

## Courses Catalog Summer Semester 2020

### 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 6, 2020.**

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

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## 1 Information

Unless indicated otherwise in the detailed module description, **classes will start in the week of April 5**. Your instructors will contact you **via your studserv email** address with details. Please make sure to check those.

### 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](http://anglistik.philol.uni-leipzig.de)).

Unless stated otherwise, **classes start in the week of April 6, 2020**. Students are responsible for keeping track of updates on actual course dates (some are alternating).

**UPDATE:** Per the university's guidelines, no in-person teaching will take place until May, 4th. We are in the process of exploring distant teaching / online teaching scenarios. At this time, we expect the bulk of classes to begin in some distant learning format in April already. Please see this news item for updates.

### 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: PD Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

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, 3 – 5 pm, HS 10  
PD 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. Next to political history, the class also underscores the importance of social and cultural history and emphasizes the plurality of North America's population. Moreover, the course integrates global, transatlantic, and international developments to better understand the nature of the American experience and its impact on international affairs.

For students of the BA in American Studies, the course ends with an in-class final exam.

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#### **Analytical Seminar**

**either a)** Tuesday, 9 – 11 am, NSG 412  
Heather Pruessing

**or b)** Tuesday, 11 am -1 pm, NSG 412  
Heather Pruessing

**or c)** Tuesday, 1 – 3 pm, NSG 412  
Heather Pruessing

Through exposure to a diverse range of primary documents and interpretive essays, the Analytical Seminar seeks to guide students' in expanding and contextualizing the information covered in the module's lecture component. Furthermore, the course seeks to develop students' analytical skills in writing, debate, and presentation.

## **Tutorial (Übung)**

**either a)** Wednesday, 9 – 11 am, GWZ 2.516  
Heather Pruessing

**or b)** Wednesday, 11 am – 1 pm, GWZ 2.516  
Heather Pruessing

**or c)** Wednesday, 1 – 3 pm, GWZ 2.516  
Heather Pruessing

Within the context of American Society, History, and Politics, students in the Praxis Seminar (Tutorial/Übung) will work to improve their writing and argumentation skills in academic English. The goal of this course is to solidify students' understanding of the lecture and analytical seminar content, while simultaneously improving critical and analytical skills through discussion and written assignments.

## 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, HS 3  
Peter Uhrig (Institut für Anglistik)

Exam: written examination (90 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.

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### 1003-2 Seminar Systemlinguistik: Introduction to Synchronic Linguistics

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

**either a)** Monday, 9 -11 am, NSG 111  
Antje Quick (Institut für Anglistik)

**or b)** Wednesday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG 301  
Antje Quick (Institut für Anglistik)

Reading list: Students are asked to purchase the reader at "universitätsdruckzentrum" (merkurdruck, Ritterstr. 10) with syllabus, course material and tasks.

Exam: cf. lecture "Introduction to Synchronic Linguistics"

Together with the lecture, this seminar introduces into the scientific branch of linguistics. Whereas in the lecture you familiarize yourself with basic concepts, the seminar focuses on indepth 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 225  
Bradley Schmidt (Institut für Anglistik)

**or b)** Thursday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG 225  
Bradley Schmidt (Institut für Anglistik)

**or c)** Thursday, 1 – 3 pm, NSG 315  
n.n. (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, HS 15  
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.

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**Seminar: Understanding Digital Cultures**

Monday, 11 am – 1 pm, GWZ 2.516  
Dr. Stefan Schubert  
Moodle Course

Contemporary (US) culture has become increasingly digital, from shopping or banking online to consuming entertainment media via streaming services or communicating with friends (or strangers) through social media. In this seminar, we want to use the prominence of the digital in everyday life as a starting point to carefully investigate not one monolithic understanding of (a) digital culture but the multiplicity and ambiguity of digital cultures. If culture itself is already an elusive term, how can we conceive of digital cultures either as subcultures or as part of a larger (national) culture? How do questions of identity, information, technology, knowledge, participation, privacy, or democracy complicate our understanding of digitality? How can we analyze specific digital artifacts and the cultural work that they do?

