

Courses Catalog Winter Semester 2019/2020

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 October 14, 2019.**

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

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1 Information

Contact Information

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

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

Registration for Classes

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

American Studies Modules

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

International Students

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

Courses

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

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

Unless stated otherwise, **classes start in the week of October 14, 2019.**

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

Addresses:

GWZ (Geisteswissenschaftliches Zentrum), Beethovenstr. 15

NSG (Neues Seminargebäude), Universitätsstr. 5

HSG (Hörsaalgebäude), Universitätsstr. 7

2 BA Courses

2.1 Literature and Culture I (04-001-1001)

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Kanzler

Module organization & coordination: Dr. Spieler

This module acquaints students with the basic issues and techniques of American literary studies. It provides a survey of United States literary history as well as an introduction to the methods and theories employed in literary and cultural analysis.

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

Lecture: American Literary History

Monday, 11 am - 1 pm, HSG HS 6
Prof. Katja Kanzler

This lecture will provide a survey of US-American literary history from its colonial beginnings to the present. It will discuss important themes, modes, and genres that characterize American 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.

Seminar:

either a) Wednesday, 9 - 11 m, NSG 410
Hedwig Lieback

or b) Wednesday, 3 - 5 pm, NSG 114
Dr. Sophie Spieler

or c) Thursday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 412
Caroline Lyle

Based on American Studies’ comprehensive notion of ‘text’ as referring to any complex cultural artifact and on an understanding of ‘narrative’ as a fundamental category of human existence, the seminar’s underlying assumption is that the ability to ‘read’ texts is central to the ability to understand, analyze, and discuss culture more generally. To thus facilitate your ability to read complex texts, the seminar focuses on two main perspectives. It aims to help you develop an analytic vocabulary to talk about the specifics of narratives and their implementation into texts, and it aims to help you understand basic theoretical frameworks that discuss the connection between texts and culture in analytic terms. The seminar will moreover help you to develop a feeling for the questions and approaches typical of American Studies. Coursework will cover basic techniques of critically engaging texts, exemplary analyses and interpretations, as well as an overview over contemporary approaches in literary and cultural theory.

Tutorial (Übung):

either a) Tuesday, 11 am – 1 pm, GWZ 2.010
Heather Pruessing

or b) Tuesday, 1 – 3 pm, GWZ 2.010
Heather Pruessing

or c) Wednesday, 11 am -1 pm, NSG 114
Heather Pruessing

This course focuses on the language skills necessary for successful literary analysis. The tutorial will focus particularly on the form, function, and structure of the traditional English essay. Through various writing activities, which will progress in difficulty and length, students will gain the writing skills required to complete the module seminar's final assignment.

2.2 iTASK (international, interdisciplinary, integrated: Technical, Academic, Soft, and Career Skills) (04-001-1004)

Overall module responsibility: PD Dr. Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: Heather Pruessing

The goal of the module is to help students develop key skills to thrive in their studies and in their subsequent career choices. Reports from Germany and the United States show that a leading reason why students experience frustration and set-backs in their studies and career pursuits is because of a relative lack of preparation in how to integrate personal and professional goals into a comprehensive plan for continuous individual development. For the generation of students beginning university, your learning and working life is expected to last at least a half-century. This module is meant to help you prepare for that voyage. This module is thus meant to prepare you for the TASK ahead.

The module consists of one professional seminar and one praxis seminar

Lecture

Tuesday, 9 – 11am, GWZ 2.010
Heather Pruessing

This class takes place every two weeks.

There are four types of skills that determine to a large degree a student's success at university, and in different careers after receiving an undergraduate diploma. These are technical, academic, soft, and career skills. Moreover, the type of knowledge that one acquires at university plays a key role in how one thrives after leaving campus life. Especially important is knowledge that is international, interdisciplinary, and integrated into larger issues engaging societies worldwide. We will explore each set of skills, what they mean, and how to develop these further. We will do so by simultaneously exploring how they relate to the sort of knowledge and expertise expected across all sectors of the work world.

