

Courses Catalog Summer Semester 2023

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 3, 2023.**

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	Society, History, and Politics III (04-001-1010)	9
2.5	Literature & Culture III (04-001-1011)	10
2.6	Ethnicity and Diversity in US Culture II: Multicultural and Multilingual America (04-001-1012)	11
3	MA Courses	12
3.1	Political Cultures in a Transatlantic Context (04-038-2005)	12
3.2	Media and Society (04-038-2006)	14
3.3	Interamerican Spaces and Latino/a Cultures (04-038-2016)	16
4	Lehramt Courses	17
4.1	04-AME-1402: Literatures and Cultures of the USA	17
4.2	04-AME-1701 US Popular Culture and American Literature	19
5	Creative Writing and Other Courses	20
5.1	BA Professional Skills Module “Creative Writing: Envisioning America”	20
5.2	Writing Clinic	21

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 (BA, MA, Lehramt), please have a look at the Registration Information Sheet. 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 Documents 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 3, 2023**. Students are responsible for keeping track of updates on actual course dates (some are alternating).

Please keep checking our website for up-to-date information on how classes will take place.

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)

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: Heather Pruessing

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: Constructing North American History I: From Colonial Times to the Civil War

Wednesday, 5 – 7 pm, HS 9
Prof. 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.

Analytical Seminar

either a) Tuesday, 9 – 11 am, GWZ 2 5.16
Heather Pruessing

or b) Tuesday, 11 am – 1 pm, GWZ 2 5.16
Heather Pruessing

or c) Thursday, 11am – 1pm, NSG 414
Vivian Sadlik

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, NSG 414
Heather Pruessing

or b) Wednesday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG 414
Heather Pruessing

or c) Wednesday, 1 – 3 pm, NSG 414
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)

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Lohmann, Arne

Module organization & coordination: tba

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
Prof. Dr. Lohmann, Arne
(Institut für Anglistik)

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

This course introduces students to the scientific study of language with a focus on English. We will get to know the field of English linguistics by working our way through the different levels of linguistic analysis: phonetics/phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. We will also learn about sub-disciplines that investigate the interface of linguistics with other scientific disciplines. In doing so the central terms and tools of the scientific study of language will be introduced and the basics of empirical research in linguistics will be discussed.

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

Choose one out of three seminars (a-c):

either a) Monday, 3 - 5 pm, NSG 301
Dr. Zingel, Roman-Henrik
(Institut für Anglistik)

or b) Tuesday, 9 am - 11 am, NSG 315
Dr. Zingel, Roman-Henrik
(Institut für Anglistik)

or b) Tuesday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 315
Dr. Zingel, Roman-Henrik
(Institut für Anglistik)

Reading list: will be announced in class.

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 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

Choose one out of three classes (a-c):

either a) Monday, 9 - 11 am, NSG 225
Dr. McCafferty, Patrick
(Institut für Anglistik)

or b) Friday, 11 am - 13 pm, NSG 329
Allen, Thandi
(Institut für Anglistik)

or c) Friday, 9 - 11 am, NSG 123
Schmidt, Bradley
(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)

Overall module responsibility: Dr. Stefan Schubert

Module organization & coordination: Annika Schadewaldt

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, 5 – 7 pm, HS 11
Dr. Stefan Schubert

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.

Choose two out of three seminars:

Seminar 1: American Literature and Culture at Midcentury

Monday, 3 - 5 pm, NSG 324
Annika Schadewaldt

The postwar decades hold a special place in the public memory as a watershed moment for US-American literature and culture and its self-descriptions. Often called a time characterized both by conformity and dissent, mainstream and counterculture, the postwar marks the (alleged) beginning of many things we now consider quintessentially American: youth culture, consumer capitalism, suburbia, identity politics, etc. This seminar will not only serve as an introduction to some of the canonical works of the literature and (popular) culture of the period but also engage with topics such as youth rebellion, the Beats, confessional poetry, suburban sadness, and the beginnings of the Civil Rights movement.

This seminar will be partially taught as a so-called Blockseminar, i.e., instead of weekly sessions about half of the sessions will be taught on 2-3 days at the end of the semester.

Seminar 2: “Stick It to The Man”: American Anarchist Fictions

Monday, 11am - 1 pm, GWZ 2 5.16

Dr. Katja Schmieder

US-American fictions have often depicted anarchists as radical and violent ideologists, possessed by revolutionary fervor, while philosophically, anarchism is defined as the abolition of coercive government and the establishment of a society based on voluntary cooperation. In our course, we will thus examine the diverse (and often contradicting) conceptions and interpretations of anarchism that influenced the way American writers have (re-)imagined and probed ideas of freedom, social justice, and resistance to hierarchical power structures and authority.