Throughout the seminar, we will discuss and theorize ways to approach these topics analytically from the perspectives of literary and cultural studies. Topics we will cover may include ‘new media’ like video games and phenomena such as ‘post-film’ or ‘post-TV’; utopian/dystopian writing speculating about the digital future; how issues of privacy, surveillance, and data are inextricably linked; the role that ‘race,’ gender, and bodies play in digital culture in particular; media literacy, ‘politics,’ and ‘fake news’; and theoretical questions surrounding networks, algorithms, and identity or philosophical strands like posthumanism.

## Seminar: A Star Is Born: Examining Celebrity Culture in the United States

Tuesday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG 410  
Annika Schadewaldt

In this class, we will explore the phenomenon of celebrity and celebrity culture as it is produced, circulated, and consumed. While we will also look at the history of celebrity in the United States, we will mainly focus on the meanings of celebrity and the negotiations of social values and behavioral norms it allows. That is, we will discuss the ways in which celebrity is culturally constructed and discussed; how it shapes our understanding of concepts such as identity, work, and authenticity; and how it intersects with categories such as gender, class, and race. For this, we will both critically engage with different attempts to theorize celebrity and specific case studies in fictional and nonfictional texts from a variety of media. Some of the questions we will discuss are: What makes a celebrity? Why are celebrities significant? What are the social functions of gossip and scandal? And should we use our time for something more important instead?

*The two seminars of this module include a **presentation conference** at the end of the semester, in which students will present their final projects to the class. The two-day conference will be held on July 16 and July 17. Participation is mandatory. Students are expected to block these days in their calendars. The final decision on the exact date and time of the conference will be made in coordination with the students at the beginning 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-c) ist ein Kurs zu belegen.*

**1107-1a Seminar: Into the Wilderness: Canadian Literature and Culture**

Monday, 9 – 11 am, NSG 124  
Stefan Welz (Institut für Anglistik)

Reading list: Margaret Atwood’s *Cat’s Eye* (1988), Rudy Wiebe’s *A Discovery of Strangers* (1994), Michael Ondaatje’s *Warlight* (2018), selected short stories by Alice Munro

Further reading: Hammill, Faye (2007): *Canadian Literature*, Edinburgh Critical Studies, Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP., *The Cambridge Companion to Canadian Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

I recommend the purchase of the three novels (Atwood, Wiebe, Ondaatje); other reading matter will be available on MOODLE.

Exam: research project in this class or in 1107-2

Canadian Literature is still a comparatively young cultural phenomenon. Only a few decades ago in her critical study *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972) Canadian writer Margaret Atwood fused the conception of Canadian literature with notions of national identity. Today, the question of identity still seems to be on the agenda while we are witnessing an ever growing, stylistically diverse, and thematically rich literary output from this vast country. The course provides a first approach to Canadian literature in English via a selection of prose texts in focusing on the thematic aspect of ‘Wilderness’. Textual analyses of this central conception will emphasize conflicts such as man vs. nature, the urban vs. the rural, mass society vs. individual isolation.

## 1107-1b Seminar: The Anglo-American Pacific

Wednesday, 9 -11 am, NSG 301  
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: research project 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 fascinating 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.

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## 1107-2 Seminar: Literatur oder Kulturgeschichte der USA:

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

### 1107-2a Seminar: Fictions of Transhumanism: Science as Politics and Policy

Thursday, 11 am – 1 pm, GWZ 2.516  
Dr. Katja Schmieder

Exam: research project in this class or in 1107-1

Transhumanism – a decidedly Anglo-American school of thought and philosophical movement – imagines the future of humankind in such promising terms as "super-wellbeing" and "longevity." Also, transhumanist ideas and preconceptions employ the narratives of "science," which associates them with notions of credibility, authority, and objectivity on the one hand, and which dismisses the fact that transhumanism originated from eugenicist beliefs about the improvement of the human genes on

the other. Accordingly, contemporary politics and (popular) culture addresses these dynamics in contradicting ways.