Lastly, we will integrate your learning experience together by developing your own studies-and-career-portfolio where you lay out goals, objectives, and plans for the next three years. This is the last but perhaps primary importance of the "i" before the TASK ahead, namely, it should be your individual experience that prepares you to thrive during your studies and career development.

Seminar

Wednesday, 1 – 3 pm, GWZ 2.010
Heather Pruessing

Using the broad themes discussed in the lecture, the module praxis seminar will delve into more practical detail. Through various written and oral assignments, students will deepen their professional skill set. Course goals include: cultivating skills for creating a persuasive CV and cover letter, for optimizing an internship or job search, for and acing an interview.

2.3 Language and Society – Applied Linguistics (04-001-1005)

Overall module responsibility: Dr. Reuter (Institut für Anglistik)

Module organization & coordination: Dr. Reuter (Institut für Anglistik)

The module consists of one lecture and two seminars

1005-1 Vorlesung Varietäten: Varieties of English

Tuesday, 7- 9 pm, HSG HS 3
Siebers, Lucia
(Institut für Anglistik)

This lecture provides an overview of the syntactic, lexical and phonological variation across different varieties of English. It introduces participants to varieties in the UK, the US, Australia/New Zealand and other localities in the English-speaking world. We will also consider the issues of standards and standardisation, language contact, as well as ethnic, social and stylistic varieties of English.

1005-2 Seminar Varietäten: Language variation and change in North American English

Wednesday. 11 am – 1 pm, NSG 115
Siebers, Lucia
(Institut für Anglistik)

Exam: oral presentation

This course provides an overview of the varieties of English spoken on the North American continent. Considering the settlement history of the United States and Canada, we will investigate how the different settler groups shaped the development of regional dialects and how contact with speakers from other languages resulted in the emergence of such contact varieties as African American English and Chicano English. The major aim of the seminar will be to trace the changes and developments in North American Englishes over the centuries as well as examine current changes in progress. In doing so, we will characterise North American varieties in terms of their linguistic features and examine to what extent variation in the use of these features is determined by extra-linguistic variables such as gender, age and ethnicity.

1005-3 Seminar Geschichte des US-Englisch: Historical Roots of Present-Day US-English

Friday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 222

Dr. Sylvia Reuter
(Institut für Anglistik)

Reading list: Reader at Printy`s (Ritterstr. 5) with syllabus, guidelines, and texts

Exam: written examination (60 min)

The seminar introduces into the earlier periods of all Englishes, i.e. into Old and Middle English, followed by Early Modern English as the decisive period for the birth of US-English. It then examines the most important factors that have shaped US-English from its beginnings in colonial times up to the present. Yet, as we move from the past into the present we will not only discuss changes on all language levels, i.e. vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation, but also investigate what authentic texts of various times teach us linguistically.

2.4 Society, History, and Politics II (04-001-1006)

Overall module responsibility: PD Dr. Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: T. Schlobach

This module is meant to provide students with an interdisciplinary, international, and integrated introduction to key developments and themes in the history, politics, and society of the United States from the Reconstruction period to the present.

The module consists of one lecture and two seminars

Lecture: American Horizons – North American History in a Global Context II: From the Civil War to 2001

Monday, 7 - 9 pm, HS 5
PD Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

The lecture explores how the unfolding of American history after the Civil War shaped American society and thus the country's political culture, its institutions, and the diverse groups living together in the United States. Topics to be covered include Reconstruction politics in the South, the rise of corporate America, the changing international role of American politics and culture, mass immigration and its impact, reform and civil rights movements, the globalization of American culture, and many more. The course thus integrates global, transatlantic, and international developments to better understand the nature of the American experience and its impact on international affairs.

Seminar: Sources of Wealth and Roots of Power - United States Economic and Social History in an International Context

Thursday, 3- 5 pm, NSG 302
Tobias Schlobach

[Moodle Link](#)

Although it has been more than ten years since the global financial crisis struck, its impact can still be felt around the world, may it be directly or in the form of subsequent economic and political crises, giving (new) importance to questions about the nature, mode of operation and history of the current economic system, as well as its impact on society and politics. This course offers a survey of international economic and social history, designed to introduce students to the world of economics and the implications it had—and has—for our living environment.

