

## Course Catalogue Winter Semester 2024/25

### 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 14, 2024.**

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 5<sup>th</sup> floor, in house 3, which is opposite the elevators/stairs.

Contact information on individual faculty members can be found on the [faculty page](#).

## Registration for Classes

Most classes require prior registration. To learn more about registration procedures for students in different ASL programs (BA, MA, Lehramt), please have a look at the [Registration Information Sheet](#). As access to some classes is quite competitive, please take the procedures and deadlines for registration seriously.

## American Studies Modules

Modules in the BA and MA programs are designed to achieve specific learning goals, they entail a specific amount and specific types of coursework and examinations, and they may have prerequisites. To learn more about these, we strongly encourage you to have a look at our program's Module Catalog 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](http://anglistik.philol.uni-leipzig.de)).

Unless stated otherwise, **classes start in the week of October 14, 2024**. 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.

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##### **Seminar:**

**either a)** Monday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 320

Dr. Katja Schmieder

**or b)** Thursday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 414

Annika Schadewaldt

**or c)** Thursday, 3 - 5 pm, NSG 428

Dr. Stefan Schubert

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.

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**Tutorial (Übung):**

**either a)** Monday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 428

Anne Bertram

**or b)** Wednesday, 9 - 11 am, NSG 410

Heather Pruessing

**or c)** Wednesday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 410

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.

**Heather Pruessing's classes will start the week of Oct 21, 2024.**

## **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 is the more general part of the iTASK module. Every two weeks, guests, mostly graduates of our degree programs, present their own professional experiences and perspectives in order to share and discuss them with the group. The focus is on the possibilities and risks of career planning, but also on very practical issues such as internships. These contributions are framed by more specific information, e.g. on planning stays abroad during your studies.

Exams are closely coordinated with the corresponding seminar in the iTASK module

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#### **Praxis Seminar**

Thursday, 9 am – 11 am, NSG 220

Heather Pruessing

**or** Thursday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG 220

Heather Pruessing

Using the broad themes discussed in the lecture, the module's 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, and for acing an interview.

**Heather Pruessing's classes will start the week of Oct 21, 2024.**

## 2.3 Language and Society II - Synchronic and Diachronic Varieties of English (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.

A 'Tutorium' for the lecture will be offered starting in the second week of the semester: Thursday, 3 – 5 pm, NSG 427, taught by Lena Senger.

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

Thursday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG 405  
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.

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### **1005-3 Seminar History of US English: Historical Roots of US-English**

Thursday, 1 pm – 3 pm, NSG 225

Martin Schäfer

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: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

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 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 form of an essay; the exam usually takes place in the final class meeting.

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### **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: American Eras: Focus on the US Supreme Court**



Thursday, 1 – 3 pm, NSG 220  
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 Pruessing’s classes will start the week of Oct 21, 2024.**

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### **Seminar 2: America Plays: Organized Sport in America, from Reconstruction to the turn of the 21st Century**

Wednesday, 3 pm - 5 pm, NSG 224  
Parker Billinghamurst

Throughout one of the most consequential and turbulent 100-years of American history, few if any cultural institutions of the 20th Century consistently remained as central within mass consumption and general American attention as that of **organized sports**. Throughout the roughly-century of American history this seminar seeks to cover, organized sports within America will be observed to have been variously influenced or pulled-along by the American cultural, social, and political milieu of its time, just like many other American institutions. Yet at other times, sport can be seen to offer the opportunity to push back and influence the American cultural, social, and political milieu of its day as well. As an introductory course to the topic, we will examine the specificities and idiosyncrasies of America’s relationship with organized sports, and we will take a look at a variety of sources and mediums of cultural literature. These range from journalism, to biographies, to histories, to government legislature, to protest and political literature, to advertisements and film, and beyond. Topically, this seminar will take a chronological view of American history through the topical lens of sport and look at topics such as America’s first professional women’s sports league, the Cold War’s relevance towards American sports, and the integration of nationalism into sport in the post- 9/11 world. Other seminars will closely examine some of America’s most consequential athletes, such as Muhammed Ali and OJ Simpson. Most importantly, as this seminar is an introductory course to the history of American sports, no knowledge of the finer rules, details, or history of American sports is assumed or required.