In this seminar, we want to examine the relationship between (popular) fictions, science, and state politics in order to arrive at an understanding for the narratives that elevated eugenics and transhumanism to their respective levels of international acceptance: We will therefore analyze rhetorical and other strategies used in different “texts” - movies, novels, legal tracts, short stories, scientific writings, TV shows, speeches, advertisements, etc. Questions we thus try to answer include the following: Why are transhumanist ideas almost exclusively fictionalized as suspense and dystopia, while often envisioned as utterly bright and positive in political and scientific texts? By which narrative means does transhumanism relativize its eugenicist roots? What role does religion, feminism, ethnicity, and class play in transhumanist theory and practice?

In our readings, we will focus on the aspect that lies at the core of each discussion on and in eugenics and transhumanism: the control over human reproduction. The texts we are discussing might thus include such classics as *Frankenstein*, *Herland*, and *Brave New World* as well as popular novels like *State of Fear* and *Inferno*. We will also take a closer look at the movies *Soylent Green* and *Elysium* as well as the TV shows *Star Trek* or *H+*. Additionally, essays by Gustave Le Bon, Margaret Sanger, W.E.B. DuBois, Julian Huxley, and other influential figures will further help us historicize recent concepts and debates.

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### **1107-2b Seminar: The Anglo-American World of Today’s Global Political Economy**

Friday, 11 am – 1 pm, GWZ 2.516  
Friedrich Opitz

Exam: research project in this class or in 1107-1

The economic background of much of today’s surge in transatlantic populism is a hotbed for debate. Populism can be seen as a chiffre for the strains of undergoing structural changes in Western societies since the neoliberal turn of the 1980s. Albeit gradually rising aggregate levels of material wealth, some groups and regions seem to benefit more than others. Inequality is rising with regard to rural-urban divides, highly educated vs lesser skilled, or older industrial areas vs agile financial market places and tech monopolies. How did the contemporary socio-economic make-ups of transatlantic societies emerge? The intersections of intellectual and socio-economic history will establish the fora for this course’ retracing of influential thinkers, ideas and events shaping the unravelling of Anglo-American capitalism.

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

Module Coordinator: PD Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

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: Political, Social and Cultural Histories of the Vietnam War**

Monday, 5 – 7 pm, NSG 104  
PD Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

The Vietnam War took place on several fronts, not just in the rice fields and jungles of Southeast Asia. The war was fought in American universities, on American city streets, in antiwar marches, and Civil Rights demonstrations. This class examines all these different theatres of war and attempts to understand how a small conflict that started in a small Southeast Asian country that most Americans couldn't find on a map turned into a global war that ultimately transformed American society, politics, and culture. How did the Vietnam War come to loom so large in the American consciousness? How did Americans interpret U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia and how did those interpretations shape the Antiwar Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Conservative Movement? How was Vietnam portrayed in popular culture and how did those portrayals shape American diplomacy and politics throughout the latter twentieth century? How is the Vietnam War still relevant of America's collective memory? These are the central questions this course asks.

In class, we discuss scholarly texts next to a variety of primary sources (texts, images, films). Students are asked to participate in one group moderation (Studienleistung); deadline for a term paper as a module exam is September 30, 2020.

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#### **Seminar: Competition, Cooperation, and Coercion — Contending Perspectives on Global Political and Economic Relations and the Role of U.S. Foreign Policy**

Thursday, 3 -5 pm, GWZ 2.516  
Tobias Schlobach

This seminar will explore the structure and dynamics of global political and economic relations as well as the role of the United States as a key actor in them. We will also identify and evaluate differing—and often contending—perspectives on these by applying conceptual and analytical frameworks from the fields of Global Political Economy, International Relations, as well as Security and Cultural Studies. We will examine individual cases and broader developments in global political and economic relations and United States foreign policy, thereby mapping general dynamics and specific interdependencies between the two and providing an overview of the key discourses, trends and shifts in the country's interaction with global politics and the global economy. Over the course of the semester, this seminar

will build and sharpen students' vocabulary and skills for understanding and analyzing current issues and challenges in both United States foreign policy and global political and economic relations.