For this purpose, the seminar will explore the historical development of economic thought, survey key concepts and terminology, and examine their application to reality. We will also analyze the economic and political mechanisms at play, as well as their interplay and interconnection with social and societal history. A distinct focus will be laid on the United States and its development from being a mere component of the British economic empire to becoming one of its own, including the challenges and (r)evolutions involved in this process, as well as the implications on U.S. domestic and foreign policy. Within this context, additional emphasis will be put on the changing patterns of trade and the geopolitics/-economics of resources, from sugar islands over cotton fields to oil wells and digital industries.

Topics are chosen to show a wide variety of historical examples to students and to provide an understanding and critical perspective of the history and working principles of (modern) economies. Through argumentative essays and written reflections on assigned readings, students will additionally sharpen their competence in critical and analytical thinking, thus enabling them to come up with their own answers to the host of abovementioned questions.

Praxis Seminar

Wednesday, 9 – 11 am, NSG 114
Heather Pruessing

This tutorial will complement the module's lecture and seminar by offering further exposure to a diverse collection of primary documents from contemporary American history, politics, and society. The goal of this course is to solidify students' understanding of the lecture and seminar content, while simultaneously improving critical and analytical skills through discussion and written assignments.

2.5 Project Module (04-001-1009)

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Kanzler

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Kanzler

The module is designed to facilitate the acquisition of skills that prepare students to write a BA thesis in the near future. It will assist them in taking the necessary steps for developing a research project. This includes adequate ways of identifying the subject matter of a research project; researching relevant scholarship; formulating a research question; delimiting the body of material to be analyzed, determining appropriate research methods, and thus finding the topic for a scholarly project. Students will be required to design a research project; this includes submitting a short, annotated bibliography during the course of the semester and a poster presentation as well as a term paper at the end of the term.

The module consists of one colloquium

Project Colloquium

Wednesday, 5 -7 pm, GWZ 2.516
Prof. Katja Kanzler

3 MA Courses

3.1 Methods and Theories in American Studies (04-038-2001)

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Kanzler

Module organization & coordination: Dr. Schubert

This module provides students with an overview of key methods and theories employed in the interdisciplinary field of American Studies. It is meant to prepare students for the program's advanced modules.

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar: Methods and Theories I

Tuesday, 1 - 3 pm, GWZ 3.515

Prof. Katja Kanzler

This seminar is dedicated to some of the major theoretical frameworks both utilized and shaped by American Studies scholarship. We will read and discuss a selection of theoretical writings on themes like representation, narrative, media, 'race,' gender, and others. The selection will aim to strike a balance between 'classics' in the field of American Studies and approaches or paradigms that have recently come to the fore.

Seminar: Methods and Theories II

Monday, 3 - 5 pm, GWZ 3.515

Dr. Stefan Schubert

This seminar will address major paradigms of and theories used in American studies, tracing their evolution and contestation in the past sixty years of scholarship within the field. We will examine the history of American studies and the prevalence of different frameworks throughout the decades, from the myth-and-symbol school to the so-called 'New Americanists.' Our sessions will focus in particular on gaining an understanding of what 'method' and 'theory' entail, how they characterize a scholarly field, and how, for the humanities and American studies in particular, they are intrinsically connected to broader sociopolitical discussions. Students will learn to reflect on their own use of methods and theories and how to apply them in critical readings, scholarly arguments, and research projects.

3.2 Graduate Colloquium in American Studies (04-038-2002)

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Kanzler

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Kanzler

This module acquaints students with current issues and debates in American studies. Two exemplary seminars represent different academic traditions within this interdisciplinary field of inquiry, giving students an impression of their respective scholarly interests and approaches.