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### **Seminar 3: Contested Histories: Debating America’s Past and Present**

Wednesday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 323  
Hannah Vossen

The seminar focuses on the ongoing “experiment” of the United States of America, emphasizing how U.S. society, history, and politics have evolved over time while grappling with the tensions between continuity and change. By exploring how different groups, movements, and ideologies have influenced and responded to shifts in power, policy, and social norms, students will use primary sources to trace these themes across different periods and examine how Americans have debated, recorded, and reacted to the societal, historical, and political dynamics of the 20th century. Special attention will be given to U.S. domestic politics and U.S. foreign policy to examine how key concepts such as progress and resistance, war and peace, ideals vs. social reality, and identity and nationalism have shaped the continuity and change of the American “experiment.”

Students may analyze:

- Letters, speeches, and articles from different eras to see how ideas about democracy and citizenship have evolved.
- Court cases and legal documents to understand how laws have been used to both protect and restrict rights.
- Political cartoons, propaganda, and media to explore how public opinion has been shaped and how it has influenced policy and society.
- Personal diaries and memoirs to gain insights into the lived experiences of people during significant historical moments.

## 2.5 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 and one tutorial

#### Research Project

Tuesday, 3 – 5 pm, NSG 426  
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-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.

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#### Tutorial: Study and Career Planning

Wednesday, 1 - 3 pm (**every other week**), NSG 410  
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 Pruessing's classes will start the week of Oct 21, 2024.**

## 2.6 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 6  
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.

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#### Seminar: Captivity—Enslavement—Incarceration—Liberation

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

In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault identifies penal institutions as important sites of modernity. In Western societies, he argues, the prison has become a place where social discipline is enforced and economic productivity is sustained. With around 1.8 million incarcerated people in the United States as of 2024, this course recognizes the need for an in-depth exploration of the social, cultural, racial, and gender dynamics of captivity, enslavement, incarceration, and liberation throughout American history.

Through the lens of captivity narratives, we will explore how accounts such as Mary Rowlandson's shaped the perception of indigenous peoples in early American literature. Retracing the experiences documented in slave narratives, notably those recorded by Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs, the seminar retraces the harrowing realities of black slavery.

Based on these enduring historical legacies, contemporary struggles for freedom by African American communities will be addressed through such lenses as moral panic concerning black delinquency, stop-and-frisk policies, mass incarceration, and the racialized logics of the prison-industrial complex.

Further seminar topics include Asian-American internment camps during World War 2, present-day immigrant detention centers at the US-Mexico border, narratives of white victimhood, challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in captivity, as well as fantasies of prison break and escape. Finally, based on philosopher-activist Angela Davis' assertion that "[p]risons do not disappear social problems, they disappear human beings," we will engage with current voices of social activism and prison reform.

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#### Tutorial: Spoken Academic Discourse

Tuesday, 3 – 5 pm, NSG 122  
Lola O’Sullivan (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

#### Research Papers and Portfolios

In their second and third semester, MA students will complete 6 modules overall, four of which they have to finish with a research paper and two of which with a portfolio exam. Because of that, every one of the thematic modules in the 2nd and 3rd semester is offered in two varieties on TOOL: the “Research Project” (= seminar paper) variety and the “Academic Discourse” (= portfolio exam) variety. The Academic Discourse/portfolio varieties have a “-P” at the end of the module number (e.g., “04-038-2007-P” is the module “Cultures of Difference: Academic Discourse” = portfolio, whereas “04-038-2007” is “Cultures of Difference: Research Project” = seminar paper).

Accordingly, in each of the two semesters, students should finish two modules with a seminar paper and one with a portfolio. While the seminar paper is something students mostly write in the semester break, the portfolio consists of multiple smaller assignments to be completed mostly while classes are in session. Within these stipulations, you can freely choose which of the thematic modules you want to take in their seminar-paper variety and which in the portfolio variety (the contents are the same, only the exams are different). You have to do so when you sign up for the modules on TOOL.

For more information, please see our website (especially the study regulations, the Registration Information Sheet, and a [previous news item](#)) or contact your study advisers.

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

Module organization & coordination: Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

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 327

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.

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##### **Seminar: Methods and Theories II**

Wednesday, 1 - 3 pm, GWZ 3 5.15

Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

This seminar will address major paradigms 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: Queer Movements in US Cultural Memory**

Tuesday, 3 – 5 pm, NSG 427  
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 different Queer Movements since the 1950s as a case study for discussing how the concepts of Memory Studies (and Public History) are transmitted into memory projects and places of remembrance such as museums, educational programs, films, novels, comic books, etc.

