

Course Catalogue Winter Semester 2023/24

American Studies Leipzig

Below please find our course catalog. We will update these pages throughout the break. Unless stated otherwise, **classes start in the week of October 9, 2023.**

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 (BA, MA, Lehramt), please have a look at the Registration Information Sheet (will be available later). 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 and at the appendix to our Conditions of Study.

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 October 9, 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 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) Monday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 410

Dr. Stefan Schubert

or b) Tuesday, 3 - 5 pm, NSG 412

Leonie Kratzenstein

or c) Wednesday, 3 - 5 pm, NSG 110

Annika Schadewaldt

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.

All LC I seminars start in the week of October 16, 2023.

Tutorial (Übung):

either a) Monday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 222
Anne Bertram

or b) Wednesday, 9 - 11 am, NSG 110
Heather Pruessing

or c) Wednesday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 110
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.

All LC I tutorials start in the week of October 16, 2023.

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 lecture and one praxis seminar

Lecture

Wednesday, 5 - 7 pm (**every other week**), NSG 102

Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

The lecture series brings in several speakers from outside academia to introduce students to relevant professional opportunities in areas such as journalism, employment in foundations, or businesses. It imparts orientation knowledge about the competencies with which potential occupational fields in American Studies can be developed as well as about current discourses regarding development trends in the international job market in the humanities and social sciences. Within the framework of the lectures, students can enter an exchange with experts from relevant professional fields.

Praxis Seminar

Thursday, 11am – 1 pm, NSG 414

Heather Pruessing

or Thursday, 1 – 3 pm, NSG 414

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.

Heather Pruessings classes start in the week of October 16, 2023.

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

The module consists of one lecture and two seminars

1005-1 Lecture Varieties: Varieties of English

Tuesday, 7 - 9 pm, HS 3
Prof. Dr. Ole Schützler

Reading list: will be provided in the course

This lecture broadly focuses on (predominantly synchronic) variation in English and some models and theories that have been advanced to account for it. We will look at variable properties of language at different levels (e.g. phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, etc.) as well as different dimensions along which such properties can vary. These include region (traditional rural dialects, modern urban dialects, postcolonial varieties), mode (written vs. spoken language), as well as social factors like gender, age and socio-economic status. We will discuss how those dimensions overlap, talk about issues like language attitudes and standardisation, and we will generally keep an open eye for interesting research areas in present-day English.

1005-2 Seminar Varieties: From *prescribing* to *describing* (American) English usage

Friday, 9 – 11 am, NSG 224
Dr. Jakob Neels

Exam: oral presentation

Recommended preparation: *Bridging the unbridgeable: A project on English usage guides*. Leiden University Centre for Linguistics. <<https://bridgingtheunbridgeable.com>>.

Reading list: The required readings will be made available on Moodle.

Although variability is a key feature of natural languages, members of modern societies permeated with codified norms tend to believe that there can be only one correct way to phrase something in their language. Thus, coexisting linguistic variants often entail usage problems: *sneaked* or *snuck*; *none of them is* or *none of them are*; *less* or *fewer*; *different from*, *to*, or *than*; *who I met* or *whom I met*; *continual* or *continuous*; *to secretly admire* or *to admire secretly*; and so on. Who imposes rules such as “Don’t split infinitives”? How old and how flexible are such stylistic conventions? In this course, we will disentangle grammatical correctness from linguistic etiquette, exploring English usage in different registers and sociolinguistic contexts: from A like *Americanization* to Z like *zero adverbs*. We will (or *shall*) seek to tease apart old “grammar myths” from useful guidelines that serve clarity of expression. The course will furthermore discuss the roles played by prescriptive grammarians, descriptive linguists, the media and the general public in shaping linguistic conventions and attitudes. It will examine changing approaches to the study of usage and style ranging from fairly arbitrary rules to nuanced descriptions based on corpus data. Course participants will learn to find their own answers to usage problems they encounter in their (English) discourses.

1005-3 Seminar History of US English: Historical Roots of Present-Day US-English

Exam: written examination (60 min)

Reading list: TBA

This seminar explores the development of the English language, starting from Old English through Middle English and Early Modern English to Present-Day US English. Over the centuries, massive changes took place in all areas of grammar. While some of these are clearly linked to language-external events (e.g., the influx of French vocabulary after 1066), other show a very complex interplay of numerous factors (e.g., the development from a synthetic language with relatively free word order to an analytic language with fixed word order). By analyzing texts from the different stages of English, you will develop a basic understanding of earlier varieties of English and the role language internal and language external factors played in the development of Present-Day US-English.