The module consists of two seminars

Postcolonial Theory and/in American Cultural Studies

Tuesday, 3 – 5 pm, GWZ 2.516

PD Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

This class serves a double purpose. First, it offers an introduction to key texts and key issues of postcolonial theory, asking for the main concern characteristic for that perspective. On a second level, the class actively places postcolonial theory within the interdisciplinary field of American Cultural Studies. How does postcolonial theory enrich our studies on American history, society, and culture, and how did the field of American Cultural Studies in general change because of interpretations offered by scholars from postcolonial theories?

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.

Seminar 2: Pod Save America – Popular Culture and Politics in the Age of Podcasting

Wednesday, 5- 7 pm, GWZ 3.515

Talel Ben Jemia

Over the past decade, podcasts have emerged as a crucial addition to the media landscape by merging traits of journalism, cultural and political commentary and serialized entertainment formats. This seminar will explore the media specificity of podcasting by drawing a line to the history of radio in American culture. We will further explore the different genres that have become primarily associated with podcasting (e.g., True Crime, newspaper reporting) and the ways in which they have been integrated into the 24/7 news cycle. The period we will focus on in this seminar is from the 2016 election onwards. We will explore how and why this particular medium has become so prominent in an era of partisan polarization.

3.3 iCAN: international, interdisciplinary and integrated Career and Academic Knowledge (04-038-2003)

Overall module responsibility: PD Dr. Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: Dr. Schmieder

The two seminars complement each other to introduce and embed for students how American Studies relates to major trends in international career development. What skills, knowledge, and experience are employers in such diverse professional sectors as education, media, international organizations, business, government branches, cultural exchange, and journalism looking for? How do these trends impact how one pursues graduate studies, and how one begins now to prepare for the period after graduate school? Repeated international studies confirm that students should be defining and designing their graduate school objectives and strategy from the outset of their graduate program. This goal is the purpose of requiring all students in the MA American Studies program at Leipzig to enroll in iCAN.

The module consists of an applied seminar with two sessions each week

Applied Seminar (*aspeers*)

Monday, 11 am - 1 pm, GWZ 3.515
Dr. Sophie Spieler

and

Thursday, 11 am - 1 pm, GWZ 3.515
Dr. Katja Schmieder

From identifying a topic of profound academic interest to writing a Call for Papers, from corresponding with authors to gathering financial support, from reviewing others' work to suggesting modifications, from grouping articles to sections to writing an introduction – editing a scholarly publication entails a wide range of professional skills central to academia and to non-academic work settings alike.

In 2007/08, the first group of editors founded and published *aspeers*, the first and currently only graduate-level peer-reviewed journal for European American Studies, i.e., a journal that publishes the critical work of pre-PhD authors from (other) European universities.

This semester, we will work to edit the 13th issue of the journal and to refine its positioning in the market. This will include learning about different publication formats and about academic publishing in the US and Germany in general. Most of the time and workload, however, will go into the editing process outlined above. Mostly working in project groups, the module thus provides a truly unique opportunity to acquire and improve professional skills in areas such as critical reading and writing, word processing, public relations, and communication.

3.4 Consumption, Culture and Identity (04-038-2011)

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Kanzler

Module organization & coordination: Dr. Schubert

This module focuses on the study of consumer and popular culture. The two seminars approach consumer culture from different academic perspectives, aiming to acquaint students with the respective research interests and methodologies they contribute to the exploration of consumption, culture, and identity.

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar: Food, Identity, and Textuality in North American Literature and Film

Tuesday, 9 – 11 am, GWZ 3.515
Prof. Katja Kanzler

From Mary Rowlandson's ostentatious refusal to eat the food offered by her Indian captors to the unnamed protagonist's emphatic "I am what I yam!" in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, North American authors have repeatedly used food to unfold their stories. Their texts (in print and on screen) feature food—a wide variety of fare as well as scenes of its preparation, consumption, or refusal—as potent and multifaceted signifiers. In this seminar, we will explore some dimensions of this narrative tradition, along with selected critical paradigms by which literary and cultural scholarship have approached it. We will pay particular attention to the ways in which culinary signifiers have helped U.S.-American and Canadian narratives negotiate issues of national identity, ethnic belonging, gender roles, and psychological as well as bodily selfhood. We will discuss how food unfolds its signifying potential in a variety of cultural forms, such as autobiography, the novel, poetry, and film.

