

Courses Catalog Winter Semester 2021/2022

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 11, 2021.**

Students are responsible for keeping track of updates on actual course dates (some are alternating). Please note that **classes take place in person** (unless noted otherwise) and that specific **safety protocols** are in place for everybody to be able to participate (**see our news item**).

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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**. 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 11, 2021**. 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 Literature and Culture I (04-001-1001)

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

Module organization & coordination: Dr. Stefan Schubert

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: US-American Literature: Beginnings to Present

Tuesday, 9 - 11 am, HS 12

Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

This lecture will provide a survey of 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) Thursday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 110

Dr. Stefan Schubert

or b) Thursday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 322

Solveig Kloss

or c) Monday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 224

George Rainov

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.

The seminars start in the week of **October 18.**

Tutorial (Übung):

either a) Wednesday, 9 - 11 am, NSG 428
Heather Pruessing

or b) Wednesday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG 428
Heather Pruessing

or c) Wednesday, 1 pm - 3pm, NSG 428
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.

The tutorials start in the week of **October 18**.

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Olaf 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

Professional seminar

Tuesday, 1- 3 pm, NSG 114
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.

Praxis Seminar

Tuesday, 11am – 1 pm, NSG 114
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 Society, History, and Politics II (04-001-1006)

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: Tobias 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

*To complete the module, students need to attend the **Lecture**, one **Issues Seminar (Seminar 1a or 1b)** and one **Key Documents Seminar (Seminar 2a or 2b)***

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

Monday, 5 - 7 pm, HS 5
Prof. 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 different social 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.

To get full credit for this class, students must pass a final written exam (in-class or at home test) in form of an essay.

Seminar 1a: Sources of Wealth and Roots of Power – Historical, Societal and Global Dimensions of United States Economic & Political Culture

Thursday, 3 - 5 pm, NSG 322
Tobias Schlobach

Perhaps more than in any other country, the economy and economic issues seem to play a prominent—if not dominant—role in U.S. society and political culture, being widely perceived as—if not the—key factors of influence on the country's history, as well as its domestic and foreign policy. Dating back to even before independence, this peculiar interrelation between economic and political issues has consistently and decisively influenced the country's development ever since, with repercussions echoing in many of today's important issues, like the strive for social and climate justice, globalization, international treaty-making and alliance-building, or military efforts abroad.

This seminar will explore U.S. history from an economic and political, and social perspective, contextualizing it with the global settings in which it unfolded. Using both key individual moments and essential broad developments in U.S. and global history as backdrop and context, we will examine the material and structural settings and conditions that shaped U.S. economic and political culture, including the challenges and (r)evolutions involved in this process, as well as their implications for U.S. domestic and foreign policy to this day.

Seminar 1b: Conspiracy Narratives in the United States: From the Lost Cause to Loose Change

Thursday, 11am - 1pm, GWZ 2 5.16

Danson Wolfe

In this seminar we will approach post-Civil War North American History through the lens of Conspiracy Theory. Using this lens, such topics as American Imperialism, immigration and internal migration, the Red Scare(s), the War on Terror, the Space Race, and social upheaval and reform, among others, will be addressed regarding their historicity alongside the social narratives told then and now. The course strives to provide a contextual overview combined with analytical training that will aid scholars in their understanding of the society, history, and politics of the United States, past and present.

Praxis Seminar 2a - 2b

either 2a) Tuesday, 9 – 11 am, NSG 114

Heather Pruessing

or 2b) Wednesday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 305

Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

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.

2.4 Project Module (04-001-1009)

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

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

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, 3 - 5 pm, NSG 125
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

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 course will start on **October 20**.

2.5 Ethnicity and Diversity in US Culture (04-001-1018)

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

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

The goal of this module is to enable students to understand the United States as a multiethnic and multicultural space and to discuss on an academic level the cultural productions of various ethnic groups in the contexts of their specific historical and cultural development.

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

Lecture

Thursday, 9 - 11 am, HS 5
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

The lectures will discuss key concepts of and developments in race, ethnicity and minority studies as well as explore the cultures and histories of ethnic groups in the U.S., focusing especially on the literatures and cultures of U.S. Latinos/as, African Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans.

Lectures will start on **October 21**.