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: Peter Hintz

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 and choose two out of three seminars.

Lecture: Constructing North American History II: From the Civil War to 9/11 and beyond

Monday, 5 - 7 pm, HS 4

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; the exam usually takes place in the final class meeting.

Seminars:

Each of the seminars offered in the module share two central goals: First (1), they deepen the content of the lecture in the module by exploring and discussing important concepts and developments through select examples and approaches, thus combining a survey perspective with case study work to further the understanding of United States' history, politics, and society in the 20th and 21st centuries. Second (2), and most importantly, the seminars serve to teach and reinforce techniques and methods essential to scholarly work in American Studies in general, and to historical, political, and societal content in particular. In doing so, these praxis-oriented seminars pick up on what has already been learned in the module SHP I and are designed to enable students towards independently developing a scholarly project that leads to an analytical term paper.

Choose two out of three seminars:

Seminar 1: “We Got More Yesterday than Anybody”: A Cultural History of Black Americans since the Civil War

Monday, 3 - 5 pm, NSG 321

Peter Hintz

The course explores the social, cultural, and political development of the Black community in America from the Civil War to the present. Studying the struggles and achievements of Black Americans since the formal abolition of slavery in 1865, we will examine the long-lasting impact of what historian Eric Foner terms the “second founding” of the United States. Using a variety of sources, we will seek to understand the evolution, complexity, and diversity of Black life in America. The course covers key themes, periods, and actors, such as Reconstruction, Jim Crow segregation, the Harlem Renaissance, Civil Rights and Black Power, mass incarceration, the BLM movement, and Black Hispanic history. In line with the module’s emphasis on practice, the course shall enable students to perform an analysis of historical discourse towards uncovering the raced, classed, and gendered specificities of social, cultural, and political life in the United States.

Seminar 2: Tensions and Turbulences: The Social Movements of the 1960s and 1970s

Thursday, 5 - 7 pm, NSG 411

Vivian Sadlik

Experienced and remembered as a period of cultural revolution, social disillusionment, and civil unrest, the 1960s and early 1970s saw a vast variety of movements fuelled by anger at political developments and a renewed sense of injustice within the spheres of political, economic and social life. In this seminar we will take a closer look at and explore the emergence, growth, and legacy of the New Left and Counter Culture, the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power, El Movimiento, second-wave feminism, the struggle for the liberation of LGBTQ+ people, as well as the fight for rights of Native Americans. In the praxis-oriented frame of the seminar, students will learn how and along which lines these movements can be historically analyzed and compared. With the help of a variety of primary and secondary sources students will be trained to raise critical questions concerning form, intent, and effect of historical (re)sources and will be asked to share their insights in discussion, presentations, and written assignments.

Seminar 3: American Eras: Focus on the US Supreme Court

Thursday, 9 – 11 am, NSG 414

Heather Pruessing

9 justices, all household names in American popular culture, run the highest court in the land. Their power today is unprecedented, and their decisions shape the nation dramatically. This seminar aims to give students a broad understanding of crucial moments in American history during the 20th and 21st centuries. Starting with the Industrial Revolution and ending with the Biden Presidency, we will explore overarching historical themes such as political conflict, social revolutions, and evolving cultural norms, and we will do so using the lense of the US Supreme Court. “American Eras” complements the module’s lecture and other seminars by offering exposure to a diverse collection of primary and

secondary documents. These sources will span contemporary American history and will provide students with opportunities for improving their critical and analytical skills through a mix of verbal and written engagement.

Heather Pruessings classes start in the week of October 16, 2023.

2.5 Project Module (04-001-1009)

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

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-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 and one tutorial

Project Colloquium

Tuesday, 3 - 5 pm, NSG 426
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez

The seminar 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. In the course of the semester, students will be required to design a research project of their own choice.

This course starts on October 17.

Tutorial: Study and Career Planning

Wednesday, 1 - 3 pm (**every other week**), NSG 110
Heather Pruessing

This class will revisit and build upon themes covered in the first-semester iTASK seminar. Together we will work to help students organize themselves for the end of their studies and for their transition into life after university.

Heather Pruessings classes start in the week of October 16, 2023.

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

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

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-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

Monday, 11 am - 1 pm, HS 6
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-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.