*First session of this Seminar on Thursday, April 16. Please mind the information regarding access and participation during the current situation you have received on your official university email account. If for some reason, this information did not reach you, please contact the instructor.*

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

Module Coordinator: Prof. Katja Kanzler

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.

**The module consists of two seminars**

### **~~Seminar: The American Short Story~~**

~~Wednesday, 1–3 pm, GWZ 3.515  
Oksana Marafioti (Picador Guest Professor)~~

~~This course explores American literature and culture through what has been called our uniquely national art form, the short story. Writer Ann Patchett likens reading short stories to the experience of a swarm of bees, “blocking out sound and sun and becoming the only thing you can think about.” We’ll be doing a lot of thinking about the short story—as a literary art form, as a social and historical record, and as a reflection of the cultural values that shape our ideas of who we are. From the ghosts and fantasies that haunted the nineteenth-century short story to the casual cruelties and everyday redemptions in twentieth-century stories to today’s experimental fictions, the short story represents diverse visions of American identity and experience. We will thus roam widely to construct methods for thinking about and a critical vocabulary for discussing and writing about the short story. Students will examine the genre, learning about its formal structures and strategies, as well as its place among various historical literary movements, including realism, naturalism, modernism, and postmodernism. Special attention will be paid to the material conditions of short story writing and publishing—the 19th century rise of the literary magazine, the Little Magazines and anthology collections of the 20th century, and the possibilities for the short story in today’s digital environment. We will read individual stories from a wide range of American authors as well as a contemporary short story collection.~~

**Update: Unfortunately, the seminar “The American Short Story” cannot be offered as announced. We are sorry for the inconvenience. Instead of this seminar, we will be offering alternatives for students who have registered for the module Literature & Culture III. We will contact you about this once the module registration has concluded.**

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### **Seminar: Remembrance, Recovery, Revision: The US-American Neo-Slave Narrative**

Thursday, 11 am – 1 pm, GWZ 3.515  
Mascha Lange

The year 1619 marks the forceful displacement of the first group of enslaved Africans from their West African homelands to Jamestown, Virginia. What followed were two and a half centuries of forced labor, disenfranchisement, and exploitation of African American people. Four centuries later, slavery, which was nominally abolished with the 13th Amendment in 1865, continuously haunts the United States. This haunting is most piercingly reproduced in the genre of neo-slave narratives – in works such as Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (1987) that remember, recover, and revise the history of slavery from a 20th and 21st century perspective. In this class, we will read (and watch) a selection of neo-slave

narratives to unpack matters such as cultural memory, trauma, representation, and agency. Other topics will include the revision of history from a black female point of view, questions of authenticity and authorship, and the reconfiguration of generic conventions. At the beginning of the seminar, we will also consider neo-slave narratives' precursors – slave narratives – to understand the genre's palimpsestic composition and the cultural work it does.

Readings will include Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845, in excerpts), Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979), Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad* (2016), as well as a selection of movies and TV series. If you would like to get a head start on the seminar's reading, beginning with Octavia Butler's *Kindred* is recommended.

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

Module Coordinator: Prof. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

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.

Both seminars in this module will start in the week after Easter.