Our course will begin by examining the historical roots of anarchism in America, including the impact of figures like Voltairine de Cleyre and Emma Goldman. We will then look into the relatively new and increasingly popular interdisciplinary field of Anarchist Studies (Lewis Call, L. Susan Brown) and its relevance and productivity for American Studies. However, the major part of our seminar consists of reading/watching and analyzing texts – novels, short stories, movies – that span different historical periods and genres and that explore anarchist themes and motifs. How is the intersection of anarchism with other political ideologies portrayed? How does anarchist fiction engage with issues of class, economy, religion, or gender? What unique perspective on anarchism is provided – a reflection, a critique, a call to action – and how is this perspective narrated? And how do we define “anarchist fiction,” after all? Authors we might consider include Jack London, Ursula K. LeGuin, and Ken Kesey, and we will discuss the movies *Captain Fantastic* (2016) and *The Trial of the Chicago 7* (2020).

Seminar 3: Genres That Matter: History and Theory of Hollywood Film

Thursday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 410

Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

Genres supply films with a set of conventions and parameters to follow in order to fit within a determined and specific category. At the same time, genre conventions are constantly broken, rewritten, and reinvented. The course will examine different Hollywood film genres, how they are defined and what determines such genre boundaries, as well as in what ways these sets of rules can be played with and to what effect.

We will journey through Hollywood cinematic history, discussing the relevance of certain genres in specific decades and eras of the popular film industry. We will explore a variety of genre theories in order to develop an understanding of how a genre is constructed, identified, and deconstructed and use these theories in order to close read and analyze popular films from the classic Hollywood era (film noirs, western, melodramas), from New Hollywood (horror and science fiction), and from more contemporary works (neo-noirs, neo-western, and climate fiction).

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: 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 1: Sports History as 20th Century U.S. Cultural History

Monday, 5 - 7 pm, NSG 325
Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

There is no doubting that sports possess an enormous hold on Americans, and indeed on people the world over. As importantly, sports often echo as well as shape American culture, politics and society.

In this course we will explore the way in which sports have played a vital role in shaping the United States, with an emphasis on the period from about 1900 to the beginning of the 21st century. We will explore U.S. history in that period through the lens of sports, to examine political, economic, social, and cultural questions relating to equality, citizenship, ethics, culture, identity, and commercialization. We will look beyond the action on the field of competition and focus on tensions between amateurism and professionalism, the relationship between American sports and notions of nationalism and foreign policy, the intersection of sport and race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and (dis-)ability, the interplay between sports and religion as well as sports and capital, technological innovations, and many other aspects.

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).

Seminar 2: Histories of American Masculinities since 1945

Tuesday, 1 -3 pm, NSG 321
Peter Hintz

Understanding masculinity as varying in its formations and as being historically contingent, the course traces the historical development of American masculinities from the end of World War II to the present day. Shaped by contemporary socioeconomic, political, and cultural discourses, such as racial (de)segregation, feminism, or neoliberalism, ideas and practices of 'what makes a man' have differed and changed drastically since 1945. Taking the impact of the categories of class, race, space, sexuality, and (dis)ability into account, we will look at a diverse array of male self-conceptions and social and cultural imaginations of masculinity. The questions we will ask may include: How did fatherhood develop from the 'nuclear family' to queer parentage? What impact did deindustrialization have on Black men? How do populist movements conceive of masculinities today? Guiding our discussions will be a broad selection of sources from sociopolitical and cultural discourse, such as from magazines and literature, film, and social media.

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

Overall module responsibility: Dr. Stefan Schubert

Module organization & coordination: 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.

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar 1: We and You

Wednesday, 3 - 5 pm, GWZ 2 5.16
Salvador Plascencia (Picador Guest Professor)

This course explores the poetics and politics of we- and you-narratives. We will examine how these stories exploit ambiguities in narrative identity. How do readers reconcile the paradox of a singular communal voice? In second-person stories, what do we make of you's ability to simultaneously refer to the reader, a disembodied narrator, and a fictional character? Mobs, high school cliques, refugees, undercover spies, and shapeshifting yous will narrate our readings. The course will include work by the following writers: Jennifer Egan, Mariana Enríquez, Jeffrey Eugenides, Steven Millhauser, Julie Otsuka, and Justin Torres.

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

Please note that there will be **double sessions (3 – 7 pm)** for some weeks.