The lecture starts on October 16.

Seminar: Visual Discourses of Race and Ethnicity

Monday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 320
Dr. Steffen Wöll

The Afro-Caribbean philosopher Frantz Fanon begins his seminal essay “The Fact of Blackness” (1952) by stating that “I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things [...] and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects.” As a new generation of digital natives moves the cultural pendulum ever closer towards an all-encompassing on-screen media consumption, visual discourses increasingly shape and structure our perspectives on social and cultural realities. While definitions of subjects and objects are rewritten in this process, new challenges and boundaries emerge. This seminar explores how visual discourses past and present impact understandings of race and ethnicity in the United States. We will ask how paintings, maps, photographs, films, material artifacts and other visual texts shape debates related to identity, objectification, representation, and power.

Through a series of case studies and accompanying readings, we will examine how race and ethnicity are constructed, negotiated, and contested in a variety of different forms. Topical focal points of the seminar include the aesthetic vocabularies of representation, the role of images in contexts of racial oppression, resistance, and liberation, the relationships between visual culture and social justice, as well as the possibilities and limitations of visual media as tools for political intervention. We will also consider the ways in which social media, digital technologies, and so-called artificial intelligence are impacting the consciousness and agency of minorities, and what these developments may mean for future politics of identity and representation.

Tutorial : Spoken Academic Discourse

Friday, 1 – 3 pm, tbd
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. Sebastian Herrmann

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, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 225

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

Thursday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 411

Dr. habil Sebastian Herrmann

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 Pisarz-Ramírez, Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-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: Body, Nation, Citizenship – 20th Century US Body Politics in Transnational Perspective

Tuesday, 3 – 5 pm, NSG 323

Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

This class serves a double purpose. On a conceptual level, it introduces and outlines the idea of centering historical inquiry around (usually, but not necessarily) human bodies and how political, social and cultural power were framed, articulated, negotiated, exercised ... with, through, or on bodies. It asks how core categories of cultural studies such as gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, ability, or others can productively be analyzed through a lens of bodily practices and representations.

Specifically, the class interrogates the connections among bodies, the nation, and the world in 20th century US history. The idea that bodies, bodily practices and bodily characteristics are heavily freighted with values that are often linked to powerful political, cultural 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 roles of biopolitics in its gendered, racialized, classed, sexualized ... dimensions. Topics range from regulating sexuality during periods of U.S. military occupation to Cold War ideals of American feminine beauty, and from "body counts" as metrics of military success to cultural representations relating to immigrant groups and health issues.

Seminar 2: Outsiders, Outcasts and Deviants in US Literature

Tuesday, 11 am - 1 pm, GWZ 3 5.15

Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez

Outsider figures abound in American literature: Herman Melville's Ahab, J.D. Salinger's Holden Caulfield, Toni Morrison's Sula, or Stewart O'Nan's Marjorie Standiford are just a few examples. Outsiders are designed as villains or misfits, heroes/heroines or pariahs, deviants or inferiors, and often they are those who resist society's rules and insist on being different. Sometimes they are admired for their nonconformism, sometimes despised and sometimes emulated; often they allow readers to get an "outside perspective" on society. In this course we will discuss the figure of the outsider in literature with a specific focus on notions of difference and deviance. We will explore which function the figure of the outsider has assumed in various periods and how notions of difference and deviance have changed over time, as well as how the outsider status has impacted on identity constructions and group and self-representation.

The first session of this course will take place on October 17 (second week of classes).

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

Overall module responsibility: Dr. Stefan Schubert

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. 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, 3 - 5 pm, GWZ 3 5.15

Dr. Katja Schmieder

and

Thursday, 3 - 5 pm, GWZ 3 5.15

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 17th 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. Please be aware that the module will contain a quite extensive time commitment outside of the two slots indicated here, which you will spend on completing a variety of tasks individually or in groups.

3.4 Cultures of Difference (04-038-2007)

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar 1: Passing, Posing, Masquerade: 'Racechanges' in U.S. Literature

Tuesday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 304

Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

People—historically real persons as well as fictional characters—who cross the boundaries of 'race' are a conspicuous recurrence in American social, cultural, and literary history: people whom law and custom define as Black who pass for White; Blackface minstrelsy and its legacy in 20th-century popular culture; Whites who, in a variety of constellations, imagine themselves to be Black. Literary scholar Susan Gubar suggests the term "racechange" as an umbrella for such instances of "the traversing of race boundaries, racial imitation or impersonation, cross-racial mimicry or mutability, white posing as black or black passing as white."