**The module consists of two seminars**

### **1012-1 Seminar: Fictions of Race in American Literature and Culture**

Wednesday, 9 – 11 am, GWZ 3.515  
Prof. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

Exam: term paper covering both seminars

How has 'race' become part of identity narratives at various moments in American cultural and literary history? How have narratives of race influenced Americans' sense of individual and national identity? And how have writers imagined and talked about race through fiction? In this course, we will read texts by American authors of varying racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds from the 18th to the 21st century, focusing on how "fictions" in the artistic sense - novels, stories, essays, etc. - have both fostered and challenged "fictions" in the ideological sense - that is, the assumptions and myths about race that have pervaded American cultural life from its early beginnings. We will explore how these texts negotiate race, racism and identity in direct or subtle ways and how they address the entanglement of race with other categories of difference such as gender, sexuality, and class.

All texts for the course will be available from Moodle.

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### **1012-2 Seminar: English in New York City**

Wednesday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG 405  
Sven Leuckert (Institut für Anglistik)

Exam: term paper covering both seminars

Perhaps one of the most recognisable dialects spoken in the USA, New York City English has been capturing the interest of linguists for decades: Its mixture of conservation and innovation and its diversity across ethnic groups remain fascinating research topics to this day. In the seminar, we will trace the history of English in New York City, place it in American dialectology in a wider context, and discuss its predominant features on the levels of phonology, lexis, and syntax. We will also delve into current issues, such as the shifting attitudes of New Yorkers towards their own variety, as well as stereotypical portrayals of English in New York City.



### **3 MA Courses**

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

Module Coordinator: Prof. Katja Kanzler

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: The Irish in America: Role Playing, Politics and Nationalization**

Tuesday, 3 – 5 pm, GWZ 2.516  
PD Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Ireland has the largest diaspora to indigenous population rate of any country in the world, and in the United States of America this diaspora has flourished from terrorist threat to political powerhouse. Through a mix of Irish pride and American nationalism, the Irish-American diaspora has become one of the most dominant and influential socio-political groups in American history. In this course we will examine how the Irish underwent this dramatic change. From portrayals of the Irish as a subhuman, nationalist group whose loyalties lay with the fenian struggle against British rule in their homeland to the proliferation of US presidents proudly claiming Irish descent in the 20th century, the oftentimes dichotomous nature of the Irish-American experience will be dissected and contextualized alongside some of the most important events in American social and political history. We will deal with practices of assimilation from an Irish-American perspective, in particular in regards to labor, military and political roles, and how the Irish-American experience underwent a dramatic change from the 1840s to the current era, using the development of their portrayal in media and popular culture as a key marker of this. The relationship between the most significant wave of Irish migration to the US, those escaping the Great Famine of the 1840s, and those other marginalized groups of reconstruction-era America will be analyzed in order to see how the Irish would later define themselves in opposition to these groups in order to increase their influence in an Anglo-Saxon dominated American society. All these factors and events will be considered when addressing the overarching themes of roleplaying and the construction of whiteness for the Irish in America

All participants are requested to read the assigned texts (primary sources and secondary texts) for each class meeting and take an active part in group discussions. Several class meetings will be moderated and additionally prepared by a group of selected students who “adopt” that meeting’s topic, selecting additional or different material and guide through our discussions (Studienleistung). Deadline for a term paper as module exam is September 30, 2020.

## **Seminar: Fictions of Choice? The Cultural Work of the US Presidential Election**

Wednesday, 11 am – 1 pm, GWZ 3.515

Dr. Sebastian Herrmann

The US presidential election arguably is one of the most consequential recurring political events worldwide. In choosing a president, US citizens make a decision the economic, political, military, and cultural ramifications of which are often felt around the globe. The US presidential election, however, is also a cultural ritual. A recurring event that allows for affirming, contesting, and (re)negotiating a wide array of values, of foundational myths, but also of hopes and anxieties surrounding social and cultural change. At its most basic, it is a double celebration of ‘Western’ ideals of individualism, agency, and subjectivity.