Please note that this is a discussion- and reading-intensive graduate seminar. Students outside the MA American Studies, including international students, are generally welcome, but should inquire for prerequisites with Prof. Kanzler (katja.kanzler@uni-leipzig.de).

Seminar: Consuming Narratives—Identities—Politics

Thursday, 11 am – 1 pm, GWZ 2.516
Dr. Stefan Schubert

Contemporary US culture has been increasingly obsessed with the consumption of narratives—not just with reading or watching fictional stories but with 'consuming,' in various forms and media, phenomena and discourses that display notably narrative characteristics. In particular, such narratives are closely linked to the (socio)political realm, providing their 'readers' with subject positions to conform to or ways to explain their (postmodern) selves that intrinsically form distinctly political and ideological identities as well: From the proliferation of fake news that misrepresent US politics in order to demonize either conservative or progressive voters, to conspiracy theories about the 'deep state,' a 'flat Earth,' or 'cultural Marxism,' to movements about the consumption of food or the alleged loss of 'men's rights,' American political culture seems to produce, more than ever, narratives that explain

the world in paradoxically simpler, less complex, and often more antagonistic terms, providing meaning and structure to Americans' lives.

In this seminar, we will trace this proliferation of 'political' narratives and Americans' readiness to consume them in order to better understand the contemporary cultural moment, to analyze how (popular) culture, literature, and 'politics' are interwoven, and to probe into the narrative peculiarities of these discourses. We will look at these phenomena from the perspective of literary and cultural studies to investigate both a range of fictional treatments of this 'political' consumption of narratives, for instance in *American Psycho* (1991/2000), *The Circle* (2013), *Westworld* (2016-), or *Leave No Trace* (2018), and examples from online communities and news magazines that foster discussions around, among others, celebrity culture, online conspiracies, and an alleged white male victimization.

Please note that this is a discussion- and reading-intensive graduate seminar. Students outside the MA American Studies, including international students, are generally welcome, but should inquire for prerequisites with Dr. Schubert (stefan.schubert@uni-leipzig.de).

3.5 Immigration, Ethnicity, and Citizenship (04-038-2012)

Overall module responsibility: PD Dr. Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: PD Dr. Stieglitz

The United States is a country of immigration; Germany is not. Thus the standard line to contrast a basic difference between the two countries in terms of mobility and citizenship. Reality is of course considerably more complex for both countries. Human mobility and ethnic diversity stand at the center of how the United States has perceived itself from its earliest moments. The concept of citizenship, of the formal political and social contract involving rights and obligations for those born into citizenship, or granted citizenship, lies at the heart of how a country perceives its basic values, norms, institutions – in short, that for which it stands. The American story cannot be understood without a strong appreciation of how immigration and ethnicity and their importance for defining citizenship have infused the country's construction, and struggle with itself. In the debates about state, society, and citizenship, the United States and Europe have played a fundamental role in influencing each other's evolving models with which to regulate mobility, diversity, and belonging.

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar 1: Long Journeys to Become Citizens – Histories of Asian American Immigration

Monday, 3 - 5 pm, GWZ 2.516

PD Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

This class aims to bring forward the many strands of Asian American history, highlighting the distinctive nature of the Asian American experience while placing it in the context of the major trajectories and turning points of U.S. history. Covering not only histories of Chinese and Japanese but also those of Filipinos, Koreans, Asian Indians, and Vietnamese, the class tries to give attention to the diversity within Asian America. We will deal with policies of regulation and with practices of resistance, with topics concerning histories of labor and business, gender and sexuality, representation and popular culture from the 19th century to current developments.

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.