Seminar: "A technical white elephant": Whiteness and (Post-)Racial Representations in US Visual and Material Culture

Thursday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 115
Dr. Steffen Wöll

In his influential study of whiteness, Richard Dyer noted that "[a]s long as race is something only applied to non-white peoples, as long as white people are not racially seen and named, they/we function as the human norm. Other people are raced, we are just people." Taking this insight as a point of departure, this seminar explores representations of race and ethnicity in the United States with a focus on visual and material culture. Investigating constructions of whiteness and Otherness and their supposed post-racial dissolution, we will discuss a broad spectrum of sources. These may range from depictions of animals and landscapes, movies about cyborgs or zombies, and visualizations of internal Others in horror films.

The seminar will start on **October 21**.

Tutorial (Übung): Spoken Academic Discourse

Monday, 9 - 11 am, Seminargebäude S 222
Dr. Patrick McAfferty (Institut für Anglistik)

Exam: oral examination (15 min)

This course focuses on equipping students to improve their command of the processes involved in organizing clear, effective academic presentations as well as those practical language skills most frequently needed in spoken English as used in the context of research-based academic discourse. The exercises will engage with different media used for academic conference presentations.

3 MA Courses

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

Module organization & coordination: Dr. Katja Schmieder

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

Wednesday, 3 - 5 pm, NSG 421
Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

This seminar is dedicated to some of the 'grand' theories of the humanities and social sciences that are both utilized and shaped by American Studies scholarship. We will read and discuss a selection of theoretical writings on narrative, media, 'race,' gender/sex, and justice. The selection will aim to strike a balance between classics in the field of American Studies and approaches that have recently come to the fore. Additionally, it will make a point in exposing you to diverse voices and registers in theoretical writing.

Seminar: Methods and Theories II

Wednesday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 322
Dr. Katja Schmieder

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. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez, Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez, Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

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

Seminar 1: Memory Matters – Memory Studies & the African American Civil Rights Movement

Tuesday, 3 – 5 pm, NSG 326

Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

This class tries to accomplish three goals. First, it takes as its starting point the current debates about the public role of history and its memory within US society and culture. As we can see, hear, and read every day, the visible presence of statues, flags, buildings and other material or immaterial artefacts and ideas trigger enormous emotions and lead to heated and at times even violent controversies. This class interrogates the chronicle of these ‘history wars’ and asks, how the struggle for some usable past shapes political and cultural conflicts of the present.

On that base, the class, as its second main objective, shall offer an introduction to key texts and key issues of Memory Studies and Public History, asking for the increased relevance that these fields got within American Cultural Studies over the last decades. How do Memory Studies and Public History enrich our interest on North American history, society, and culture, and how did the field of American Cultural Studies in general change because of interpretations offered by scholars working within these areas?

On a third level, this class makes use of the memory politics revolving around the (long) African American Civil Rights Movement as a case study for discussing how the concepts of Memory Studies (and Public History) are transmitted into memory projects such as freedom trails, museums, educational programs, films, comic books, etc.

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.

To get full credit for this class, students write a **term paper / essay** of about 6,500 words, due **March 30th, 2022**.

Seminar 2: Identity and Social Difference in American Culture and Literature

Wednesday, 11 am - 1 pm, GWZ 2 5.16

Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

This course will address the construction and negotiation of difference and identity in American literature and culture. How have categories of difference such as Race and Ethnicity, Gender, Social Class, Sexuality, and Disability been constructed in American history? We will look at fictional and nonfictional texts as well as theory and critical essays to discuss how notions of identity and difference have changed, and how the definition as “different” has impacted on identity constructions and performance and on group and self-representation. Our discussion of difference and identity will be concerned with practices of exclusion such as stigmatization and criminalization as well as with configurations of difference such as migrancy, disability, poverty, blackness, and others. The last three sessions will be dedicated to student group projects.

This course will start on **October 20th**.

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

Module organization & coordination: Dr. Stefan Schubert

The two seminars complement each other to introduce and embed for students how American Studies relates to major trends in international career development. sWhat 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, NSG 414
Annika Schadewaldt

and

Thursday, 3 - 5 pm, NSG 112
Dr. Stefan Schubert

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 15th 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 Transatlantic Space (04-038-2010)

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar 1: Key Texts in the Transatlantic Histories of Black Radicalism

Tuesday, 9 am - 11 am, NSG 413

Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

For the last 500 years, the Atlantic world has been absorbing a considerable portion of the world's population into its complex economic, political, and cultural systems. The transatlantic slave trades, the plantation economies in the Americas and colonial racial regimes consolidated capitalism as a world-system, led to the rise of the 'West,' to mass emigration out of Europe and Asia, to the widespread decimation of Native communities, and to the massive uprooting of Africans from their various geographical and cultural locations. However, where we can locate histories of domination, we invariably find histories of resistance and liberation. The cultural, intellectual, and political traditions of West Indian, African American or (Pan-)African liberation movements are equally histories of resistance to this social order as they are formulations of alternatives to it.

