“For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause him to withdraw his present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world.” John Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity”

“Here man is free; as he ought to be; nor is this pleasing equality so transitory as many others are.” Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, “Letters From An American Farmer”

“If the effort to describe the United States as homogeneous was unavailing, our predecessors could and did succeed in defining what they called the American Character. They constructed images of national identity with such concepts as individualism, pragmatism, optimism, ambition, idealism, and progress and attributed them variously to the influence of the frontier, affluence, and a classless and nonhierarchical society. ... As Americans, we celebrated an aggressive individualism, nurtured by political democracy and producing economic prosperity as its much desired offspring. But this interpretation of our past was built on silences…” Alice Kessler-Harris

“Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed—
Let it be that great strong land of love
Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme
That any man be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)”
Langston Hughes

Required Materials:
1. Texts available at bookstore:
2. SacCT materials
3. Other materials as noted below, ex. materials from library.
Catalog Description: Examination of the ways in which physical spaces and places within America contribute to the formation of American identities and vice versa. Interdisciplinary and topically organized, analyzes both exterior and interior spaces: city, suburb, regions, body, mind, and the borderlands, to name a few. Also studies the interaction of race, class, gender, and sexuality with space and identity.

Course Description: Fundamental to this course is the way in which physical spaces within America contribute to the formation of American identities and vice versa. Both historical and contemporary interactions between Americans and their environment will be examined. Topically, we will be exploring exterior spaces, including those of the city and suburb; interior spaces, including those of the body and mind; as well as those which cross interior/exterior boundaries, such as the borderlands. The ways in which popular culture and race, class, gender, and sexuality impact upon the construction of particular spaces also will be a part of this examination. A variety of fields will be included in our assaying of the territory: cultural geography, landscape studies, gender studies, history, literature, sociology, and art are only some of the fields with which we will connect.

This will be only the second time this course is being offered online, so your patience is appreciated! (Please ignore any references in videos to it being the first time.) As an online course, familiarity with and ability to use SacCT and other online tools, such as posting videos on youtube.com, is necessary. If you have difficulty using online tools, this is not the course for you. Class lectures will be hosted on youtube.com, and some office hours will be hosted on Google hangout, as stated above.

Also: although this is an online class, it has the same expectations for performance as other classes in the CSUS Humanities and Religious Studies Department. We expect our students to read, to write, and to think – and to do so understanding that this is a 3-credit class counting towards a bachelor’s degree. If you’re looking for an easy class, look elsewhere.

Course Objectives: The goals for your learning in this course include:
An understanding of
- the ways in which multiple disciplines come together to create meaning,
- how particular disciplines construct meaning,
- the ways in which the construction of space within America constructs us as individuals and vice versa;
- demonstration of visual and textual literacy;
and the ability to:
- compare and contrast the experiences of diverse populations within the United States in relationship to space and place,
- apply the techniques of formal analysis to a variety of texts
- communicate effectively in both oral and written formats

Coursework: Your grade will consist of participation, quizzes and/or journals, multiple short essays, two presentations and a research essay. Essays are due on SacCT as indicated; late papers will not be accepted after the due date unless written authorization (e-mails are okay) has been given prior to the due date. If you have problems completing an assignment, please contact me BEFORE it is due.

Presentations: These will be filmed by you and uploaded to youtube.com. You will (1) present your research project ideas as well as (2) give an in-class presentation on an assigned topic. Peer responses to research project ideas will count as part of the participation grade.

Quizzes/Journals: You will be taking quizzes and/or writing short journal assignments and submitting them online. These may not be made up except under extenuating, documented conditions. Quizzes will be multiple choice and/or short essay.

Essays: Formatting: Essays should be typed, double-spaced, and have 1” margins. The font and its size should be in Times 12 point. At the top of the first page, single-spaced, include a descriptive title for your paper in
addition to tagging information (your name/Dr. Buckman/the date/essay #). Other formatting instructions may be given in the assignment.

Research Essay. The research essay will consist of an analysis of the construction of place in a particular piece of film, music, literature, or other artwork. Use specific evidence from the text with which you are working, including direct quotes or visual references. Demonstrate why these references or quotes support your argument. Do not simply summarize or describe your primary text or your research! Students will present their paper topics to the class in workshop sessions. You will need to use a specified number of sources for this essay. More information will follow.

Academic Integrity: Please turn in work that is solely your own. Appropriate credit must be given to the work of other authors that is used; this includes the proper use of paraphrasing and quoting as well as citation within and at the end of the paper. If you are unsure about what this means, please contact me. Plagiarism is not an option; it can mean failure of an assignment, failure of a class, and/or expulsion from the university. In this class, plagiarism will mean a zero for the assignment as well as a report to the appropriate office. If plagiarism occurs again, you will receive a failing grade for the course. If you are uncertain what plagiarism is, please see me. Additionally, you should examine the following URL: http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353

Accomodations: Accommodations will be made for disabilities recognized by the university, provided the student notifies the instructor of all official requirements and provides certification of said disability. Students also must take responsibility for expressing their needs clearly to me as well as for all forms and appointments required.

Participation: This class depends upon the full engagement of students with the material and the class itself. I expect students to participate in online discussions on a regular and informed basis. Disruptive and negative behavior works against you in your grade. Since this is an online course, participation will occur online. Discussion posts must occur by 11:59pm on the Sunday of the scheduled week in order to count towards participation. (Ex. the discussion for the week of 9/1 is due by 9/7.) In order to count for credit, posts must be substantive and not merely repeat what other students have said.