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##### **Seminar 2: Mobility, Space, and Power**

Tuesday, 11 am - 1 pm, GWZ 3 5.15  
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

In the past decades, the “mobilities turn” (Hannam, Sheller and Urry 2006, Addey 2013) has opened up new agendas of research, addressing globalization, migration, and mobile lifestyles. At the same time scholars have pointed to various mobility regimes and their production of uneven forms of movement related to power structures. Mobility takes place in particular spatial settings, which are often produced through histories and geographies of privilege and oppression, inclusion and exclusion, as well as conflict and containment. Racial territoriality and (im)mobility are closely connected as the reality of Jim Crow and its control of black movement in the South has



demonstrated. Urban „ghettoes“ and gated communities are spaces linked to differential forms of mobility. In this course we will discuss intersections of mobility, space, and power in various scenarios as well as their representation in U.S. writings and cultural productions.

### 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 professional-skills module iCAN is meant to introduce and embed for students how American Studies relates to major trends in international career development. It will introduce you to key skills, knowledge, and experience that employers in such diverse professional sectors as education, media, international organizations, business, government branches, cultural exchange, or journalism are looking for in the contemporary labor market. Practically, the module will accomplish this by guiding you through the process of editing and publishing an issue of the academic journal *aspeers* together, in dedicated sessions, through practical workshops, and via a variety of group and teamwork settings.

#### The module consists of an applied seminar with two sessions each week (plus additional sessions)

##### Applied Seminar (aspeers)

Monday, 11 am - 1 pm, GWZ 3 5.15

Peter Hintz

**and**

Thursday, 11 am - 1 pm, GWZ 3 5.15

Dr. Stefan Schubert

**plus additional time slots\***

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 18th 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. The exact time slots will be discussed in the first weeks of the class, but for now, please plan for **Mondays** and **Thursdays, 10am-11am** as well as **1pm-3pm** as potential **additional slots** that in some weeks will have to be used.

### **3.4 Cultures of Difference (04-038-2007)**

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

#### **The module consists of two seminars**

##### **Seminar 1: Red Power & Beyond: Native American Histories Since the 1950s**

Wednesday, 11 am - 1 pm, GWZ 3 5.15

Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

This seminar is dedicated to the social and cultural history of the indigenous populations in North America from the end of the Second World War to (almost) the present day. The focus is on indigenous social movements that have established themselves around several different interests and goals, on their strategies, objectives, successes and defeats, on their actors and institutional centers, on their connections and demarcations to other social and political movements of these decades. The course will encourage the students to think about intersections of gender, race, sexuality, and class and to consider Native resistance movements and cultural persistence since the 1950s.

In the seminar, we study scholarly literature parallel with various primary sources (texts + audio-visual) in order to gain an overview of developments and structures as well as an insight into more specific events or phenomena. Topics will include postwar urban migration and tribal termination policies, the Red Power movements of the 1960s, self-determination, economic developments, environmental issues, and Native legal organizing in the late 20th and 21st centuries. Essentially, the seminar will be structured chronologically, but there is also the possibility to focus on individual aspects in greater depth.

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##### **Seminar 2: The Freak Show and Its Legacies**

Tuesday, 1 - 3 pm, GWZ 3 5.15

Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

The freak show is one of the influential infant forms that commercial popular culture took in the United States. Evolving as a performative format across a range of locales, from dime museums to circuses, the freak show centers on the exhibition of “extraordinary bodies,” to use Rosemarie Garland Thomson’s phrase, “seemingly singular bodies that we would now call either ‘physically disabled’ or ‘exotic ethnics’” who would be staged so as to amplify their difference from the implied audience. Freak shows (re-)frame these various manifestations of difference as ‘freakery,’ a cultural category and script that revolves around notions of deviance, constructing ‘the freak’ as “a single amorphous category of corporeal otherness” (Garland Thomson). While the freak show itself all but vanished by the early 20th century, its cultural scripts traveled to a host of new media and formats, where they have continued to circulate and fuel practices of the popular, greatly diversifying their cultural semantics in the process.

In this seminar, we will explore selected popular artifacts and practices that use the scripts of the freak show, from the format’s original venues in the 19th century to 20th- and 21st-century materials. Based on theorizations of ‘freakery’ and ‘enfreakment,’ we will ask: How do the scripts of the freak show change as they travel across media, genres, and historical periods? How do the various artifacts and

practices semanticize the otherness of its freak-figures? How do these semanticizations resonate with hegemonic or sub-/counter-cultural discourses that are circulating in their historical settings (discourses of normativity, deviance, [non-]conformity, etc.)? How are freak-figures affectively charged in these materials? How do the materials interpellate their implied audiences, and how do they construct the relationship between implied audience and freak figure?