Seminar 2: Media, Literature, and Culture in the Digital Age

Monday, 3 – 5 pm, NSG 325
Dr. Stefan Schubert

The past two decades have seen the ever-increasing presence of digital technology in virtually all realms of cultural production, seamlessly seeping into everyday activities—from how we communicate, receive information, or buy things to how we find and consume entertainment. These developments have also profoundly shaped US (popular) culture, and one particular trend has been to merge what used to be distinct media environments into transmedia experiences. Literature, too, has been entangled in such a convergence between film, television, the Internet, and other media, in both content (e.g., in utopian or dystopian novels imagining a fully digitalized future) and form (e.g., in experimental fiction that remediates elements of television shows or video games).

In this seminar, we want to theorize, contextualize, and historicize these developments in order to scrutinize them from the perspective of literary and cultural studies. To this end, we will analyze specific fictional artifacts from a variety of media (e.g., potentially, films like *The Matrix* and *Ex Machina*, TV shows like *Westworld* and *Severance*, novels like *House of Leaves* and *The Circle*, and video games like *Detroit: Become Human*) and connect them to larger cultural discussions surrounding the so-called Digital Age. Throughout the semester, we will tackle issues such as identity and community, privacy and surveillance, conspiracy narratives, artificial intelligence and transhumanism, and algorithms and digital literacy.

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. 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.

The module consists of two seminars

1012-1 Seminar: Performing Race and Ethnicity

Tuesday, 3 – 5 pm, NSG 423
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

This course explores race and ethnicity as constructed and performed/performable identities in American cultural discourses and literary texts. We will explore how through acts of representation, bodies are objectified and stereotyped, how the performance of whiteness has served to create exclusive notions of national identity and culture, but also how ethnic and racial identities have been employed in playful, liberating or resistive ways. Our discussions will include issues such as minstrelsy and racial masking, passing, "playing Indian," and performing *Latinidad*, as well as the multiple ways in which authors have addressed racial and ethnic performances in novels, stories, and plays.

This course will start on **April 11**.

1012-2 Seminar: African American English: Its structure and sociolinguistic history

Monday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 421
Dr. Jakob Neels
(Institut für Anglistik)

Reading list: will be made available on moodle

"African American Vernacular English is not Standard English with mistakes" – although this point was made compellingly by eminent linguist Geoffrey Pullum in response to the 1996 Oakland school board controversy, the current status of this English sociolect is still riddled with public misconceptions. Among scholars, also the diachronic evolution of African American English (AAE) in the context of colonial slave trade and US history is controversially debated, leading this variety to be sometimes classified as a creole language. Through its long history, AAE developed into a fairly stable contemporary variety that differs, in many features of language structure, from the prestigious White norms codified as Standard (American) English. The global visibility and diffusion of features of AAE have recently reached new heights via various media and movements, above all via hip-hop music. Covering historical, structural, typological, attitudinal, educational and media perspectives, this course introduces students to AAE from multiple angles and puts participants in a position to investigate selected aspects in greater detail.

3 MA Courses

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

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: Eugenics - Body - Politics, 1890 to the Present

Tuesday, 3 – 5 pm, NSG 425

Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

This class aims to provide windows into American pasts and presents formed, informed, and transformed by eugenics. It is, first of all, a class in American (and also transnational) social and cultural history, a class about the eugenic movement from the late 19th into the mid-decades of the 20th century and how it tried to influence, shape and often enough destroyed the lives the well-being of a significant amount of people not only in the US but worldwide. Moreover, this is a class about eugenic thinking, about a system of knowledge that claimed to be scientific and that exercised a highly productive yet immensely dangerous form of biopolitics. Additionally, this class will discuss how eugenics – in a number of appearances – stays with us today and how its languages and ideas still have a strong impact on nowadays biopolitical governmentality.

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).

Seminar: Black Identities and Black Protest in African American Writing

Tuesday, 11 am – 1 pm, GWZ 3 5.15

Prof. Dr. 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. Orators, slave narrators, novelists, playwrights and performers have found different ways of dealing with the racialized environments and racial hierarchies of their times, sometimes by strategic adaptation, sometimes by openly voiced protest and radical opposition. Against this background this

course asks how black writers from the 18th to the 21st century have addressed blackness and voiced protest against racial injustice in pamphlets, speeches, poems, and narratives. Discussing texts by black intellectuals, poets and authors of fiction we will explore different positions and visions concerning the situation of being black in America.

This course will start on **April 11**.