In this seminar, we will trace and discuss the wide range of intellectual, cultural, and political traditions of Black Radical Thought throughout the Atlantic world that sought to overcome these structures of domination. This course will draw most of its primary and secondary readings from the Black intellectual traditions internal and external to American studies, which offer students a lens through which enslavement, liberation, class, race, and gender oppression, as well as uprooting and migrations have been experienced. These readings will encompass a variety of authors from the US, UK, the West Indies, Latin America, and Africa.

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.

To get full credit for this class, students write a term paper / essay of about 6,500 words, due March 30th, 2022.

Seminar 2: From Transatlantic to Global to Planetary: Geopolitical Imaginaries in North American Science Fiction

Wednesday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 421

Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

In many ways, science fiction has always been a privileged genre for reflections on globalization. As science fiction-scholar Istvan Csicsery-Ronay notes, the genre tends to “depict [...] humanity as if from outer space as one species, and the world as one planet,” making “globalization of one form or another [...] the default vector of sf from the beginning.” Science fiction’s narratives of interplanetary travel and encounter, exploration and colonization, of interconnectivity between worlds offer an imaginative space to think through structures and dynamics of interconnection on the smaller scales of our social reality. In addition, the distant worlds and futures that the genre imagines by way of extrapolation and speculation defamiliarize this social reality in ways that can animate critical thinking about how we want our global coexistence to be organized. At the same time, science fiction and science fictional discourse have been implicated in authorizing imperial expansionism and the proliferation of global capitalism, and the genre’s narratives reflect on this legacy in very different ways.

In this seminar, we will read a selection of science fiction narratives for how they “theorize globalization,” as David M. Higgins puts it in a special issue of *SF Studies* on the genre’s relationship to globalization. This selection will put an emphasis on more recent publications, and its reading will be accompanied by discussions of key paradigms of science fiction studies.

Please note that this is a discussion- and reading-intensive graduate seminar. 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).

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

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 1: Domestic Spaces and Practices in US-American Writing

Monday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 124
Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

Many discourses of consumption and identity converge in domestic space. The home, present as well as past, is a key site for the performance and display of consumerism, while being tied to often normative scripts of gendered, classed, and racialized (re-)production and consumption. On a symbolic level, the home, as Gillian Brown highlights in her influential study of 19th century US culture, has served as a powerful metaphor of individualism, through which subjects can express their selfhood and interiority in ways that are also greatly framed by hegemonic identity discourses. Unsurprisingly against this backdrop, the home has been a major subject of writing, in which these cultural semantics have been articulated, resisted, and negotiated – from the domestic novels of the 19th century to contemporary neo-domestic fiction, from advice books to reality tv.

In this seminar, we will discuss a set of texts, along with relevant scholarship, that thus address domestic spaces and practices. The texts will range from the 19th century to the contemporary period, and while the emphasis will be on literary narratives, we will also look at other materials like advice manuals and reality shows.

Please note that this is a discussion- and reading-intensive graduate seminar. 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).

Seminar 2: Asian American Poetry

Tuesday, 3 - 5 pm, GWZ 2 5.16
Prof. Don Mee Choi (Picador Guest Professor)

In this course, we will explore some of the literary innovations generated by contemporary Asian American and Pacific Islander poets. We will examine their poetic/textual innovations in the contexts of war, colonization, migration, diaspora identity, inherited memory and trauma, and resistance. We will also examine how Asian American culture and identity is marketed and consumed. We will read and discuss works by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Jennifer Hayashida, Cathy Park Hong, Diana Khoi Nguyen, Hoa Nguyen, Barbara Jane Reyes, Craig Santos Perez, Prageeta Sharma, Brandon Shimoda, Divya Victor, and Jeffrey Yang.