Seminar 2: Black Women and Their Interior Lives in Literature (Picador Guest Professor Morgan Jerkins)

Tuesday, 11 am - 1 pm, GWZ 3.5.15

Morgan Jerkins (Picador Guest Professor)

Throughout history, black women have been some of the least understood and most criticized characters. There are many assumptions made about their speech, sexual behavior, and personality and the literary canon is not exempt. Over the years, black women have resisted these narrow stereotypes and constrictions on their bodies through the written word as a way to reclaim their

narratives and dismantle white supremacy. In this course, we will read, contextualize, and discuss the works of women of the diaspora from places such as America, Guadeloupe, Nigeria, France, and Italy, and from writers such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Maryse Condé, and Toni Morrison. We will consider topics such as citizenship and migration, ancestral trauma, the struggle for self autonomy, and the ontological battles of finding their places in the world.

This class will conclude in December. The precise class schedule will be discussed in the first session.

3.6 Transatlantic Space (04-038-2010)

Overall module responsibility: PD Dr. Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: PD Dr. Stieglitz

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar 1: Body, Nation, Citizenship – 20th Century U.S. Body Politics in Transnational Perspective

Tuesday, 1 - 3 pm, GWZ 2.516

PD Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

This class interrogates the connections among the body, the nation, and the world in 20th century U.S. history. The idea that bodies and bodily characteristics are heavily freighted with values that are often linked to political and social spheres remains underdeveloped in the histories of America's relations with the rest of the world. Attentive to diverse state and nonstate actors, the class asks for the national and transnational dimensions of biopolitics. Topics range from regulating sexuality during periods of U.S. military occupation to Cold War ideal of American feminine beauty, and from "body counts" as metrics of military success to cultural representations relating immigrant groups and health issues.

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.

Seminar 2: The Art of Brevity: Short-Form Storytelling in Transnational Perspective

Thursday, 3 - 5 pm, GZW 2.516

Dr. Sophie Spieler

In this seminar we will explore the so-called transnational turn in cultural and literary studies by studying its theoretical premises and its practical implications. We will do so by foregrounding an array of short-form storytelling formats as case studies: the short story (as perhaps the most 'American' of literary genres), the anecdote, poetry, advertising, short films, etc. The aim of this seminar is to move away from the restrictive concept of the nation in order to make visible the various artistic, political, social, and economic connections that link the US to the rest of the (transatlantic) world and fundamentally shape its cultural output.

4 Lehramt Courses

4.1 Modul *-2401: “American Literatures, American Societies”

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Kanzler, PD Dr. Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: E. Ravizza

The module is designed specifically to train future teachers to deepen their American-studies knowledge. The students will engage with American literary and cultural texts, with critical theory, and with important socio-historical contexts. In the seminar, they will also practice their analytical skills in close readings of American literary and filmic texts, and they will learn how to implement this knowledge in the classroom. The exam for the module consists of an extensive analytic project, in the form of a portfolio exam, prepared by the students during the course of the seminar.

The module consists of one lecture, one seminar and one (optional) workshop

2401-1 Lecture: Society, History, and Politics II

American Horizons – North American History in a Global Context II: From the Civil War to 2001

Monday, 7 - 9 pm, HS 5
PD Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

The lecture explores how the unfolding of American history after the Civil War shaped American society and thus the country’s political culture, its institutions, and the diverse groups living together in the United States. Topics to be covered include Reconstruction politics in the South, the rise of corporate America, the changing international role of American politics and culture, mass immigration and its impact, reform and civil rights movements, the globalization of American culture, and many more. The course thus integrates global, transatlantic, and international developments to better understand the nature of the American experience and its impact on international affairs.

2401-2 Seminar: Teaching America – American Literature, Media, and Culture

Choose one out of six seminars (2401-2a-f):

2401-2a/b/c American Monsters: Constructions of the Other

Tuesday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 411
Eleonora Ravizza

or

Tuesday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 411
Eleonora Ravizza

or

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

As Judith Halberstam once claimed, monsters are “meaning machines.” The concept of the monster has the ability to instigate discussions on what it means to be human and challenge such conceptions. A myriad of characteristics have been attributed to what constitutes monstrosity, evolving over time to reflect the most feared Otherness of the moment, from immigration to queerness, from diseases to anything considered 'abnormal.' The idea of the monstrous has historically been used to discriminate and to manufacture fear towards the Other, but it has, at times, also been embraced as an empowering label.