This seminar explores the ways in which 'racechange' figures as a topos in American literature from the 19th to the 21st century. In the course of selected literary and theoretical readings we will ask: How do narratives of 'racechange' reflect on the category and discourse of 'race'? What notions of 'Blackness' and 'Whiteness' do they negotiate? How do narratives of 'racechange' engage with the (historically changing) power structures of 'race'? How have (narrative as well as scholarly) reflections on 'racechange' energized scholarship on other crossings or ambiguations of identity categories?

Seminar 2: Negotiating Empire in US Culture and Literature

Wednesday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 225

Prof. Dr. Gabriele Piszcz-Ramírez

One of the key narratives of U.S. national mythology is that the United States is exceptional for having been a world power without having had a substantial empire. This myth has been thoroughly interrogated by cultural critics and historians over the past decades as well as by the cultural productions of those affected by settler colonialism, continental and extra-continental expansion, militarized interventions and economic hegemony that have characterized US imperial formation. This course will look at the ways imperial practice has been negotiated in narrative form from the 17th to the 21st century. We ask how various writers have confronted, critiqued, and sometimes celebrated an 'American Empire', but also how American imperialism itself has employed different narratives to endorse its operation.

This course starts on October 18.

3.5 Myths, Narratives, Memory (04-038-2009)

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar 1: Remembering the Holocaust in US American Culture and Society (with Katharina Austilat)

Wednesday, 11 am - 1 pm, GWZ 3 5.15

Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

In the years since World War II, the experience and memory of the experience that came to be known as the Holocaust / the Shoah has deeply shaped US American culture. When the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. opened in 1993, many (and often critical European voices) interpreted this as the climax in a process of 'Americanizing' the Holocaust - at a moment in time, when there was no monument or museum on the National Mall dedicated to the history of slavery in the US.

This course explores how the Holocaust has been understood, interpreted, and remembered by the larger American society from the 1940s until today. We will discuss topics such as the development of Holocaust Studies and the place of the Holocaust in Genocide Studies; the relevance of remembering the Shoah for the development of the Jewish community (and other victim groups) in the US; the roles of different media for commemoration practices; museums and memorials as forms of public memory; how Holocaust remembrance works within the US education system; and overall how the Holocaust shaped political and cultural discourse, e.g. in relation to social movements of marginalized or discriminated against groups in US society.

A main emphasis of this course revolves around questions of representation. The Holocaust has been positioned at the limits of representation - as the unimaginable, the unrepresentable, the incomprehensible. We will discuss numerous attempts to represent the Holocaust in US Culture - in survivor testimonies, in literature and graphic novels, in documentary and feature films, in TV series and radio shows, in artwork. Based on a broad variety of examples, the general goal of this class is to analyze the changing and multiple roles of Holocaust Memory for US political and cultural discourses.

Seminar 2: Mythmaking, Secret-Keeping, Good Gossip, and Creating Characters

Thursday, 11 am - 1 pm, GWZ 3 5.15

Megan Giddings - Picador Guest Professor

In this seminar, we will close-read, discuss, and write through the ways that myths are used in contemporary works to establish an understanding of people, setting, and beliefs. We may read works such as Louise Erdrich's *Round House*, Susan Choi's *My Education*, John Darnielle's *Devil House*, Charles Yu's *Interior Chinatown*, and Clint Smith's *How The Word Was Passed*. There will be times where we will do creative activities as other ways to consider and understand the course's big ideas.

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar 1: On the Move: Picaresque Traditions in U.S. Literature and Film

Wednesday, 3 - 5 pm, NSG 124

Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

The picaresque genre is one of the oldest traditions of long-form storytelling. Originating from European literary traditions, its conventions fell on fruitful soil in U.S. culture. The genre's focus on the adventurous travels of a 'roguish' social outsider, typically narrated in the first person, has resonated powerfully with the storytelling needs of a nation marked by mobility (or, rather, mobilities of various sorts). The perspective on society that this narrative set-up affords—a perspective often realized in a satirical manner—uniquely qualifies the picaresque for “contexts of cultural transition, disorder, and ambiguity” (Rowland Sherrill).

