

Courses Catalog Summer Semester 2019

American Studies Leipzig

Below please find our course catalog. We will update these pages throughout the break and the semester. Unless stated otherwise, **classes start in the week of April 1, 2019.**

Students are responsible for keeping track of updates on actual course dates (some are alternating).

Table of Contents

1	Information	2
2	BA Courses	3
2.1	Society, History, Politics I (04-001-1002)	3
2.2	Introduction to Linguistics for American Studies (04-001-1003)	5
2.3	Literature & Culture II (04-001-1007)	7
2.4	The Anglo-American World in a Global Context (04-001-1008)	9
2.5	Society, History, and Politics III (04-001-1010)	12
2.6	Literature & Culture III (04-001-1011)	13
2.7	Ethnicity and Diversity in US Culture II: Multicultural and Multilingual America (04-001-1012)	15
3	MA Courses	16
3.1	Political Cultures in a Transatlantic Context (04-038-2005)	16
3.2	Media and Society (04-038-2006)	18
3.3	Difference and Literature (04-038-2007)	19
3.4	Interamerican Spaces and Latino/a Cultures (04-038-2016)	20
4	Lehramt Courses	21
4.1	04-AME-1401: Literatures and Cultures of the USA	21
5	Creative Writing	23
5.1	BA Professional Skills Module “Creative Writing: Envisioning America”	23

1 Information

Contact Information

The Institute for American Studies is located at the University's Humanities Building (Geisteswissenschaftliches Zentrum, GWZ), Beethovenstraße 15, on the 5th floor, in house 3, which is opposite the elevators/stairs.

Contact information on individual faculty members can be found on the faculty page.

Registration for Classes

Most classes require prior registration. To learn more about registration procedures for students in different ASL programs (Magister, BA, MA; service for Lehramt), please have a look at the **Registration Information Sheet** available in the respective news item. As access to some classes is quite competitive, please take the procedures and deadlines for registration seriously.

American Studies Modules

Modules in the BA and MA programs are designed to achieve specific learning goals, they entail a specific amount and specific types of coursework and examinations, and they may have prerequisites. To learn more about these, we strongly encourage you to have a look at our program's Module Catalog (BA; MA) and at the appendix to our Conditions of Study (BA; MA).

International Students

International Students are very welcome in the courses offered by the Institute for American Studies. To learn more about places available in individual courses, please contact the instructor, and describe your situation briefly (i.e., exchange student, international guest student, participating in an international degree program). We will do our very best to include you in our courses.

Courses

Course catalogs of past semesters can be found in the Downloads and Resources Area.

For course offerings in Linguistics, please consult the British Studies course catalog, available at the website of the Institute for British Studies (anglistik.philol.uni-leipzig.de).

Unless stated otherwise, **classes start in the week of April 1, 2019**. Students are responsible for keeping track of updates on actual course dates (some are alternating).

Addresses:

GWZ (Geisteswissenschaftliches Zentrum), Beethovenstr. 15

NSG (Neues Seminargebäude), Universitätsstr. 5

HSG (Hörsaalgebäude), Universitätsstr. 7

2 BA Courses

2.1 Society, History, Politics I (04-001-1002)

Module Coordinator: n.n.

This module is meant to provide students with an interdisciplinary and integrated introduction to key developments and themes in the history, politics, and society of the United States from the colonial period to the conclusion of the Civil War. Beyond becoming acquainted with important aspects of American life, the module is meant to provide students with repeated exercises and practice in analytical thinking and expression, both in written and oral form.

The module consists of one lecture, one seminar, and one tutorial

Lecture: American Horizons – North American History in a Global Context I: From Colonial Times to the Civil War

Monday, 11 am - 1 pm, HS 5
Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

The lectures will explore how the unfolding of American history shaped American society and thus the country's political culture, institutions, and outcomes. Topics to be covered include transatlantic influences on the emergence of an American republic, the formation of republican institutions, the role of religion in shaping American politics and society, the evolution of an American capitalism, tensions between regional and national institutions and cultures, expansion and empire, and war. The course thus integrates global, transatlantic, and international developments to better understand the nature of the American experience and its impact on international affairs.

The first session of this class will take place in the week of **April 15**.

Seminar

either a) Monday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 403
Heather Prüßing

or b) Wednesday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 425
Heather Prüßing

or c) Thursday, 1 - 3 pm, GWZ 2.516
Eric W. Fraunholz

In this seminar, students will read original documents and interpretative essays relating to the different themes raised during the lecture. The seminar will also emphasize the nature of academic debates by discussing scholars' contrasting views and perspectives regarding these issues. This will permit students to deepen and contextualize their knowledge about the topics covered during the lecture, while also improving their skills in research as well as in analysis and presentation.

The **first session** will take place in the week of **April 15**.

Tutorial (Übung)

either a) Monday, 9 - 11 am, NSG 403
Heather Prüßing

or b) Wednesday, 9 - 11 am, NSG 425
Heather Prüßing

or c) Wednesday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 425
Heather Prüßing

The Praxis Seminar (Tutorial/Übung) will involve students practicing American-English academic writing on the subject of American society, history, and politics. Analytical writing skills will be developed with diverse assignments. Students will also practice regularly the presentation of ideas (a thesis) orally and how to substantiate them with evidence and analysis.