In this seminar, we will explore monstrosity from different angles and we will discuss various strategies of meaning-making in fictional texts, looking at how the monster intersects with American studies categories such as gender, race, queerness, bodies, and genre. The seminar will allow students to deepen their understanding of American literature and culture as well as to engage with literary and cultural theory in order to analyze a thematically fitting primary text of their choice.

The texts analyzed in class will include Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), *Alien* (Scott, 1979), Charlotte Perkins Gilman's “The Yellow Wallpaper” (1892), and *The Silence of the Lambs* (Demme, 1991). The exam for this module is a portfolio exam that will consist of different written elements showcasing what students have learned throughout the semester.

2401-2d/e/f American Dreams, American Nightmares

Wednesday, 1 - 3 pm, GWZ 2.516
Eleonora Ravizza

or

Thursday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 403
Eleonora Ravizza

or

Thursday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 403
Eleonora Ravizza

“For many, the American Dream has become a nightmare.” Bernie Sanders made this statement in 2016, referring to the economic difficulties of many Americans. Since its inception, the American Dream has been one of the most recognizably American myths, but in recent years it has come under scrutiny, both in politics and in academia. However, American literature and culture have been questioning, challenging, or deconstructing this myth for a long time.

In the seminar, we will look at the portrayal of the American Dream in fiction, particularly paying attention to narratives of economic success, suburban families, and immigration. We will examine the various meanings of the American Dream and how it has evolved over time. We will also engage with American nightmares—American dreams gone wrong—as represented in crime or post-apocalyptic and dystopian narratives as well as with distortions or revisions of the Dream. The seminar will allow students to deepen their understanding of American literature and culture as well as to engage with literary and cultural theory in order to analyze a thematically fitting primary text of their choice.

The texts analyzed in class will include *The Truman Show* (Weir, 1998), Richard Yates' *Revolutionary Road* (1961), and *Thelma & Louise* (Scott, 1991). The exam for this module is a portfolio exam that will consist of different written elements showcasing what students have learned throughout the semester.

Workshops:

In addition to the seminar, (optional) workshops will be offered. The workshops will support the students in developing important skills needed to complete the portfolio exam. Some of the topics covered will include how to create a research bibliography, how to discuss theory, and how to practice film analysis.

The exact schedule will be available on Moodle. Signup for the workshops will work via Moodle, as will be explained in the first week of classes. The workshops will take place on **Tuesday 3-5 pm, Wednesday 3-5 pm, or Thursday 3-5 pm.**

5 Creative Writing

5.1 BA Professional Skills Module “Creative Writing: Imagining America” (04-001-1019)

(5 credits)

Overall module responsibility: Dr. Schubert

Module organization & coordination: Dr. Schubert

Wednesday, 11.15 am-12.45 pm, GWZ 3.5.15
Morgan Jerkins (Picador Guest Professor)

Seminar: Creative Nonfiction Workshop

Wednesday, 11.15 am-12 pm, GWZ 3.5.15

Tutorial: Creative Nonfiction Workshop

Wednesday, 12 pm-12.45 pm, GWZ 3.5.15

This workshop will be focused on creating a strong narrative from our personal histories as well as finding our individual tools with which to equip us for the journey of exploring our former selves from these experiences. Through close readings of each other's works, we will pay close attention not only to technical components, such as tone, rhythm, and style, but also more developmental aspects like momentum, idea trajectories, and emotional reporting. Our discussions on craft will often be supplemented with advice-centered work from authors like Alexander Chee, Vivian Gornick, and Joan Didion. Students will be expected not only to submit original material but also to give in-depth critiques to their classmates. This class is for anyone no matter their writing level for we will be challenging each other to dig deep into our memories, experiment with form, and actively engage with language and technique.

This class will conclude in December. The precise class schedule will be discussed in the first session.

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