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Olaf 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: Fictions of (Un)belonging: Citizenship in US Literature and Culture

Thursday, 3 -5 pm, NSG 320
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

Over the past few years, the ongoing debate about immigration and immigrants in the US has been marked by a resurfacing in public discourse of harmful stereotypes, openly voiced fears about outsiders, and nativist rhetoric. Many of these discussions are deeply rooted in century-long conversations about who is allowed into the country, who belongs and who does not. At the same time, they raise questions about citizenship, identity and belonging that in a globalized world are of pressing importance. What does it mean to be American? How is citizenship defined, and who defines it? How is this definition shaped by our relationships to other human beings? This course will consider the concept of citizenship by examining how writers have used literature to represent and think the meaning of nationhood, race, migration, and belonging. We will discuss texts by, among others, Hannah Arendt, Walt Whitman, Rudolph Fischer, Chang Rae-Lee, Leslie Marmon Silko, Richard Rodriguez, and Teju Cole, along with critical essays on the concept of citizenship.

This course starts on **October 21**.

Seminar 2: Entrance / Exit – Policies of Immigration and Deportation in US History

Wednesday, 9 am - 11 am, GWZ 2 5.16

Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

This course has a double purpose. On a first level, it offers a broad introduction into US immigration and deportation history, focusing on migrant groups from Europe and Asia since the 1830s and how they were welcomed (or not) by the American public. More importantly though, this class discusses and analyzes the long history of distinguishing and separating between wanted and unwanted immigrants at the United States' borders. Undesirable immigration had been regulated since the 19th century on political, legal, economic, social, and cultural grounds; gender, race, class, nationality, political affiliation, and characteristics of assumed physical disability were used to classify 'un-Americans,' 'illegal aliens,' and 'subversives.' A main emphasize of the course should revolve around the deportation regime that emerged around that selection process and how it was both politically and legally justified but also challenged. In addition, the course will focus on the strategies and practices immigrants used to circumvent official barriers and to struggle for their right to remain in the United States.

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.

To get full credit for this class, students write a **term paper / essay** of about 6,500 words, due **March 30th, 2022**.

4 Lehramt Courses

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez, Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: Dr. Eleonora 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

Choose one out of two Lectures (2401-1a or 2401-1b):

2401-1a American Horizons – North American History in a Global Context II: From the Civil War to 2001

Monday, 5 - 7 pm, HS 5
Prof. 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 different social 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.

2401-1b Lecture “Ethnicity and Diversity in US Culture”

Thursday 9 - 11 am, HS 5
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

The lectures will discuss key concepts of and developments in race, ethnicity and minority studies as well as explore the cultures and histories of ethnic groups in the U.S., focusing especially on the literatures and cultures of U.S. Latinos/as, African Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans.

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

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

2401-2a/b: Bodies in American Culture

Tuesday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 110
Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

or

Tuesday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 110
Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

Bodies represent a fundamental site where power is negotiated. Looking at how bodies are controlled, regulated, narrated, historicized, weaponized, institutionalized, and theorized can offer critical insights into American culture. By exploring, for example, how differently looking bodies can be constructed as monstrous, how male bodies can be militarized for the benefit of a war narrative, or how non-white bodies can be subjugated or exoticized in a colonial context, we can try to understand the cultural politics expressed in diverse narratives around bodies.

In this seminar, we will examine different conceptualizations of bodies and we will look at how bodies are represented in American popular culture through different lenses, such as gender, queerness, race, class, and disability. The seminar will enable 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 primary text of their choice.

The exam for this module is a portfolio exam that will consist of different written components which will showcase what students have learned throughout the semester.

2401-2 c/d: Elections in American Film and Fiction: Media and Identity in American Narratives of Political Persuasion

Tuesday, 11 am - 1 pm, GWZ 2 5.16
Dr. Sebastian Herrmann

or

Tuesday, 1 - 3 pm, GWZ 2 5.16
Dr. Sebastian Herrmann

This seminar will use narratives of the US presidential election as a critical lens to better understand US culture. In the first half of our seminar, we will look at how these texts develop only very limited visions of who can be a successful and 'electable' political player. Specifically, we will look at how these texts negotiate gender, race, and class, both individually and as intersecting categories of difference. We will then shift gears to explore how election texts imagine the power of media to manipulate voters and shape political outcomes. Doing so will allow us to think more fundamentally about the model of personhood all of these texts rely on, and on the myths of individualism they deploy.