The **first session** will take place in the week of **April 15**.

2.2 Introduction to Linguistics for American Studies (04-001-1003)

Module Coordinator: Dr. Sylvia Reuter (Anglistik)

Die Vorlesung "Einführung in die synchrone Linguistik" führt ein in die Grundlagen der modernen englischen Sprachwissenschaft und gibt einen Überblick über die wesentlichen Teilgebiete der Disziplin. Das Seminar "Systemlinguistik" vertieft das in der Vorlesung "Einführung in die synchrone Linguistik" vermittelte Wissen aus den Bereichen Morphologie, Phonetik/Phonologie, Semantik und Syntax mit spezifischer Relevanz für das moderne amerikanische Englisch. Die Übung "Geschriebener Akademischer Diskurs" macht mit Form, Funktion, Entwicklung, Struktur und Stil englischer Textelemente als Basis des akademischen Essays vertraut.

The module consists of one lecture, one seminar, and one tutorial

1003-1 Vorlesung: Introduction to Synchronic Linguistics

Tuesday, 1 - 3 pm, HSG HS 3
Doris Schönefeld (Institut für Anglistik)

Exam: class test (120 min) covering the lecture and the seminar

The lecture aims at familiarizing students of English with the essentials of (English) linguistics. We will set out to define the field, the study of language, and will work our way through a programme clarifying central terms and issues of the major branches of linguistics. These comprise phonetics/phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, as well as sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics, sitting at the interface of language to other phenomena. Time permitting, we will also have a look at the historical development of linguistics. The lecture assumes a thorough knowledge of English, but does not presuppose any previous study of grammar or other aspects of linguistics.

1003-2 Seminar Systemlinguistik: Introduction to Synchronic Linguistics

Von den folgenden Seminarangeboten (a-b) ist ein Kurs zu belegen.

either a) Tuesday, 9 - 11am, NSG 224
Dr. Sylvia Reuter (Institut für Anglistik)

or b) Friday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 110
Dr. Sylvia Reuter (Institut für Anglistik)

Reading list: Students are asked to purchase the course material at Printy (Ritterstr. 5).

Exam: cf. lecture "Introduction to Synchronic Linguistics"

This seminar is conceived together with the introductory lecture as the basis for further studies in linguistics. Whereas in the lecture you familiarize yourself with basic concepts, the seminar focuses on in-depth discussion, exercises and task solving. We will start our linguistic journey with phonetics & phonology, and after that move into other traditional areas of linguistics such as morphology, syntax, and semantics. Needless to add, the textbook describes English as used in the USA.

1003-3 Übung Sprachpraxis für Amerikanisten: Written Academic Discourse

Von den folgenden Übungsangeboten (a-c) ist ein Kurs zu belegen.

either a) Thursday, 9 - 11 am, NSG 303
McAfferty (Institut für Anglistik)

or b) Thursday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 315
Peter Tasic (Institut für Anglistik)

or c) Thursday, 3 - 5 pm, NSG 315
Peter Tasic (Institut für Anglistik)

Exam: written examination (90 min)

Reading list: Williams, Joseph M. Style: *The Basics of Clarity and Grace*. Ed. Joseph Bizup. 5th ed. London: Pearson, 2014. Print. [ISBN-13: 978-0-321-95330-8 / ISBN-10: 0-321953304] Please have your copy with you in our first class.

The goal of this practical language exercise is the class essay in academic English. Students will practise their analytic and interpretative text production skills in keeping with both the formal genre conventions and current research on academic writing at tertiary levels. Our exercises are geared to helping students mitigate those weaknesses detrimental to structural clarity and target those strengths conducive to enriching the formal elements in their written academic discourse. Our exercises will focus on improving i) the mechanics of academic writing, ii) approaches to text production, iii) patterns of coherence and cohesion, and iv) systematic revision techniques.

2.3 Literature & Culture II (04-001-1007)

Module Coordinator: Prof. Katja Kanzler

The module builds on and advances the knowledge and skills students acquired in the introductory module “Literature & Culture 1.” It acquaints students with major issues, concepts, and theories involved in the study of literature and (popular) culture. The module explores the canon debate and its implications for the study of U.S.-American literature and culture. In addition, it introduces students to exemplary modes and genres of literature and culture, and to their reflection in scholarship.

The module consists of one lecture and two seminars

Lecture: US-American Popular Culture: History, Media, Methods

Tuesday, 9 - 11 am, NSG 326
Prof. Katja Kanzler

This lecture will provide an introduction to US-American popular culture and popular culture studies. It will cover three main areas: First, it will discuss what popular culture actually is – how it has been conceptualized, also in relation to other fields of cultural and literary expression, and what kinds of questions American Studies scholarship has raised about it. Two, the lecture will survey significant milestones in the historical development of US popular culture, from 19th-century minstrel shows to 21st-century (post-)television. Third, it will take a closer look at some of the media that function as carriers of popular culture, how their medial particularities have been conceptualized and what specific methods of analysis they require.