In this seminar, we will discuss a wide array of representations of the US election—both fiction and nonfiction, both past and ongoing—to explore this premise further: What are the myths that election fictions reaffirm? In how far do ‘real’ representations of ‘real’ elections differ from them... or do they? How malleable is the concept of ‘election,’ what other forms of choosing a leader have fictional texts envisioned, and how does that perspectivize the cultural work of the electoral ritual? How can such a cultural studies perspective on politics help us make sense of the ongoing election season, which will, after all, unfold over the course of the semester we will work together?

We will use the first session to map out a research program for this class and proceed from there. Be ready for a considerable workload, which will definitely include a weekly reading and research journal, weekly peer review work on this journal, and perhaps more. Also, be ready to discuss, online and in class.

Students from other programs are welcome to join, but please reach out to me via email before the first session to make sure that participating in the class actually makes sense for you.

### **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: Invective Television: On the Forms and Cultural Work of Symbolic Abuse in Popular Media**

Monday, 11 am – 1 pm, GWZ 3.15  
Prof. Katja Kanzler

It is one of the governing assumptions in Popular Culture Studies that the affective grammar of popular mass culture is one of love and attachment—i.e., that popular culture is about attaching people to cultural materials (films, tv shows, music), and about attaching people to each other (in their shared uses of materials they love). This seminar will probe into the extent to which popular mass culture is also governed by detachments and conspicuous practices of depreciation. Such practices of depreciation—which we will summarily designate by the term ‘invective’—can take a broad variety of forms, from aggressive insult and vitriol over scenarios of humiliation and shame to spectacles of ridicule and mockery. We will explore selected formations of invective popular culture on contemporary US television with a focus on its formal, ‘poetic’ means, its structures of feeling, and its socio-political resonances.

Please note that this is a discussion- and reading-intensive graduate seminar, with a particular focus on cultural and social theory. Students outside the MA American Studies are generally welcome to join the class, but should inquire for prerequisites with Prof. Kanzler ([katja.kanzler@uni-leipzig.de](mailto:katja.kanzler@uni-leipzig.de)).

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**Seminar: Progressive Cinema - US Society, Reform & Motion Pictures, 1894-1920**

Tuesday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG 325  
PD Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

During the Progressive Era (1890s to World War I), an urban and middle-class reform movement started out to address (real & perceived) problems caused by industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and political corruption. Among other things, it rested on a visual logic, on identifying, representing, documenting, and highlighting issues such as inner-city housing, hygiene, consumer rights, educating immigrants, or race relations. Next to photography, the new media of film became an integral part of this strategy.

In this class, we will study a number of very early US-movies against that backdrop of the ongoing Progressive Movement. Accompanied by reading other primary sources and scholarly literature, we

will analyze the visual logic of Progressivism at the beginning of the 20th century and discuss how the movement made use of film in order to bring across their point.

All participants are requested to read the assigned texts (primary sources and secondary texts) for each class meeting and take an active part in group discussions. Several class meetings will be moderated and additionally prepared by a group of selected students who “adopt” that meeting’s topic, selecting additional or different material and guide through our discussions (Studienleistung). Deadline for a term paper as module exam is September 30, 2020.

### **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: A Genre Turn? Genre Fiction, the Literary, and Imaginaries of Social Commentary in 21st-Century Literature**

Tuesday, 1 – 3 pm, GWZ 3.515  
Prof. Katja Kanzler

There has been a lively debate in recent scholarship whether North American literature in the new millennium is marked by a 'genre turn'—a new currency of popular forms and conventions in contexts of supposedly 'serious,' aesthetically and politically ambitious literature. Especially Jose Saldivar has suggested that this genre turn is tied to the quest for a literary language that is capable of addressing the complexities of social inequality in the 21st century, a quest that he has described with the somewhat contentious phrase of a "postrace aesthetic."

In this seminar, we will probe into this literary phenomenon and the scholarly discussions around it. Our readings will include novels and/or short stories by writers like Colson Whitehead, Junot Diaz, Nalo Hopkinson, or Margaret Atwood. Our discussions will address questions like: How do the (primary and secondary) texts speak to the relationship between the literary and the popular? What regimes of knowledge do the literary and the popular mobilize for them? What traditions and histories are evoked by the registers of genre fiction? What methods of literary criticism—methods of close reading, distant reading, or other—are useful for unlocking the imaginaries of social commentary that animate the texts?

