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M.A. in American Studies (MAS)  
Course Catalog  
Summer Term 2020

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Dear students of the M.A. in American Studies,

The Heidelberg Center for American Studies welcomes you to the summer term 2020.

In the MAS course catalog, you will find all lectures and courses that are relevant for the program and taught in English. You may also take classes held in German if you speak German on a university level. Please consult with the MAS coordinator prior to signing up with any German taught courses. You may find further classes and lectures in the university's online catalog (LSF) or on the respective department's website.

The here listed classes are offered by the Heidelberg Center for American Studies, the English Department, the Institute for Geography, the History Department, the Institute for Political Science, and the Theological Seminary.

Please note that due to the multidisciplinary set-up of our program registration for single classes may differ from each other. You will find directions on how to register in each course description. Please also note the different registration deadlines. It is not necessary to register for lectures.

Please be aware that one class may not count toward two different modules at the same time. E.g., if you choose a seminar for the main module Literature & Culture, the class cannot count toward the research module Literature & Culture as well, but you need to take a different class for the research module. The same applies for courses that are listed in different modules. If you take a class, you must choose toward which module the credit points will count.

If you have any questions, please contact

**MAS Coordinator Nikolas Mariani, M.A. ([nmariani@hca.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:nmariani@hca.uni-heidelberg.de)).**

# M.A. in American Studies

## The Program

Students enroll in the program each winter semester. The standard duration of study, including the writing of the Master's thesis, is four semesters. The M.A. in American Studies (MAS) program (100%) includes the academic disciplines of geography, history, literature and cultural studies, political science, and religious history. At the start of the program, students will choose two of those as their core disciplines. One of these two core disciplines will receive further emphasis in the research module, which is meant to prepare students for the writing of their M.A. thesis. The flexibility module gives students the opportunity either to take American Studies courses outside their core disciplines in order to broaden their understanding of the comprehensive field of American Studies, or to attend additional classes in one of their two core disciplines for a deeper engagement with their primary fields of interest. The interdisciplinary module is designed to bring the perspectives and methods of the various disciplines into dialogue with one another.

These subject modules are supplemented by a methodology module meant to impart both theoretical proficiency and empirical methods, as well as practical skills; and a module on cross-cutting perspectives, which—in the spirit of a traditional *studium generale*—affords students an opportunity to venture outside of the field of American Studies. There will also be a chance during the “mobility window,” usually slated for the third semester, to study abroad on an exchange, accept an internship, etc. The MAS program concludes with an examination module.

### Modules and courses

By dividing the program into various modules, the HCA has three goals for students:

1. To acquire and deepen the latest subject-specific knowledge and research methods of the individual disciplines.
2. To implement multi- and interdisciplinary approaches, and to demonstrate the synergistic potential of such approaches.
3. To practically apply methodological and research skills in order to make graduates competitive in both the academic and the non-academic international job market.

The M.A. program “American Studies” is comprised of:

--A study plan (*Kernfach*)

--An examination module

The study plan encompasses:

--A subject-specific component

--A section on building “comprehensive competencies”

The subject-specific component of the program is divided into four parts:

1. **Main modules:** Students choose two of the HCA's offered disciplines as core disciplines in which they will develop and deepen their subject-specific knowledge and skills. Main modules in the chosen disciplines come with a minimum of one seminar that will be exclusively available to M.A. students, as well as an additional course (in either lecture or seminar format). Students can select their core disciplines freely. They may combine two fields from the humanities or from the social sciences, or they may choose to traverse academic disciplines. All combinations are possible.
2. **Research module:** After finishing the main modules, students complete a research module in order to immerse themselves more fully in one of their two core disciplines. For the research module, students will participate in a seminar offered exclusively to M.A. students. In an "Independent Study" format, students will autonomously work through and discuss with their professor an assigned reading list. This will usually serve as preparation for writing the M.A. thesis.
3. **Flexibility module:** In the flexibility module, students may choose 12 credits worth of courses from any discipline offered in the program. For these elective credits, any combination of courses is allowed. Students can either choose to broaden their understanding of American Studies with classes outside of their core disciplines, or they can choose to focus more deeply on their primary areas of interest.
4. **Interdisciplinary module:** The interdisciplinary module serves to promote an interdisciplinary approach to scholarship and demonstrate the synergistic potential of such an approach. Students will take part in an interdisciplinary seminar offered by instructors from two different disciplines, as well as a two-semester interdisciplinary colloquium in which variegated topics and approaches from the field of American Studies will be discussed.