3.2 Media and Society (04-038-2006)

Overall module responsibility Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

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: The Body Politics of Hollywood's Film Noir, 1940s/50s

Wednesday, 11am – 1 pm, GWZ 3 5.15

Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

This class analyzes Film Noir movies from the 1940s and 1950s as historical documents. Its guiding questions will be: Why did Hollywood produce this series of films packed with disillusionment, paranoia, despair, fear, uncertainty, deception, and violence? Where times during the 1940s and early 1950s actually so dark, despite a successful war effort and an expanding consumer society? How did these films relate to certain aspects of U.S. culture – to the experience of World War II, to the transition back to a post-war society, to the beginning Cold War, to questions of change with regard to gender, race, sexuality, citizenship, or consumerism? And when these films were about social and cultural Angst, how did they interact with psychoanalysis and the expanding overall culture of therapy?

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).

Seminar: Unfilmable / Unwatchable: Cinematic Depictions of Identity, Conformity, and Neurodiversity

Thursday, 1 – 3pm, NSG 410

Dr. Steffen Wöll

In the early days of silent film, twentieth-century Hollywood blockbusters, and in today’s stratified media landscape directors and actors strived to map the depths of the human psyche on the silver screen. Narrative tropes and visual styles have been both developed and subverted through filmic journeys to and beyond the boundaries of normative personalities and behaviors. Surrealist cinematic laboratories such as *Eraserhead* (1977) as well as mainstream productions like *Joker* (2019) employ different means to address the tensions and pressures that exist between individual experiences and calls for cultural assimilation and social conformity. In this seminar, we will explore how a cross-section of films from different genres and historical contexts depict and narrate human subjectivity, (non-)normative identities, mental Otherness, and more. To enable productive conversations in class, we will view these films through diverse theoretical lenses and contextualize them within overarching patterns and debates that continue to shape the interplays between media and society.

Trigger Warning: The materials discussed in this seminar include unsettling and/or graphic images as well as sensitive mental health topics that may be distressing for some. If you feel that participating will have detrimental effects on your wellbeing, please consider foregoing the seminar.

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. 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: Narratives of (In)Security in US Culture and Literature

Monday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG 425
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

In a 2009 article, Amy Kaplan suggested that in the wake of 9/11 the American narrative of freedom and democracy has increasingly been replaced by narratives of security and securitization. Concomitantly, more and more critics have pointed out that security should not only be scrutinized as a political strategy but also as a cultural discourse. In this course we will explore US-American narratives, spaces, and imaginaries related to concepts of security and insecurity as well as the way such narratives have been functionalized for different purposes. We will ask how security is produced and performed in US cultures and literatures, how safe and unsafe spaces are constructed and narrated, and how the logics of securitization have shaped the perception and representation of spaces such as gated communities, “ethnic” neighborhoods, detention camps, prisons, and borders. The first part of this MA course will be taught in the form of regular class sessions, followed by a project phase in which participants will be expected to investigate a research project of their own choice. The course will conclude with a colloquium dedicated to the presentation and discussion of the student projects.

This course starts on **April 3**.

Seminar: Beyond National Borders: Hemispheric Visions of the Americas

Wednesday, 1 – 3 pm, NSG 327
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

This course situates the study of American cultural production in the context of the American hemisphere rather than the nation state. We will investigate how the possibilities for the study of American literature open up when “America” is understood not as a synonym for an isolated United States but as a network of historical and cultural connections that have extended across the hemisphere from the period of colonization to the present. We will read theoretical texts from the fields of inter-American and border studies as well as novels, stories, plays and other texts that articulate the intercultural relationships between the United States and Latin America, Canada and the Caribbean.

This course will start on **April 12**.

4 Lehramt Courses

4.1 04-AME-1402: Literatures and Cultures of the USA

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

The module consists of one lecture and one seminar

1402-1 Lecture: Constructing North American History I: From Colonial Times to the Civil War

Wednesday, 5 – 7 pm, HS 9

Prof. 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.

1402-2 Seminar: American Cultures and Society

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

1402-2a/b/c The (Death of the) American Dream: Questioning Narratives of Power, Wealth, and Individualism

either a) Tuesday, 9 – 11 am, NSG 410

Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

or b) Tuesday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG 410

Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

or c) Thursday, 9 – 11am, NSG 410

Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

The American Dream is a foundational myth of American society and culture. In recent decades, critics of this idea have become more vocal, pointing at the great inequality present in American society and even claiming that the American Dream is dead. Examining the historical and social circumstances that have shaped the ideology of the American Dream is crucial in order to understand how the US perceives itself as a nation without a class system, a nation of immigrants who can climb the social ladder in a country of abundance and opportunities.

In this class, we will look at how and why the rags-to-riches narrative has been fashioned and we will examine how narratives of wealth and equality have fueled the rise of American-style capitalism and determined the impact of mass consumerism. Looking at the history of American imperialism will also

provide another facet of how capitalistic forces determined American intervention in the colonial context and beyond. Furthermore, we will investigate how the suppression of the labor movement, the belief in trickle-down economics, and the lack of a social safety net have led to increasing social inequality.

