1950s and 1960s at Newcastle City Library.

**Brian Ward** also visited Waterville Primary School in North Shields where he was interviewed by students for their *Don't Look the*

*Other Way* documentary exploring historic links between the town and slavery. Coordinated by the North Shields Heritology Project, the students were doing terrific work to uncover a rich, long-forgotten, history of racial and ethnic diversity in their town. You can view the short documentary on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/V-7pVh87UGk>.



Students at Waterville Primary School preparing Brian Ward for his interview on Frederick Douglass and antislavery activism in North Shields.

**Brian Ward** spent most of the year serving on the Area Studies sub-panel for the government's 2021 Research Excellence Framework exercise – a massive periodic audit of all the research conducted in all disciplines across all UK universities.



Logo of the Library of Congress's Radio Preservation Task Force

**Brian Ward** joined the United States Library of Congress Radio Preservation Task Force as a member of the caucus dealing with African American and Civil Rights Radio. Brian's 2004 book, *Radio and the Struggle for Civil Rights in the South*, is considered one of the most important studies in this area.

**Rebecca Wright** completed her manuscript for her book *Moral Energy in America: From the Progressive Era to the Atomic Bomb* (forthcoming, Johns Hopkins University Press). She also presented part of her new project, *Warming Up America* at the 2021 *Symposium for the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain* (SAHGB) and participated in an international workshop on *Energy and Society: Shifts in Historical Understanding*, which is developing an edited collection on the subject.

### GRANT BIDDING SUCCESS

**David Gleeson** has been awarded a £685,000 Research Grant from Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) for his project *Civil War Bluejackets: Race, Class and Ethnicity in the United States Navy, 1861-1865* (See p. 3 for further details on this project).

**Victoria Bazin** and **Melanie Waters** have been awarded a £499,002 Standard Grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) for their project, *Liberating Histories: Women's Movement Magazines, Media Activism and Periodical Pedagogies*.

### POSTGRADUATE NEWS

**Gabriel Hogg** successfully defended his PhD thesis, 'Race and Radicalism: An Exploration into Militant Waterfront Unionism & African American Working Class Activism in San Francisco, 1934-1954.' His examiners, **Tony Badger** and Simon Hall (Leeds), commended the authoritative and confident way that he responded to their questions. Gabe was supervised by **Joe Street** and **Henry Knight-Lozano**, and then **Patrick Andelic**.

**Jack Hodgson** successfully defended his PhD thesis, 'Californians and Others: Marginalised Children and the Golden State during the Great Depression.' It was examined by **Julie Taylor** and Jonathan Bell (UCL) and the examiners praised its 'rich ... and detailed

analysis' and for 'add[ing] a fresh perspective to the social history of the Depression.' Jack was supervised by **Tony Badger** and **Joe Street**. Jack was Tony Badger's 37<sup>th</sup> PhD student and his viva was Prof. Badger's last formal duty in his role as professor.

### SPOTLIGHT ON AMERICAN STUDIES STUDENTS: Lewis Kimberley, PhD candidate

Lewis Kimberley is an AHRC-funded PhD student working on a dissertation titled 'Rumour and Racial Violence in the United States, 1873 to 1908.' He previously completed his BA (Hons) and MA in History at Northumbria. He was awarded the Peter J. Parish Dissertation Prize in 2019 by British American Nineteenth Century Historians (BrANCH) for his MA dissertation, 'Blood and Loyalty: An Examination of Collective and Individual Loyalties during the Race Riots of Presidential Reconstruction.'



Lewis Kimberley

**Could you tell us about how you became interested in American Studies?**

When I initially came to Northumbria, I was convinced I was most interested in modern European history. Wrong! By the time I reached the end of my BA, my dissertation and all my modules except one were related to American Studies. The sheer variety of modules really grabbed my attention and before I knew it, I was doing a PhD on American history.

**You're finishing a PhD on an American Studies subject, could you tell us about your research and how you came to choose your topic?**

My research examines the relationship between rumours and racial violence in the United States from the Civil War to the First World War. The project has definitely grown out of my pre-PhD research on Reconstruction violence. At BA and MA, I kept encountering outlandish claims and strange stories people believed to be true, despite their absurdity. The more stories I found, the more I wanted to try and understand them, and that's what led me to historical rumours.