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

#### **The module consists of two seminars**

##### **Seminar 1: Against the Invisibility of Class: Writing Work in U.S. Fiction**

Wednesday, 3 - 5 pm, GWZ 3 5.15

Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

Foundational myths notoriously construct the United States as a nation without class, as offering unlimited opportunities for social mobility, a society where a person's economic standing entirely depends on their individual effort. While these myths are as fantastic as other elements of the nation's mythology, they have influenced U.S. literary and cultural productions as well as their scholarly discussion: In many of its contexts, U.S. literature has been remarkably uninterested in questions of class and, more broadly, experiences of labor. And American Studies scholarship, despite its close ties to (British) Cultural Studies, has also, for a long time, conspicuously sidelined engagements with class and labor-related exploitation, oppression, poverty, and/or precarity.

In this seminar, we will probe into the slim but significant corpus of U.S. literary texts that focus on work and class, in a variety of social constellations, ranging from the early 19th-century to the contemporary period. These readings will be accompanied by discussions of how literary and cultural scholarship has conceptualized (the working) class in a U.S. context, including the intersectionality of class with other axes of social inequality, what traditions and conventions of 'writing work' it has identified, and how it has proposed to read the politics of such literary texts.

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##### **Seminar 2: Writing the American West**

Thursday, 1 – 3 pm, NSG 410

Daniel Gumbiner - Picador Guest Professor

California is a diverse and complex state, home to many distinct thriving artistic communities. In this course, we will explore the work of some of its greatest living contemporary writers. How do these different writers explore place and identity in their work? What is at the core of their respective artistic projects? And how has the history of the state influenced and shaped their writing? Students will be expected to read several novels, as well as a selection of short stories, from writers such as Manuel Muñoz, Ishmael Reed, Tommy Orange, Claire Vaye Watkins, Ella Leffland, Michael Ondaatje, and Julie Otsuka, among others.

Please be aware that this class will end the final week before the winter break and therefore taught in double sessions.

### **3.6 Global America (04-038-2010)**

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

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

#### **The module consists of two seminars**

##### **Seminar 1: Narrating Citizenship**

Wednesday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 405

Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez

Citizenship has seen a revival as an analytical category in American Studies, as Katja Sarkowsky and Ina Batzke point out in a recent journal article. Narratives about national membership, normative models of the citizen and their negotiation in literature, and civic myths about what a “good American citizen” is, raise questions about citizenship 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? And 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 Phillis Wheatley, Walt Whitman, Rudolph Fischer, and James Baldwin, along with more recent writings and critical essays on the concept of citizenship.

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##### **Seminar 2: Histories of Slavery in North America & the Atlantic World**

Tuesday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG 222

Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz (with Maximilian Pott)

The history of enslavement constitutes one of the most defining chapters of America’s past, with traumatic consequences for large segments of the American population. While the institution of slavery profoundly characterized the historical trajectory of the United States, it was part of a vast global network of systems of bondage that transformed the entire Atlantic World. This course delves into the various forms of slavery and servitude from the colonial period through the Civil War. By adopting a transnational perspective, the class highlights the inseparable connections between the plantations in the Antebellum South and other world regions, shedding light on the establishment of racial slavery from the shores of West Africa, in the Caribbean and Latin America, during the United States expansion across the North American continent and in the border regions.

The seminar progresses mostly chronologically, commencing with the role of slavery before and during the colonization of the Americas. We will examine the origins and impact of the transatlantic slave trade and its connection to the development of racial capitalism. The class will explore the captivity of African-descended people and their experiences during and after the Middle Passage, discuss Native American slavery and coerced labor systems in the Pacific, and investigate the various forms of resistance employed by enslaved individuals and communities, from everyday acts of defiance to organized rebellions. We will conclude with an exploration of the legacies of slavery, the continued existence of systems of oppression after the Civil War, and the representation of the institution of slavery in the public memory of the United States. Next to reading recent scholarship on the history of enslavement, a central component of this class is engaging with a wide variety of primary sources, from personal narratives to oral histories, legal records and other cultural artefacts. By critically

analyzing these historical sources, we will learn how to read documents created by enslavers against the grain, navigate the silences in the archives, and conduct research on the history of slavery.

## **4 Lehramt Courses**

### **4.1 Module \*-2401: “American Literatures, American Societies”**

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

Module organization & coordination: Dr. Eleonora Ravizza, Dr. Sebastian Herrmann

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

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.

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##### **2401-1b Lecture Ethnicity and Diversity in US Culture**

Thursday, 9 - 11 am, HS 6  
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.

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#### **2401-2 Seminar**

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



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

Thursday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 304  
Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

**or**

Thursday, 3 - 5 pm, NSG 304  
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.

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).