Seminar: Narrating Us/US: ‘We’ Narratives in 20th and 21st-century American Literature

Tuesday, 1-3 pm, NSG 329
Michaela Beck

The pronoun ‘we’ seems to hold a remarkable, yet contradictory position in the (US-) American cultural imaginary as well as in public discourse(s). On the one hand, the first-person plural pronoun has been used to invoke versions of a (dominant) national public throughout US history – from the iconic ‘We, the people’ in the Preamble to the United States Constitution to the chant ‘Yes We Can’ popularized by Obama’s presidential campaign in 2008. On the other hand, the same pronoun has equally been employed to summon and address publics excluded from, or opposed to, this national ‘we’: publics marked as non-normative in terms of race, ethnicity, social class, sexuality, or age, for instance. As such, public invocations of ‘we’-ness have also been closely tied to dynamics of in-/ and exclusion as well as discourses of hegemony and normativity in the US.

In this seminar, we will explore these and related implications of the first-person plural pronoun with regard to American fiction in particular: We will look at a selection of short fiction and novels from the 20th and 21st century which feature a narrating ‘we’ – that is, narratives which are told – and often focalized by – not an individual but a group of speakers. The goal of this seminar will be to explore and contextualize the forms of collectivity which these literary ‘we’ narratives represent and propose. We will analyze how these specific forms of ‘we’-ness reflect on (US-)American concepts of national unity and how they negotiate discourses of in- and exclusion, dominance, and visibility in terms of race,

ethnicity, nationality, class, or gender in the US. To this end, close analyzes of the primary texts will be combined with approaches from literary studies as well as with theories and concepts from (American) cultural studies, including the paradigm of *E Pluribus Unum*, the concept of 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1983), and the notion of 'middle-classlessness' (Hoberek 2009).

Primary texts will include William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" (1930), Jeffrey Eugenides *The Virgin Suicides* (1993), and Julie Otsuka's *The Buddha in the Attic* (2011).

Seminar: Stranger Than Fiction: Reality-Based TV Formats in a Post-Truth Age

Wednesday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 301

Dr. Sophie Spieler

This seminar is part of the module "Literature and Culture II" (LC-II), which offers an in-depth engagement with specific segments of US popular culture, and showcases the theoretical and methodological potentials of literary and cultural studies.

In this seminar, we focus on two television formats that have traditionally claimed to 'represent reality'—documentary series and reality TV. Using specific examples, we will examine the form, function, and politics of these formats: How do they establish their claims to 'reality'? Which pleasures do viewers derive from these claims? What cultural work do such formats perform in the age of 'fake news', in which 'reality', 'truth', and 'authenticity' have become ever more contentious categories? To what extent have these formats changed in a new media economy characterized by streaming services and binge-watching?

In addition to discussing these and other questions, the seminar will take part in the interdisciplinary conference "Weiter Sehen: Realität in Serie," in which scholars from various disciplines present their research on the ramifications of 'representing reality' in a serial fashion. Students will have the chance to experience American Studies scholarship first hand and use their impressions in their own research projects, which they present at the end of the semester.

2.4 The Anglo-American World in a Global Context (04-001-1008)

Module Coordinator: Dr. Katja Schmieder

This module is meant to provide students with a deeper understanding of how the United States and Great Britain/Ireland relate to each other and other countries that together make up what is often referred to as the “Anglo-Saxon tradition”. Especially in the wake of contemporary globalization but certainly during earlier periods of mobility, exchange, and discovery the concept of an Anglo-American world held great sway in many corners of the globe. Indeed, for much of continental Europe today, “the Anglo-American world” provides a basic compass for understanding fundamental developments in politics, economics, and culture. This module is meant to provide students with a more sophisticated understanding of how the United States and Great Britain have perceived and influenced each other historically and currently, and also to provide a deeper understanding of what the “Anglo-American world” means during our current period of global change.

The module consists of one seminar in English and one in American Studies

1107-1 Seminar: Literatur oder Kulturstudien Großbritanniens:

Von den folgenden Seminarangeboten (1107-1a-b) ist ein Kurs zu belegen.

1107-1a Seminar: The Anglo-American Pacific

Wednesday, 9 - 11 am, NSG 324
Stefan Lampadius (Institut für Anglistik)

Reading list:

A reader with selected texts by writers such as J. Cook, M. Twain, R.L. Stevenson, J. London, W.S. Maugham, A. Wendt, J. D. Holt, E. Hau’ofa, H.-K. Trask and S. Figiel will be available at the copyshop Campus Copy (Universitätsstr.18). The reader also includes secondary literature on theoretical approaches and historical aspects that enable a better understanding of the primary texts. Herman Melville’s *Typee* (1846) should be obtained by students.