Grading: (see above on plagiarism)
Research essay 30 pts (inc. presentation, ann bib, etc.) Quizzes/Journals 15pts Presentation 10pts (assigned topic, not research essay)
Participation 15pts
Other Essays 30pts
*Anyone who does not complete the research essay will not pass the course*

Schedule of Readings (may change at discretion of instructor): S= SacCT; Q/J =Quiz or journal entry
Since we do not have a designated time to meet online, course requirements will be due at the end of each week of the course, i.e. 11:59pm on Sunday. (Students last semester said weekends were necessary to get their online course work complete.) PowerPoints for class will be posted, at the latest, by 9am on Tuesday of each week. Discussion posts are due each Sunday (see above). There also will be quizzes and/or journal entries due each Sunday. If you have a question about the PPT or the reading, be sure to ask any questions by Thursday at 5pm in order to make sure you get a response. Modules will be set up so that you must complete them in a certain order.

Week 1 (9/1): Introducing Place: Begin to understand how place functions within our lives. How do we apply this idea to American identity?
Intro to course, syllabus, clips. What does it mean to be in place? How does this relate to our identities? Read: Cresswell, ch 1. Reminder: post questions or comments on it by 11:59pm Sunday, 9/7/14. Also: quiz on syllabus and journal due 9/7.

Week 2 (9/8) PPT. Read Jackson, “Pueblo Dwellings and Our Own” (S) and Cresswell, ch 2. Q/J due 9/14

9/15 Read: Cullen, ch 1; John Winthrop, William Bradford, Jonathan Edwards, Benjamin Franklin (S). Q/J due 9/21
Recommended: Massacre at Mystic, parts 1-5, digital films (online through library)
9/22 Read: Cullen, ch 2; J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Hawthorne (S); Essay One and Q/J due 9/28 on SacCT
Weeks 5-6 (9/29, 10/6) Southern Culture and American Identity: Is there a Southern American identity? How does Southern identity relate to American identity? Does class matter in representing the South?
9/29: Read: PPT, Jacobs, selections from Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl; Poe, “The Fall of the House of Usher”; Twain, selections from Life on the Mississippi and Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (S); Q/J by 2/28
10/6 Chopin, “Desiree’s Baby”; Faulkner, “A Rose for Emily”; Cullen, ch 4; Suitts, Steve, “Voting Rights, the Supreme Court, and the Persistence of Southern History.” (S) Q/J by 3/7
Weeks 7-8 (10/13, 10/20) The Western Character and American Identity: How do art and literature reflect the sociopolitical atmosphere of the time in which they are produced? How is place used to express national and regional identities? What are the myths of the West and how did these contribute to an American character?
10/13: PPT; Watch The Wilderness and the West (link to youtube on SacCT); Read: Turner’s Frontier Thesis, chap 1 (S); Quiz by 10/19 @11:59pm.
10/16 – Sherman Alexie, whom we are scheduled to read later in the semester, will be visiting CSUS. Try to attend if you possibly can! http://www.csus.edu/sacstatenews/Articles/2014/05/OneBook05-28-14.html
10/20: PPT; Read: Abbey, Powell, and Kittredge (Western Readings, S) Watch Firefly (episode to be determined based on availability) or The Great American West of John Ford (link on S for hulu.com) Essay Two and Q/J due 10/26@11:59pm
Weeks 9-10 (10/27, 11/3) City Spaces, Small Towns, and the Suburbs: How do cities sell themselves? How are cities constructed in our imagination? How are cities a part of our American identity? Examine how suburbs and small towns function. How is ethnicity reflected in the experience of these places? How do people relate to each other and what are the social, economic, and cultural parameters in and of them? How do these places reflect an American identity?
10/27 PPT: cosmopolitanism and symbolic economy. Read: Zukin, Sharon. “Whose Culture? Whose City?” The Cultures of Cities. Pgs. 1-46 (on reserve); Rushbrook, Denka. “Cities, Queer Space and the Cosmopolitan Tourist” (S); **Bibliography, outline, and thesis statement due by 11/2@11:59pm. Q/J also due 11/2
11/3 PPT. Watch: The City, segments 6-9 and 11-15; The Post-War Years, segments 15-18; America the Ugly: Searching for a Better Way to Live – all. Read: Cullen, ch 5. Quiz by 11/9@11:59pm
Weeks 11-12 (11/10, 11/17) Student Research Proposal Presentations – online. Due for everyone by 4/14, reviewed and commented upon during this time.
Weeks 13-14 (11/24, 12/1) Borderland Spaces/Space as Resistance: The (South)West, Mexican-American, and Native American Identity and Borderlands: How are Native Americans situated in relation to place? Have Native Americans and Euro-Americans thought about place differently? Analyze how Others relate to the margin and the center, using Mexican-American and Native American cultures as examples. Can the margin be a space of liberation as well as constriction or exile? How is place a part of ethnic identity?
11/24 PPT Read: Gloria Anzaldua’s Borderlands, chaps 1, 2, 5 (S) Q/J by 11/30 @11:59pm
12/1 PPT. Read: Alexie, The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian Q/J 12/7@11:59pm
Week 15 (12/8) TBA; Q/J due 12/14. It is likely we will have some discussion of the August actions and protests in Ferguson, Missouri, during this week.
Week 16 (12/15) Research essays due by 12/15@11:59pm on SacCT.