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

My key piece of advice is to come along to an Open Day and talk to the staff. Looking at the modules and topics online is one thing but talking to a genuinely passionate researcher really brings the course to life.

**SPOTLIGHT ON AMERICAN STUDIES STAFF: Professor Juliet Shields, Professor of English**

Prior to joining Northumbria, Juliet Shields was Professor of English at the University of Washington in Seattle, specializing in eighteenth and nineteenth century British literature. She is the author of *Sentimental Literature and Anglo-Scottish Identity, 1745-1820* (Cambridge University Press, 2010) and *Nation and Migration: The Making of British Atlantic*

*Literature, 1765-1835* (Oxford University Press, 2016)

“My research focuses on migration in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Anglophone Atlantic world, a region encompassing many of Britain’s colonies—from Canada and the United States to the Caribbean and South Africa. I’m interested in how people, objects, texts, and stories were transformed as they moved within this world, and how their movements contributed to understandings of racial difference, national identity, and gender roles. I find that examining the Atlantic world as a whole allows me to ask different research questions than I could if I focused on the literature and history of a single nation.



Prof. Juliet Shields

“One of the most interesting but also most humbling challenges of my research is recovering the perspectives of the Black and Indigenous peoples whose ways of life were indelibly altered by European migration and colonial settlement, and who didn’t always have or want access to print culture. I discuss this challenge in my recent book *Mary Prince, Slavery, and Print Culture in the Anglophone Atlantic World*.”



**SPOTLIGHT ON AMERICAN STUDIES  
MODULES: *Affluence and Anxiety: US  
History from 1920 to 1960* (Second Year /  
Level 5).**

*Affluence and Anxiety: US History from 1920 to 1960* is a second year (Level 5) option module which Northumbria has offered to American Studies, History, and Joint Honours students for a number of years. The module explores major developments and events of the forty years covered, including the roaring 1920s, the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, the New Deal, World War II, the Cold War, the postwar ‘economic miracle,’ the suburban boom, and the beginnings of the Civil Rights Movement. **Elsa Devienne** took over responsibility for convening this module after joining Northumbria.



McDonald's store #1, located west of Chicago, IL (Carol M. Highsmith collection, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress)

Elsa writes: “When I joined Northumbria, I inherited this module which had been designed and taught by a former colleague. It was (and still is) a fantastic module, which allowed students to explore in-depth major periods and events of the twentieth-century US, while leaving out the revolutionary decade of the 1960s, which is covered by Brian Ward’s second-year module. Yet I was unhappy with the relative absence of an environmental history angle in the readings and the lack of a critical take on postwar affluence and its devastating environment consequences. I decided it was high time to adapt it for a new

generation growing up in the context of the climate crisis.

“This inspired my new article in the *Journal of American Studies*, ‘Decarbonizing the US History Survey: The Case of “Postwar Affluence.”’ I explain that American studies teachers need to challenge the standard narrative of a postwar affluence ‘only’ marred by class, racial, and gender inequalities. The postwar ‘good life’ was fundamentally unsustainable and it contributed to the ‘Great Acceleration,’ which has led to a dramatic increase in carbon dioxide emissions. By identifying the dependency pathways this period created (the ‘car-centred’ landscapes so typically American, the reliance on fossil fuels, etc) we can better understand how we got where we are today.”

**COMING SOON!**

**A new Second Year / Level 5 module  
*History/Film: Using Popular Film as  
Historical Evidence* will be launched in  
2022-23.**



Former Miss America Margaret Gorman on set for a film about the burning of Rome, 1922 (Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress)

**WHY AMERICAN STUDIES; WHY  
NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY?**

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 interdisciplinary 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 is regularly recognized at the Northumbria Student Union's Student-Led Teaching Awards, when many members of the American Studies staff are 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 BA and related programmes (English Literature and American Studies; History and American Studies) at Northumbria 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 '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](mailto:patrick.andelic@northumbria.ac.uk))

or Prof. Brian Ward

([brian.ward@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:brian.ward@northumbria.ac.uk))

For more information on American Studies at Northumbria University, please visit us at: <http://northumbria.ac.uk/americanstudies>

Follow us on Twitter: @NUAmStudies.



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