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### **2401-2 c/d/e/f: Reading American Fiction: Canons and/of Popular Culture**

Wednesday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 124  
Dr. habil. Sebastian Herrmann

**or**

Wednesday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 124  
Dr. habil. Sebastian Herrmann

**or**

Thursday, 11 am - 1 pm, NSG 114  
Dr. habil. Sebastian Herrmann

**or**

Thursday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 326  
Dr. habil. Sebastian Herrmann

In this seminar, we will practice reading American fiction, both film and written texts, through the canonical categories of difference in American studies: race, class, and gender. In doing so, we will also work on a more general understanding of periods, modes, and genres. In addition to practicing close-reading these texts, we will draw on a diverse body of theory to better analyze, understand, and contextualize the cultural work our texts do, along with the contradictions and ambiguities they harbor. Throughout the semester we will thus practice key analytic and research skills. Taken together, the individual elements of the seminar are meant to prepare you to do independent academic work on primary texts within the field of American studies.

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).

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### **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 Wednesday 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 practice close reading and text analysis, and how to develop an argument. 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 Pizarz-Ramírez

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

**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. Pizarz-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"**

Thursday, 9 – 11 am, HS 6  
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.

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### **Seminar 1: American Eras: Focus on the US Supreme Court**

Thursday, 1 – 3 pm, NSG 220  
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 Pruessing’s classes will start the week of Oct 21, 2024.**

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### **Seminar 2: America Plays: Organized Sport in America, from Reconstruction to the turn of the 21st Century**

Wednesday, 3 pm - 5 pm, NSG 224  
Parker Billinghurst

Throughout one of the most consequential and turbulent 100-years of American history, few if any cultural institutions of the 20th Century consistently remained as central within mass consumption and

general American attention as that of **organized sports**. Throughout the roughly-century of American history this seminar seeks to cover, organized sports within America will be observed to have been variously influenced or pulled-along by the American cultural, social, and political milieu of its time, just like many other American institutions. Yet at other times, sport can be seen to offer the opportunity to push back and influence the American cultural, social, and political milieu of its day as well. As an introductory course to the topic, we will examine the specificities and idiosyncrasies of America's relationship with organized sports, and we will take a look at a variety of sources and mediums of cultural literature. These range from journalism, to biographies, to histories, to government legislature, to protest and political literature, to advertisements and film, and beyond. Topically, this seminar will take a chronological view of American history through the topical lens of sport and look at topics such as America's first professional women's sports league, the Cold War's relevance towards American sports, and the integration of nationalism into sport in the post- 9/11 world. Other seminars will closely examine some of America's most consequential athletes, such as Muhammed Ali and OJ Simpson. Most importantly, as this seminar is an introductory course to the history of American sports, no knowledge of the finer rules, details, or history of American sports is assumed or required.

## **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

#### **Creative Writing Workshop:**

Wednesday, 1 – 3 pm, NSG 224  
Daniel Gumbiner - Picador Guest Professor

This is a course for students looking to develop their own creative writing. The class will focus on short fiction and use a workshop model, in which students will read and discuss each other's work. Students will also read and discuss a selection of contemporary American short stories. Our goals will be to produce work that is meaningful to us, and to better understand how to talk about the work we have produced. A spirit of generosity and inquisitiveness about ourselves and our peers will be expected.

You can enroll in this course by registering for the 5-LP BA professional skills module "Creative Writing: Imagining America" (04-001-1019). The class is open to students of Philologische Fakultät as an external SQ module as well as students enrolled at DLL. Enrollment in this class is based on a lottery system. If you already enrolled for Creative Writing in a summer semester, you are ensured to receive a slot in this module as well.

Please be aware that this class will end the final week before the winter break and therefore taught in double sessions.

## 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](mailto:heather.pruessing@uni-leipzig.de).

**Heather Pruessing's classes will start the week of Oct 21, 2024.**

### **5.3 Study Organization and Planning**

#### **Graduate and Undergraduate Study Organization and Planning**

Monday, 10 am - noon, GWZ 3 5.03  
Dr. Stefan Schubert

This slot serves as a dedicated office hour/consultation time/Q&A session for any questions you have about planning or organizing your studies. Feel free to bring all issues or questions you have about any aspects of your studies you are unsure about or generally want help with. This can include a general study orientation for first-semester students, advice on organizing your studies, choosing modules, or planning semesters in the middle of your studies, or input for how to plan the writing of your BA/MA thesis or think about what to do once you have your degree.

You can simply come by Dr. Schubert's office without an appointment; if you prefer, you can also email him beforehand (the slot is generally in person, but you can also request a Zoom option by writing an email). This offer is open to all American Studies students, graduates (MA) or undergrads (BA).