Exam:

oral presentation and essay in this class or in 1107-2

This course provides an introduction to the Pacific as a cultural space that has been shaped by imagination, colonisation and representation through a discussion of influential Anglo-American and indigenous writings. Beginning with early reports of the Pacific (e.g., by James Cook), we will discuss texts by British and American authors of the 19th century (e.g. Herman Melville, Mark Twain, R.L. Stevenson), who represented the Pacific as a new world in the process of ‘Westernisation’ by traders, missionaries and politicians. Our main focus is on 20th-century Anglophone literature from Polynesian islands, such as Samoa and Hawaii, which have been dominated by British and American cultures and have increasingly fought the marginalisation of traditional, indigenous cultures by ‘writing back’. The discussion of fiction and non-fiction by Pacific authors such as Albert Wendt, John Dominis Holt, Epeli Hau’ofa, Haunani-Kay Trask, and Sia Figiel will be supported by introductions to theoretical approaches and historical aspects. Along with the long-lasting effects of Anglo-American imperialism, we will also explore the ambivalent relationship of Britain and the United States in the Pacific, oscillating between cooperation and competition. We will pay particular attention to the discursive potential of literature for understanding national, multiethnic and pan-Pacific identities that consider the vast ocean a connection rather than a boundary. Overall, we will explore key issues and motifs in writings about and from the Pacific, from the pervasive images of the island paradise, the ‘noble savage’ and the mythical trickster Maui, to modern orality, hybridity and diaspora.

1107-1b Seminar: Cyberpunk – When Dystopia meets Counterculture

Thursday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 223
Isabell Große (Institut für Anglistik)

Reading list:

Primary Texts: William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984), excerpts from Bruce Sterling's *Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology* (1986), Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982), the Wachowskis' *The Matrix* (1999) and Richard Morgan's *Altered Carbon* (2002)

Exam:

oral presentation and essay in this class or in 1107-2

2019: Google developed an AI that is able to make phone calls and talk to people without them realising they are talking to a machine. Our smartphones do not only help us navigate unknown places, but they also act as our artificial memory and mobile wallets, check on our health and assist us in finding 'the (temporarily) perfect match'. Lastly, after a busy day at work, Alexa and all the other smart home devices await us at home to make our consumer lives as convenient as possible. Thirty years ago, these observations were most likely to be found in cyberpunk novels or films, but since then they have become an integral part of our everyday lives. Nevertheless, contemporary cyberpunk texts such as *Bladerunner 2049* or Netflix's adaptation of *Altered Carbon* are still very similar to their 1980s' predecessors.

This seminar, therefore, intends to trace the genre/style's development and explore to what extent its most distinctive themes are still relevant today. Themes to be discussed include technology, ideology, power, gender, subjectivity and the (post-)postmodern subject, and geographical spaces. A reader with secondary sources will be provided on Moodle.

1107-2 Seminar: Literatur oder Kulturgeschichte der USA:

Von den folgenden Seminarangeboten (1107-2a-b) ist ein Kurs zu belegen.

1107-2a Seminar: "Lest we forget" – Eugenics and Anglo-American Culture

Tuesday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 412
Dr. Katja Schmieder

The term eugenics – coined in 1883 by British polymath Francis Galton – describes a set of ideas about the improvement of the human genes. Usually dismissed as a pseudo-science of yesteryears, renowned philosophers, scientists, religious leaders, and politicians have been promoting eugenics in theory and practice. Today we often neglect the close transatlantic bonds eugenics created, while (popular) cultural artifacts have further anticipated and spread eugenic ideology in its manifold guises – from its nationalist extremes to its liberal manifestations as philanthropy or transhumanism.

In our seminar, we will look at the textual and visual means employed by literary and filmic examples to portray the eugenicist belief system. How do concepts and themes – such as collectivism, gender, morality, breeding/procreation, or power/control – figure into a discussion of eugenics and transhumanism? How do narrative and rhetorical strategies relate the different aspects of eugenic ideology to the audience, making it either palatable or rendering it disgusting, or both? With approaches informed by literary/cultural studies proper as well as rhetorical studies and reader

response criticism, we will examine fiction and nonfiction texts, including, for example, writings of Margaret Sanger and Bertrand Russell. Along with such novels as *Frankenstein* (Mary Shelley), *Herland* (Charlotte Perkins Gilman), *Brave New World* (Aldous Huxley), *The Handmaid's Tale* (Margaret Atwood), and *Inferno* (Dan Brown), we might also analyze the movies *Soylent Green* and *What Happened to Monday*.

The **first session** of this class will take place on **April 9**.

1107-2b Seminar: As Detroit Goes, So Goes the Nation: The Shifting Fortunes of the Motor City and the Recent Transformations of Transatlantic Capitalism

Tuesday, 11 am - 1 pm, GWZ 3.515

Richard Bachmann

The changing nicknames of Detroit illustrate its shifting fortunes in recent history. In the middle of the 20th century, Detroit was known as the “Motor City” and “The City on the Move.” It was the center of the US automobile industry, a bastion of labor unionism, and the home of working class prosperity and social mobility. By the 1960s, times they were a-changin’, as Bob Dylan famously put it. Detroit was transforming rapidly. Soon it became synonymous with decline, decay, and failure. When the city finally filed for bankruptcy in 2013, commentators were convinced that Detroit was “America’s First Failed City.” Yet lately, different nicknames have surfaced. In accordance with a recent economic and demographic upsurge, Detroit was crowned “The All-American Comeback City” and “The Most Exciting City in America.”