Overall, in this seminar, we will reflect on the way historical myths are created, narrated, and perpetuated and we will question these very narratives by including different perspectives and varied points of view from which history can be told.

1402-2d/e/f/g/h Nation and Imagination? US Cultural History and the Myths of 'America'

or d) Tuesday, 9 – 11 am, NSG 414
Dr. Sebastian Herrmann

or e) Tuesday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG 414
Dr. Sebastian Herrmann

or f) Tuesday, 3 – 5 pm, NSG 304
Dr. Sebastian Herrmann

or g) Wednesday, 11 am - 1 pm, GWZ 2 5.16
Dr. Sebastian Herrmann

or h) Wednesday, 1- 3 pm, GWZ 2 5.16
Dr. Sebastian Herrmann

In this seminar we will engage decisive moments and core issues in US cultural and political history by asking for how they have shaped, or expressed, American national (self-)perceptions. Doing so will not only allow us to work on a deeper understanding of the cultural history of the United States, or to engage both the myths of 'America' and the contradictions and tensions they entail. On a methodological level it will allow us to practice the kind of interdisciplinary inquiry that has been, and continues to be, a hallmark of American studies.

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

Overall module responsibility: Dr. Stefan Schubert

Module organization & coordination: Dr. Stefan Schubert

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar 1: We and You

Wednesday, 3 - 5 pm, GWZ 2 5.16
Salvador Plascencia (Picador Guest Professor)

This course explores the poetics and politics of we- and you-narratives. We will examine how these stories exploit ambiguities in narrative identity. How do readers reconcile the paradox of a singular communal voice? In second-person stories, what do we make of you's ability to simultaneously refer to the reader, a disembodied narrator, and a fictional character? Mobs, high school cliques, refugees, undercover spies, and shapeshifting yous will narrate our readings. The course will include work by the following writers: Jennifer Egan, Mariana Enríquez, Jeffrey Eugenides, Steven Millhauser, Julie Otsuka, and Justin Torres.

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

Please note that there will be **double sessions (3 – 7 pm)** for some weeks.

Seminar 2: Media, Literature, and Culture in the Digital Age

Monday, 3 – 5 pm, NSG 325
Dr. Stefan Schubert

The past two decades have seen the ever-increasing presence of digital technology in virtually all realms of cultural production, seamlessly seeping into everyday activities—from how we communicate, receive information, or buy things to how we find and consume entertainment. These developments have also profoundly shaped US (popular) culture, and one particular trend has been to merge what used to be distinct media environments into transmedia experiences. Literature, too, has been entangled in such a convergence between film, television, the Internet, and other media, in both content (e.g., in utopian or dystopian novels imagining a fully digitalized future) and form (e.g., in experimental fiction that remediates elements of television shows or video games).

In this seminar, we want to theorize, contextualize, and historicize these developments in order to scrutinize them from the perspective of literary and cultural studies. To this end, we will analyze specific fictional artifacts from a variety of media (e.g., potentially, films like *The Matrix* and *Ex Machina*, TV shows like *Westworld* and *Severance*, novels like *House of Leaves* and *The Circle*, and video games like *Detroit: Become Human*) and connect them to larger cultural discussions surrounding the so-called Digital Age. Throughout the semester, we will tackle issues such as identity and community, privacy and surveillance, conspiracy narratives, artificial intelligence and transhumanism, and algorithms and digital literacy.

5 Creative Writing and Other Courses

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

(04-001-1020 | 5 Credits)

Beginning Fiction Workshop

Tuesday, 3 - 5 pm, GWZ 2 5.16

Salvador Plascencia (Picador Guest Professor)

This course is designed as an introductory workshop focusing on the writing of fiction and the discourse of craft. Through the examination of a variety of literary traditions, stylistic and compositional approaches, and the careful reading and editing of peer stories, students will strengthen their prose and develop a clearer understanding of their literary values and the dynamics of fiction.

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

Please note that there will be **double sessions (3 – 7 pm)** for some weeks.

5.2 Writing Clinic

Writing Clinic

Tuesday, 1 - 3 pm, GWZ 3 5.01

Heather Pruessing

The writing clinic is intended to serve as a resource for ASL students in all forms and stages of the writing process. Whether you are working on drafting a presentation for a seminar, or finalizing your BA thesis, you can make an appointment and receive individual help and feedback. Please simply register for an appointment by emailing Heather Pruessing at heather.pruessing@uni-leipzig.de.