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**Seminar: „How does it feel to be a problem?“ Literary Negotiations of Blackness from Slavery to the Present**

Wednesday, 3 -5 pm, GWZ 3.515  
Prof. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

Throughout American history, to be black has meant to be considered as different, and, as W.E.B. DuBois has famously observed in *The Souls of Black Folk*, it often meant to be seen as a problem. The Obama years and the phasing-out of race-based affirmative action created a sense that the nation's deep racial divisions were finally healing, resulting in the notion of a „post-racial“ USA. However, the frequency of incidents of racial profiling and racialized violence against black Americans as well as the mass incarceration of African-Americans that Michelle Alexander has highlighted in *The New Jim Crow* shows that fifty years after the abolition of racial segregation racism still looms large in 21st-century

America. Against this background this course asks how black writers have addressed blackness and the situation of African Americans in pamphlets, speeches, poems, and narratives, and how they have confronted issues of race, class, gender, freedom, citizenship, uplift, internationalism, and responsibility in their work. Discussing writings by black intellectuals, poets and authors of fiction we will explore different positions and visions concerning the situation of being black in America.

### **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**

Monday, 5 – 7 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 about the United States. 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 accessible through Moodle.

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#### **Seminar: The US Southern Rimlands in the Cultural Imagination**

Thursday, 1 – 3 pm, GWZ 2.516  
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 Southern Louisiana (New Orleans) and Florida as the most prominent regions representing the southern rimlands.

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

## 4 Lehramt Courses

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

Module Coordinator: Prof. Katja Kanzler

The module consists of one lecture and one seminar

#### 1402-1 Lecture: US-American Literature: Beginnings to Present

Wednesday, 5 – 7 pm, HS 1  
Prof. Katja Kanzler

Exam: written examination (90 min) covering the entire module

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.

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#### 1402-2 Seminar: American Cultures and Society

Choose one out of eight seminars (1402-2a-h):

##### 1402-2a/b/c/d US Cultural History and Politics: Myths and Narratives

either Tuesday, 9 – 11 am, GWZ 2.516  
Eleonora Ravizza

or

Tuesday, 11 am – 1 pm, GWZ 2.516  
Eleonora Ravizza

or

Wednesday, 3 – 5 pm, NSG 328  
Eleonora Ravizza

or

Thursday, 11 – 1 pm, NSG 426  
Eleonora Ravizza

This class will cover how 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 both historical and contemporary United States in connection to the way certain American myths and narratives have shaped the popular cultural imaginations. We will also engage



with the effects that these myths and narratives have had on the socio-political realm, considering topics such as the American Dream, immigration, the myth of Manifest Destiny, and American foreign policy.

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.

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**1402-2e/f/g/h US Cultural History and Politics: Values and Institutions**

either Tuesday, 1 – 3 pm, GWZ 2.516  
Eleonora Ravizza

**or**

Wednesday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG 328  
Eleonora Ravizza

**or**

Wednesday, 1 – 3 pm, NSG 328  
Eleonora Ravizza

**or**

Thursday, 9 – 11 am, NSG 426  
Eleonora Ravizza

This class will cover how 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 both historical and contemporary United States in terms of what determines American values and how they have shaped and empowered (or undermined) certain institutions. We will then look at how traditional American values such as freedom, justice, and equality have evolved through time and how they have influenced the socio-political realm. Topics will include racial inequality, political corruption, the healthcare system, and the justice system.

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.