Detroit’s trajectory throughout the second half of the 20th century into the first decades of the 21st has been modeled by profound changes in the economic and political order in the transatlantic realm. In this regard, Detroit is a “signature site” as historian Scott Kurashige put it. It is a place where processes and developments, which eventually shaped other places as well, had manifested much earlier and more severely. By studying the shifting fortunes of Detroit, and placing them in a transnational context, we can learn a lot about the recent transformations of transatlantic capitalism and how those transformations have affected people in Detroit, the US, and the transatlantic realm.

In the first part of this course, we will develop an understanding of the twists and turns in recent Detroit history and the history of transatlantic capitalism. We will study and discuss primary and secondary texts by historians, writers, political-economists, filmmakers, sociologists, and activists who have investigated these entangled histories through their very own respective lenses.

In the second part of this course, you will have the opportunity to explore various aspects connected to recent Detroit history and the history of transatlantic capitalism through an individual or a collaborative research project. These projects might revolve around notions of politics, history or economics, but they could also bring in literature, popular culture or the arts as crucial media for making sense of Detroit’s shifting fortunes, the transformations of transatlantic capitalism, and the economic, political, and social consequences of those transformations.

The **first session** of this class will take place on **April 9**.

2.5 Society, History, and Politics III (04-001-1010)

Module Coordinator: n.n.

This module is meant to provide students with the opportunity to engage in-depth selected societal, historical, and political themes that have shaped and shape the United States. Issues will be explored in terms of basic questions relating to American identity, the nature of power in American society, the negotiation of forms of consensus, and how American dynamics influence the country's exercise of power and transcultural undertakings in the international arena.

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar: Empire? – Understanding 19th & 20th-Century US History in a Global Context

Tuesday, 9 - 11 am, NSG 405

Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

During the 19th century, the United States developed a new self-conception as an expanding nation that was based on the ideas of Manifest Destiny and exceptionalism. With its rise to superpower after World War II, for many Americans this understanding resulted in claiming a leading role in international relations.

In this class, we will discuss core primary sources that help us understand key concepts for interpreting the history of the United States within a transnational frame. Revolving around the central question of Empire (or not), the class will deal with western expansion, Native American history, the frontier, the Philippine-American War, Puerto Rican history, the Second World War in the Pacific, and related issues.

The **first session** of this class will take place in the week of **April 15**.

Seminar:

Thursday, 11 am - 1 pm, GWZ 2 5.16

Tobias Schlobach

The **first session** of this class will take place in the week of **April 15**.

2.6 Literature & Culture III (04-001-1011)

Module Coordinator: Dr. Stefan Schubert

The module aims to deepen students' knowledge of US literature and culture, and of the methods and theories involved in their study. Two seminars allow students to explore exemplary themes and discourses in literary and cultural studies. A tutorial assists students in advancing their academic writing skills so as to master the module's advanced writing assignments.

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar: Difficult Narrators in Literature and Popular Culture

Monday, 11 am - 1 pm, GWZ 3.515
Dr. Stefan Schubert

American literature and (popular) culture abound with unusual, complex, and otherwise noteworthy narrators, from unreliable narrators in novels like Nabokov's *Lolita* to postmodern experimental narration in literature or film. In this seminar, we want to probe into what fascinates audiences about these kinds of narrations, and why a text would use a consciously 'uncooperative' or 'flawed' narrator. To do so, we will focus on what can be deemed 'difficult narrators,' which complicate and frustrate the experience of understanding the narrative, confusing the audience by breaking principles of transparency. What does such a setup allow these narrators to accomplish, and what pleasures does this manage to activate for audiences? What common patterns and strategies can we detect in these texts across different media, and what, overall, is their cultural work? Using theoretical insights from, among others, narratology, psychoanalysis, trauma theory, and gender studies (esp. on subjectivity), we will delineate common themes, concerns, and interests in the formally diverse texts considered in this seminar.

In order to overcome any resistance or hesitation about having to read and watch ostensibly 'difficult' texts, a central part of our class will be to develop strategies to seek pleasure in them, to understand why certain narrative devices are being used, and to provide a forum to ask questions about reading comprehension (and share frustrations), overall collaborating in our understanding of these texts. We will be discussing novels by authors like William Faulkner, Toni Morrison, and Mark Z. Danielewski as well as a selection of popular media, possibly including the films *Memento* and *Black Swan*, the television series *Sharp Objects*, and the video game *The Stanley Parable*. Most of these will be provided as excerpts or screened, respectively. However, please purchase a copy of Morrison's *Beloved* (any edition; used or new).

Seminar: Wide Horizon: The Role of the Western in American Literature

Tuesday, 3 - 5 pm, NSG 405
Josh Weil (Picador Guest Professor)

Too often the American western is dismissed as a lesser form, derived from overly commercial concerns, dependent on clichéd tropes. But these tropes are recognizable because they are central to American mythology—a mythology that, in turn, has been foundational to aspects of an American storytelling ethos. In part because of that, the genre has spawned seminal works of American literature. In this class, we'll examine some of those works, from early non-fiction accounts of westward exploration, to pioneering literary novels, to later masterworks enshrined in the literary cannon, to contemporary experiments with expanding the tradition. What is that tradition? What makes a Western a Western? In what ways have the cornerstones of the genre affected the wider world of American—and international—literature? And how does it still retain relevance today? These are among the questions we'll wrestle with as we explore the American literary western.