The exam for this module is a portfolio exam. It combines different written components which will encapsulate your learning process over the course of the semester.

2401-2 e/f: Digital Dystopias? Surveillance, Simulation, and Identity in US Culture across Media

Wednesday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 321
Dr. Sebastian Herrmann

or

Wednesday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 321
Dr. Sebastian Herrmann

American culture is ripe with texts that envision the dangers of the digital. At times, these visions of danger stem from how artificial intelligence might surpass that of humans, at times from how data can be used to surveil the individual, and at times from how the individual might be duped by simulated environments. In all these cases, the digital constitutes a powerful metaphor for these texts to think about contemporary, postmodern society and its relation to the individual. In exploring these texts, we will look at how they negotiate race, class, and gender, and at the model of personhood they rely on. Doing so will allow us to think about the more fundamental politics of their dystopian outlook.

The exam for this module is a portfolio exam. It combines different written components which will encapsulate your learning process over the course of 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 or Wednesday 3 - 5 pm.

4.2 Modul *-1601 “US Society and Diversity: Politics, History and Culture” (Ergänzungsstudien)

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez, Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez, Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Please note: If you are taking both this module (1601) and the module American Literatures, American Societies (2401), then you must choose lecture 2401-1a (American Horizons – North American History in a Global Context II: From the Civil War to 2001 by PD Dr. Olaf Stieglitz) in module 2401.

The module consists of one lecture and one seminar

*To complete the module, students need to attend the **Lecture** and one **Seminar** (Seminar 1a or 1b)*

Lecture “Ethnicity and Diversity in US Culture”

Thursday 9 - 11 am, HS 5
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

The lectures will discuss key concepts of and developments in race, ethnicity and minority studies as well as explore the cultures and histories of ethnic groups in the U.S., focusing especially on the literatures and cultures of U.S. Latinos/as, African Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans.

Seminar 1a: Sources of Wealth and Roots of Power – Historical, Societal and Global Dimensions of United States Economic & Political Culture

Thursday, 3 - 5 pm, NSG 322
Tobias Schlobach

Perhaps more than in any other country, the economy and economic issues seem to play a prominent—if not dominant—role in U.S. society and political culture, being widely perceived as—if not the—key factors of influence on the country’s history, as well as its domestic and foreign policy. Dating back to even before independence, this peculiar interrelation between economic and political issues has consistently and decisively influenced the country’s development ever since, with repercussions echoing in many of today’s important issues, like the strive for social and climate justice, globalization, international treaty-making and alliance-building, or military efforts abroad.

This seminar will explore U.S. history from an economic and political, and social perspective, contextualizing it with the global settings in which it unfolded. Using both key individual moments and essential broad developments in U.S. and global history as backdrop and context, we will examine the material and structural settings and conditions that shaped U.S. economic and political culture, including the challenges and (r)evolutions involved in this process, as well as their implications for U.S. domestic and foreign policy to this day.

Seminar 1b: Conspiracy Narratives in the United States: From the Lost Cause to Loose Change

Thursday, 11am - 1pm, GWZ 2 5.16

Danson Wolfe

In this seminar we will approach post-Civil War North American History through the lens of Conspiracy Theory. Using this lens, such topics as American Imperialism, immigration and internal migration, the Red Scare(s), the War on Terror, the Space Race, and social upheaval and reform, among others, will be addressed regarding their historicity alongside the social narratives told then and now. The course strives to provide a contextual overview combined with analytical training that will aid scholars in their understanding of the society, history, and politics of the United States, past and present.

5 Creative Writing

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

(5 credits)

Overall module responsibility: Annika Schadewaldt

Module organization & coordination: Annika Schadewaldt

Poetry Writing

Monday, 3 - 5 pm, GWZ 2 5.16
Prof. Don Mee Choi (Picador Guest Professor)

Poet Forrest Gander notes that the act of writing poetry is one of the least predatory acts that one can engage in. We will delve into the act of writing poetry by reading and discussing poetry across cultures and languages to explore its thematic and formal possibilities. We will write short and long poems, prose poems, homophonic translation poems, fairy-tale poems, letter-and-diary poems, mixed-media poems, documentary poems, and erasure poems. We will have regular in-class poetry readings and offer supportive feedback on peer work. The final project will involve generating an individual or collaborative chapbook (about 10-12 poems).

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