In this seminar, we will explore this tradition of the picaresque in U.S. fiction from the Revolutionary Period to the present. While our focus will rest on literary narratives, we will also probe into the uses of picaresque conventions in film. Proceeding from a conceptualization of the picaresque as a literary mode, we will discuss how picaresque narratives in various historical constellations negotiate themes like US national identity, race relations, and gender.

Seminar 2: Performing Diaspora: Irish America, 1840s until today

Tuesday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG 205

Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Ireland has the largest diaspora to indigenous population rate of any country in the world, and in the United States of America this group has flourished from outcasts to political powerhouse. Through a mix of Irish pride and American nationalism, the Irish American diaspora has become one of the most dominant and influential socio-political groups in American history.

In this course we will examine how the Irish underwent this dramatic change. From portrayals of the Irish as a subhuman, nationalist group whose loyalties lay with the Fenian struggle against British rule in their homeland to the proliferation of US presidents proudly claiming Irish descent in the 20th century, the oftentimes dichotomous nature of the Irish American experience will be dissected and contextualized alongside important events in American social, cultural and political history.

On a more conceptual level, the class centers around three terms: diaspora, performance and whiteness. We will discuss them both broadly and in close relationship to Irish America, but more generally the class aims at introducing these concepts to discuss their overall relevance for American Cultural Studies.

4 Lehramt Courses

4.1 Module *-2401: "American Literatures, American Societies"

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-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 three Lectures (2401-1a or 2401-1b or 2401-1c*):

* Prof. Kanzler's lecture on US literature may only be chosen by students who took the module 1402 (Literatures and Cultures of the USA) in the summer term of 2023. Students who took 1402 in an earlier semester must choose between the other two lectures.

2401-1a Constructing North American History II: From the Civil War to 9/11 and beyond

Monday, 5 - 7 pm, HS 4

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"

Monday, 11 am - 1 pm, HS 6

Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-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.

2401-1c 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.

* This lecture has limited capacity and may only be chosen by students who took the module 1402 (Literatures and Cultures of the USA) in the summer term of 2023. Students who took 1402 in an earlier semester must choose between the other two lectures.

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

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

2401-2a/b: American Bodies: Negotiations of Power, Identity, and Otherness in US Film

Tuesday, 9 - 11 am, NSG 213

Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

or

Tuesday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 213

Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

Bodies represent a fundamental site where power and identity are negotiated. Looking at how bodies are controlled, regulated, narrated, historicized, weaponized, institutionalized, and theorized in film can offer critical insights into American culture. By exploring 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 various narratives around bodies.

In this seminar, we will discuss and theorize different conceptualizations of bodies. We will analyze a variety of films with the use of critical theory, discussing aspects such as gender, queerness, race, class, and disability. The seminar will enable students to deepen their understanding of American culture, to explore various canonical theories, to analyze and develop an original argument about a film of their choice in a portfolio exam.

Please note: The seminars in this module are offered alongside five additional workshop sessions. While it is possible to take the seminar (and pass the module) without these workshops, attending them is strongly recommended. The workshops cover key skills that help with the portfolio. We offer the workshops in three alternative time slots (see below).

2401-2 c/d: 'Hidden' Meanings and Cultural Work: Analyzing American Literature and Culture

Tuesday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 427
Dr. habil. Sebastian Herrmann

or

Tuesday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 427
Dr. habil. Sebastian Herrmann

In this seminar, we will use American Studies' expansive notion of 'text' (and of 'literature') to analyze a broad range of US-American cultural production. We will do so from a perspective informed by American Studies' classic interest in questions of race, class, and gender, as well as other categories of difference, and we will focus on the question of these texts' "cultural work" (Lauter). Doing so will allow us to engage in the traditional hermeneutic practices of American studies, to complement this classic view with contemporary scholarship, to practice both (close) reading and researching, and to encounter and enjoy a broad variety of US-American texts. While we will keep an eye out for the applicability of these methods in the classroom, our main focus will be on the more strictly academic aspects of doing this kind of scholarly work.

2401-2 e/f: Cinematic Spectacles: Visual Pleasures, Narrative Sensations, and Spectatorship

Thursday, 9 - 11 am, NSG 410
Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

or

Thursday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 127
Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

The history of US film is marked by moments of highly cinematic visual spectacle: King Kong climbing the Empire State Building; the shower scene in Psycho; the opening of 2001: A Space Odyssey; the beach landing in Saving Private Ryan. All these moments engage the audience with a focus on the visual pleasure that the filmic medium is able to create, immersing the spectator in it. In exploring our fascination with the spectacular nature of the moving image, we will engage, among others, with these questions: How can a variety of different bodies be displayed and gazed upon? How is the visual pleasure that characterizes horror films, in watching "bodies that splatter," constructed? How can nature be visually romanticized and/or exoticized? How can images of otherness elicit feelings of identification and/or abjection in an audience?