The reading list for this class includes *Warlock* by Oakley Hall, *Close Range* by Annie Proulx, *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* by Michael Ondaatje, *Blood Meridian* by Cormac McCarthy, and *The Portable Western Reader* (edited by William Kittredge). Purchase of these books is recommended; they can also be purchased (or, in some cases, preordered) at the Connewitzer Verlagsbuchhandlung.

The **first class** of this seminar will take place on **April 9**.

2.7 Ethnicity and Diversity in US Culture II: Multicultural and Multilingual America (04-001-1012)

The objective of this module is to deepen students' knowledge of the ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity of the United States and of the theories and tools to analyze this diversity. Two seminars - one focusing on the study of ethnic minorities and one on the US as a multilingual nation - will enable students to develop their skills in discussing specific historical and cultural developments related to the multiethnic United States on an academic level.

Module Coordinator: Prof. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

The module consists of two seminars

1012-1 Seminar: Mixed Race America in U.S. Literature

Wednesday, 9 am - 11 am, GWZ 2 5.16
Prof. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

Exam: term paper covering both seminars

Scholars predict that by the year 2050, one in five Americans will identify with two or more racial ancestries. Multiracial individuals are sometimes celebrated in the media as symbols of America's 'raceless' future (Nobles, *Shades of Citizenship*), often in stark contrast to historical representations of mixed race persons who were referred to derogatively as half-breeds, mongrels, or tragic mulattoes. In this course we will explore narratives of race-mixing, passing, and multiraciality in American literature from the late 18th century to the present, discussing the various concepts and representations of racial hybridity, creolité and mestizaje as well as the significance of today's constructions of multiraciality. We will consider both fictional texts and scholarly essay from the field of critical mixed-race studies.

1012-2 Seminar: African American Vernacular English

Wednesday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 321
Lucia Siebers (Institut für Anglistik)

Exam: term paper covering both seminars

African American Vernacular English is the most widely studied and debated variety of American English, in particular with regard to its origin and current status in the education system. To begin with, we will discuss the opposing Anglicist and creolist views on the origins and development of this variety in their early as well as more recent versions. The relationship between African American and European American vernacular varieties will be of particular interest here, as will the extent to which they have converged or diverged regarding their structural characteristics from the beginning up until the present day. In the course of the seminar, we will closely examine the structure of African American Vernacular English, i.e., its phonology, lexicon, syntax and interactional rules, as well as its use in various domains such as education, media and literature. Particular attention will be paid to regional and social variation and current developments, e.g., the emergence of a supra-regional norm and the use of African American English as a marker of cultural identity.

3 MA Courses

3.1 Political Cultures in a Transatlantic Context (04-038-2005)

Module Coordinator: n.n.

This module is meant to provide students with a deeper understanding of the concept of political culture in a transatlantic context. Political culture is generally defined as the traditions, practices, institutions, material considerations and norms that shape how a society pursues politics and constructs priorities in its political process, for example, in the case of governing. Political culture involves the fields of cultural history, literature, cultural studies, political science, sociology, anthropology, and economics. It is a key concept for understanding the nature of politics and society in the United States, in Europe, and in any comparison between two regions involving comparative, international, transnational, transcultural, and global approaches to the study of history, politics, and society.

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar: Red Scare – Histories of McCarthyism

Tuesday, 3 - 5 pm, GWZ 2.516
Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Over the last years, both general interest in and academic study of American anti-Communism increased significantly again. Within this field, the so-called McCarthyism of the post-World War II years gained renewed attention through expanding the political history of the Red Scare with aspects of gender and cultural history. Moreover, as several comments since the election of Donald Trump indicate, studying McCarthyism can stimulate important debates about American political culture in general.

This class will develop a multidimensional and transnational understanding of the Red Scare from the late 1940s to the late 1950s, integrating political, social and cultural interpretations of that era. In addition, the class attempts at relating the different histories of McCarthyism to ongoing controversies in the United States.

The **first session** of this class will take place in the week of **April 15**.

Seminar: East Plays West – Sport & US Society During the Cold War

Wednesday, 11am - 1pm, GWZ 3.515

Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union greatly influenced American sports. This is most obviously true for international relations, where sport diplomacy became a major field for positioning American values in opposition to those of the Eastern bloc. But within US-society as well, sports were strongly related to the 'Cold War at home.' Sports served as important arenas where Americans discussed issues of gender and racial equality, of able-bodiedness in relation to national strength, of democratic fair play as opposed drug abuse, etc.

This class will discuss US sport history from the late 1940s to 1990 as political, social and cultural history of the Cold War in transnational perspective. Topics will be, among others, sport diplomacy revolving around the Olympic Games, the international 'goodwill tours' of athletes of color to Africa and Asia, debates about doping and 'sex verification,' and issues of integrating US-sports for women and minority athletes.

The **first session** of this class will take place in the week of **April 15**.

3.2 Media and Society (04-038-2006)

Module Coordinator: Prof. Katja Kanzler

Media and its different forms lays at the heart of constructing and disseminating images, ideas, information, and identities that have shaped the very notion of “America” and how it has been received, integrated, adapted in every corner of the world, and especially in Europe. Conversely, European traditions in such mediums - whether journalism in all its forms (print, radio, tv, internet) or film, music, literature, - have had and have strong influences on many aspects of American society. This module is meant to deepen student knowledge about how media and society have evolved in the United States, Europe, and in a transatlantic context.