## 4.2 04-AME-1701 US Popular Culture and American Literature

Module Coordinator: Prof. Katja Kanzler

The module consists of two seminars

### **Seminar: ~~The American Short Story~~**

~~Wednesday, 1—3 pm, GWZ 3.515  
Oksana Marafioti (Picador Guest Professor)~~

~~This course explores American literature and culture through what has been called our uniquely national art form, the short story. Writer Ann Patchett likens reading short stories to the experience of a swarm of bees, “blocking out sound and sun and becoming the only thing you can think about.” We’ll be doing a lot of thinking about the short story—as a literary art form, as a social and historical record, and as a reflection of the cultural values that shape our ideas of who we are. From the ghosts and fantasies that haunted the nineteenth-century short story to the casual cruelties and everyday redemptions in twentieth-century stories to today’s experimental fictions, the short story represents diverse visions of American identity and experience. We will thus roam widely to construct methods for thinking about and a critical vocabulary for discussing and writing about the short story. Students will examine the genre, learning about its formal structures and strategies, as well as its place among various historical literary movements, including realism, naturalism, modernism, and postmodernism. Special attention will be paid to the material conditions of short story writing and publishing—the 19th century rise of the literary magazine, the Little Magazines and anthology collections of the 20th century, and the possibilities for the short story in today’s digital environment. We will read individual stories from a wide range of American authors as well as a contemporary short story collection.~~

**Update: Unfortunately, the seminar “The American Short Story” cannot be offered as announced. We are sorry for the inconvenience. Instead of this seminar, we will be offering alternatives for students who have registered for the module US Popular Culture and American Literature. We will contact you about this once the module registration has concluded.**

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### **Seminar: Remembrance, Recovery, Revision: The US-American Neo-Slave Narrative**

Thursday, 11 am – 1 pm, GWZ 3.515  
Mascha Lange

The year 1619 marks the forceful displacement of the first group of enslaved Africans from their West African homelands to Jamestown, Virginia. What followed were two and a half centuries of forced labor, disenfranchisement, and exploitation of African American people. Four centuries later, slavery, which was nominally abolished with the 13th Amendment in 1865, continuously haunts the United States. This haunting is most piercingly reproduced in the genre of neo-slave narratives – in works such as Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (1987) that remember, recover, and revise the history of slavery from a 20th and 21st century perspective. In this class, we will read (and watch) a selection of neo-slave narratives to unpack matters such as cultural memory, trauma, representation, and agency. Other topics will include the revision of history from a black female point of view, questions of authenticity and authorship, and the reconfiguration of generic conventions. At the beginning of the seminar, we

will also consider neo-slave narratives' precursors – slave narratives – to understand the genre's palimpsestic composition and the cultural work it does.

Readings will include Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845, in excerpts), Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979), Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad* (2016), as well as a selection of movies and TV series. If you would like to get a head start on the seminar's reading, beginning with Octavia Butler's *Kindred* is recommended.

## 5 Creative Writing

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

(04-001-1020 | 5 Credits)

#### **From First Page to Last**

Tuesday, 11 am – 1 pm, GWZ 3 5.15  
Oksana Marafioti (Picador Guest Professor)

This comprehensive course is designed to advance the craft of writing fiction. It will be conducted in a studio-style setting, meaning that honing our writing skills will be our primary focus. We will develop an in-depth understanding of the elements writers master in order to create and, most importantly, complete their projects, and we will apply those concepts to our own material. Lessons will include plot, outlining strategies, narrative, dialogue, tension, pacing, conflict, world-building, character development, scene-building, voice, style, descriptive techniques, and editing skills. Accordingly, during lectures, we will discuss the structural/stylistic choices found in literary and genre works by recognized authors. During workshops, the class will share and discuss their own work. By the end of the course, each student will have a portfolio comprised of exercises, drafts, and at least one polished short story. There is no required textbook. Instead, we will use a combination of materials developed by me and also those found in syllabi of Margaret Atwood, Linda Barry, Joyce Carol Oates, and Neil Gaiman.

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

**Update: Unfortunately, the module “Creative Writing: Envisioning America” cannot be offered in this semester. We are sorry for the inconvenience.**