In this seminar, we will discuss and theorize different conceptualizations of spectacle. We will analyze a variety of films with the use of critical theory, discussing aspects such as gender, queerness, race, class, and disability. The seminar will enable students to deepen their understanding of American culture, to explore various canonical theories, to analyze and develop an original argument about a film of their choice in a portfolio exam.

Please note: The seminars in this module are offered alongside five additional workshop sessions. While it is possible to take the seminar (and pass the module) without these workshops, attending them is strongly recommended. The workshops cover key skills that help with the portfolio. We offer the workshops in three alternative time slots (see below).

Workshops:

As an addition to the seminar, workshops in three different slots will be offered: Tuesday 1-3 pm, Tuesday 3-5 pm, as well as Thursday 3-5 pm. The workshops help with developing important skills needed to complete the portfolio exam. The topics covered will include: how to create a research bibliography, how to discuss theory, and how to practice literary and film analysis. To participate, please block time accordingly. Signup procedures will be explained in the first seminar session.

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

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

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-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 cannot choose lecture 2401-1b by Prof. Pisarz-Ramirez 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"

Monday, 11 am - 1 pm, HS 6
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-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: “We Got More Yesterday than Anybody”: A Cultural History of Black Americans since the Civil War

Monday, 3 - 5 pm, NSG 321
Peter Hintz

The course explores the social, cultural, and political development of the Black community in America from the Civil War to the present. Studying the struggles and achievements of Black Americans since the formal abolition of slavery in 1865, we will examine the long-lasting impact of what historian Eric Foner terms the “second founding” of the United States. Using a variety of sources, we will seek to understand the evolution, complexity, and diversity of Black life in America. The course covers key themes, periods, and actors, such as Reconstruction, Jim Crow segregation, the Harlem Renaissance, Civil Rights and Black Power, mass incarceration, the BLM movement, and Black Hispanic history. In line with the module’s emphasis on practice, the course shall enable students to perform an analysis of historical discourse towards uncovering the raced, classed, and gendered specificities of social, cultural, and political life in the United States.

Seminar 1b: American Eras: Focus on the US Supreme Court

Thursday, 9 – 11 am, NSG 324
Heather Pruessing

9 justices, all household names in American popular culture, run the highest court in the land. Their power today is unprecedented, and their decisions shape the nation dramatically. This seminar aims to give students a broad understanding of crucial moments in American history during the 20th and 21st centuries. Starting with the Industrial Revolution and ending with the Biden Presidency, we will explore overarching historical themes such as political conflict, social revolutions, and evolving cultural norms, and we will do so using the lense of the US Supreme Court. “American Eras” complements the

module's lecture and other seminars by offering exposure to a diverse collection of primary and secondary documents. These sources will span contemporary American history and will provide students with opportunities for improving their critical and analytical skills through a mix of verbal and written engagement.

Heather Pruessings classes start in the week of October 16, 2023.

5 Creative Writing and Other Courses

5.1 Professional Skills Module “Creative Writing: Imagining America” (04-001-1019 | 5 Credits)

Overall module responsibility: Annika Schadewaldt

Module organization & coordination: Annika Schadewaldt

Generative Fiction Seminar

Thursday, 3 – 5 pm, NSG 429

Megan Giddings - Picador Guest Professor

When I was starting out as a "serious" writer, one of the biggest pieces of advice I was given was that "I wouldn't become truly good until I had written at least 1,000,000 words." While we won't attempt to break that million mark, we will be writing short stories in many different styles. Expect to generate many first (awful, wonderful, silly, embarrassing, ambitious) drafts. We will read short stories by writers such as Kelly Link, Jamel Brinkley, Jhumpa Lahiri, Rachel B Glaser, Charles Yu, and Venita Blackburn. In the second half of the class, you will be given a choice to either work on a collaborative writing assignment with your classmates or to participate in a small group workshop. You will be asked to revise the work you've done in this seminar.

5.2 Writing Clinic

Writing Clinic

Wednesday, 1 - 3 pm **(every other week)**, 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.

Heather Pruessings classes start in the week of October 16, 2023.