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar: Narrative across Media: Television

Monday, 11 am - 1 pm, GWZ 3.515 GWZ 2.516

Prof. Katja Kanzler

Television has come to figure as one of the major sites of storytelling in today's culture. It is particularly the storytelling in the various forms of television series and serials that has received much scholarly attention in the past few years – attention not only to the contents of the stories serial tv tells but also to their narrative form. In fact, the prevailing paradigms of contemporary television – from “quality tv” to “narrative complexity” – all suggest that it is formal features that make serial television such a significant force in US culture at the turn of the millennium.

This seminar will focus on scholarship that approaches television series in term of their narrativity. We will explore concepts of television's media-specific narrative strategies and, on this basis, ask how a narrative approach tackles the cultural work of television and how it conceives of some of the central aspects and phenomena tied to (especially contemporary) tv culture, such as seriality, popularity, genre, or media convergence.

Seminar: Lactivism, Slacktivism, Hashtactivism? Social Media and the Democratic Process

Monday, 3 - 5 pm, GWZ 3.515

Dr. Sophie Spieler

This seminar is part of the module “Media and Society in a Transatlantic Context,” which is meant to illustrate the complex interconnections of media, politics, and society. In this seminar, we will focus on the role of social media in the democratic process, and specifically in one important part of the democratic process, namely that of activism, resistance, and protest.

Focusing on a range of examples—such as Black Lives Matter or the #metoo movement—we address the following questions: What role does ‘protest culture’ play in the American imagination? How has activism changed through the emergence and solidification of new media economies? Which problems and potentials do new forms of critique—through hashtags, crowdsourcing, online petitions, etc.—hold? How does American political discourse think and talk about these relatively new phenomena? How does US popular culture engage with these and related questions?

Apart from discussing these and other questions, the seminar also includes a guest lecture by Dr. Curd Knüpfer, head of research of the research group “Digitalization and the Transnational Public Sphere” at the Weizenbaum-Institut für die vernetzte Gesellschaft.

3.3 Difference and Literature (04-038-2007)

Module Coordinator: Prof. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

The module addresses the negotiation of socio-cultural difference in U.S.-American literature. It aims to deepen students' understanding of 'difference' in its key manifestations 'race,' class, and gender with a focus on their articulation and contestation in literary texts. The seminars explore specific forms of difference in their historical, social, cultural, and aesthetic contexts. They will embed selected readings in 'difference and literature' within discussions of U.S. literary history and reflections on literary theory.

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar: Views from the Margin: Picaresque Traditions in US-American Literature and Film

Tuesday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 405
Prof. Katja Kanzler

For more than 200 years of American literary history, the picaresque has been a preferred genre for social commentary and playful critique. Its focus on the adventurous travels of a 'roguish' social outsider – of his [rarely her] quest for a home in a world out of joint – has proven immensely productive for critical, often satirical meditations on the social order and, in particular, on the structures of inequality that permeate it.

In this seminar, we will explore this tradition of the picaresque in American fiction from the Revolutionary Period to the present. Our readings will range, among others, from Royall Tyler's late 18th-century novel *The Algerine Captive* over Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, over selections from Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* to the films *Little Big Man* (dir. Arthur Penn) and *Zelig* (dir. Woody Allen). Proceeding from a conceptualization of the picaresque as a literary mode, we will discuss how picaresque narratives in various historical constellations negotiate theme like US national identity, race relations and racism, and masculinity.

Seminar: Defining and Redefining African American Literature

Wednesday, 3 - 5 pm, GWZ 2.516
Prof. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

This course will explore "African American" as an unstable signifier that has been defined, redefined and questioned in the field of tension between normative literary expectations and individual expression throughout the history of African American writing. We will consider a broad range of oral and written forms from the 18th century to the present, including folk tales, spirituals, sermons, slave narratives, essays, poems, and fiction.

Most reading materials for this course will be available from Moodle.

3.4 Interamerican Spaces and Latino/a Cultures (04-038-2016)

Module Coordinator: Prof. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

This module helps students to develop an understanding of the historical and cultural interrelationships between the United States and other regions in the hemisphere as well as of the histories and cultures of U.S. Latinos/as in the context of current debates about migration, national identity and multiculturalism.

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar: Race, Ethnicity and Space

Tuesday, 11 am - 1 pm, GWZ 2.516
Prof. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

What does it mean to study race and ethnicity from a spatial perspective, and what do we gain? How is racial inequality organized spatially? How do spaces come to be known and represented in racialized terms? This course focuses on the intersections of ethnicity/race, space, and place in theoretical and fictional writings. We will analyze the spatial dimensions of race and ethnicity and the ways in which issues such as segregation, (dis)placement, or spatial contestations are produced through histories and geographies of privilege and oppression, inclusion and exclusion. Drawing on Urban Studies, Critical Race Theory, Border and Ethnic Studies and exploring scholarly as well as fictional sources, we will discuss the emergence and representations of spaces such as ethnic enclaves, urban „ghettoes“, gated communities, refugee camps, and reservations, and the different ways in which individuals and groups have competed for, (re)claimed and (re)interpreted space. All course materials will be available from Moodle.

Seminar: The US Southern Rimlands in the Cultural Imagination

Thursday, 1 - 3 pm, GWZ 3.515
Prof. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

The southern rimlands of the United States have taken a special place in the imagination of Americans, due to their geographical location at the US Gulf coast and as places that have linked the United States to the Caribbean. They also have often been represented as “different” from the rest of the US due to their tropical climate and racially and ethnically diverse populations. In this course we will apply the lens of hemispheric studies to investigate how the rimland position as well as the histories and cultures of these regions have translated into texts and visual material produced about them by travelers and locals, and how they have served as sites of projection for different ideas of nationhood, cultural identity, and belonging. A particular focus will be on Louisiana and Florida as the most prominent states representing the southern rimlands.

Most reading materials for this course will be available from Moodle. A few sessions in this course will be double sessions due to scheduling issues.

4 Lehramt Courses

4.1 04-AME-1401: Literatures and Cultures of the USA

Module Coordinator: Prof. Katja Kanzler

für Lehramt Englisch Gym, MS, Sonderpäd. (Pflicht 5./6. Semester)

für M.Sc. Wirtschaftspädagogik (Wahlpflicht 1./2.Semester)

Dieses Modul und das Fachdidaktikmodul sind über das 5. und 6. Semester verteilt. Lehramtsstudierende müssen daher in beiden Semestern die jeweils angebotene Hälfte beider Module belegen.

Exam: written exam (90 min) covering the lecture and seminar

The module consists of one lecture and one seminar

1401-2 Lecture: US-American Literature: Beginnings to Present

Wednesday, 5 - 7 pm, HS 7

Prof. Katja Kanzler

This lecture will provide a survey of US-American literary history from its colonial pre-history to the present. It will discuss important themes, modes, and genres that characterize US literature throughout its history, its cultural contexts, and the literary periods into which these developments have been organized. In the course of this survey, we will explore the – partly very different, partly continuous – ways in which texts across these periods define ‘Americanness,’ in which they approach human nature and social differences, and the ideas about the role and operations of literature that they reflect.

1401-3 Seminar: American Cultures and Society

All seminars start in the week of April 8, 2019!

Wednesday, 11 am - 1 pm, GWZ 2.516
Eleonora Ravizza

or

Wednesday, 1 - 3 pm, GWZ 2.516
Eleonora Ravizza

or

Wednesday, 3 - 5 pm, HS 20
(except June 19: NSG 428)
Richard Bachmann

or

Thursday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 428
Eleonora Ravizza

or

Thursday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 428
Eleonora Ravizza

Historical, political, and social developments in the United States were and are influenced by the rapidly changing national landscape. In this seminar, we will discuss various topics relevant to contemporary United States in connection to fundamental American studies categories, such as race, gender, class, and religion. In addition to gaining knowledge about the historical background, students will also have the opportunity to apply their findings in group discussions about a variety of texts, such as newspaper articles, magazine articles, and online videos. The seminar thus invites an interdisciplinary dialog between history, politics, and cultural studies.

5 Creative Writing

5.1 BA Professional Skills Module “Creative Writing: Envisioning America”

(04-001-1020 | 5 Credits)

Wednesday, 3 - 5 pm, GWZ 3 5.15
Josh Weil (Picador Guest Professor)

Seminar: Short Story Workshop
Wednesday, 3.15 - 4 pm, GWZ 3 5.15

Tutorial: Creative Writing
Wednesday, 4 - 4.45 pm, GWZ 3 5.15

This workshop will be based not only on student work, but on the premise that individual voice—what makes each student’s work her own—is where we should set our sights. That will be the lens through which we examine all the elements of craft, from plot structure to point of view, the shape of a scene to the wounds that shape a character. The mark of the individual: it’s what makes a story worth our telling it. Through close reading of each other’s work and close listening to those who critique our own we’ll learn to recognize the places where that mark is strongest, to hone it, to develop its shape. And through discussions of craft and observations of technique we’ll advance along the essential second step: how to communicate that vision most effectively to others. The core of the class will be student work—each writer will workshop their own stories and offer in-depth critiques of others’ writing—but we will also use each story as a springboard for discussion and debate about craft elements. Debate an approach to one of those elements, float an unexpected idea in a critique session, take a creative risk in writing a story: this is a class that will warmly encourage boldness, experimentation, casting wide and digging deep.

The class will make use of the book *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft* by Janet Burroway, Elizabeth Stuckey-French, and Ned Stuckey-French in its tenth edition (to be released on March 25). Purchase is recommended; it can also be (pre)ordered at Connewitzer Verlagsbuchhandlung.

The first class of this workshop will take place on **April 10**.

Please also see our news item for more information on this module.

Writing Clinic

Monday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 403
Heather Prüßing

Advice for American studies Kernfach and Wahlbereich students who have specific questions concerning their BA or MA theses and research papers, as well as more general writing and style issues.

If you are interested, please email Ms Prüßing about your question, and she will schedule a time with you.