The section of the program on "comprehensive competencies" is divided into the following three parts:

1. **Methodology module:** In this module, students will deepen their understanding of the theoretical and empirical methods of American Studies, as well as develop their academic writing skills.
2. **Cross-cutting perspectives:** In this module, students will take courses outside of the area of American Studies. These courses may either be related to or independent from the disciplines of American Studies. Language course credits also count toward this module.
3. **Mobility window:** The mobility window provides students with the opportunity for intensive and practical engagement with their degree in American Studies. Students can complete an internship in a relevant field, or can choose to study abroad in order to foster cultural understanding and strengthen intercultural competencies. For students interested in pursuing an academic career, completion of a teaching assignment can also be counted toward this module, provided the assignment does not concern a constituent curricular component of the HCA's B.A. or M.A. programs.

The program concludes with the examination module:

**Examination module:** With the completion of a Master's thesis in the same area as their research module, students will have acquired specialized knowledge in a particular area of American Studies and will have demonstrated the ability to use academic methods to work on and research a topic independently. The particulars of the M.A. thesis are described in section 7.11 of the *Modulhandbuch*. Completion of the thesis takes four months during which students will present an outline of the thesis to their peers at a research colloquium. After completing the thesis, students will take a 60-minute oral final exam. Additional details about the exam are covered in the exam regulations.

## 5.2 Sample course of study

<p><b>First Semester (28 credits)</b></p> <p><b>Methodology module</b> Course: Theory &amp; Methods (4 credits) Course: Academic Writing (4 credits)</p> <p><b>Main module I</b> M.A. seminar: Core discipline I (10 credits) Lecture: Core discipline I (4 credits)</p> <p><b>Main module II</b> Lecture: Core discipline II (4 credits)</p> <p><b>Interdisciplinary module</b> MAS Colloquium I (2 credits)</p>	<p><b>Second Semester (30 credits)</b></p> <p><b>Main module II</b> M.A. seminar: Core discipline II (10 credits)</p> <p><b>Research module</b> M.A. seminar: Core discipline I (10 credits)</p> <p><b>Flexibility module</b> Discussion group: Discipline III (4 credits) Lecture: Discipline IV (4 credits)</p> <p><b>Interdisciplinary module</b> MAS Colloquium II (2 credits)</p>
<p><b>Third Semester (28 credits)</b></p> <p><b>Research module</b> Independent study: Core discipline I (4 credits)</p> <p><b>Interdisciplinary module</b> Interdisciplinary seminar (6 credits)</p> <p><b>Flexibility module</b> Lecture: Core discipline I</p> <p><b>Cross-cutting perspectives</b> 2 courses outside of American Studies (8 credits)</p> <p><b>Mobility window</b> Internship (four weeks) (6 credits)</p>	<p><b>Fourth Semester (34 credits)</b></p> <p><b>Examination module</b> Research colloquium (2 credits) M.A. thesis (24 credits) Oral final exam (8 credits)</p>

Sem	Modules		
4	<b>Cross-Cutting Perspectives (∑ 8 CP)</b> 2 courses outside of the area of American Studies	<b>Examination Module (∑ 34 CP)</b> Research colloquium (2 CP) M.A. thesis (24 CP) Oral final exam (8 CP)	
3		<b>Mobility Window (∑ 6 CP)</b> Study abroad, internship or teaching assignment	
2		<b>Subject-Specific Classes (∑ 54 CP)</b>	
		<b>Research Module (14 CP)</b> Core discipline I or II  1 M.A. seminar 1 Independent Study	<b>Flexibility Module (12 CP)</b>  12 CP worth of classes from any discipline in the program
1	<b>Methodology Module (∑ 8 CP)</b> Theory & Methods (4 CP) Academic Writing (4 CP)	<b>Main Module I (14 CP)</b> Core discipline I  1 M.A. seminar 1 lecture	<b>Main Module II (14 CP)</b> Core discipline II  1 M.A. seminar 1 lecture
		<b>Interdisciplinary Module (∑ 10 CP)</b> 1 Interdisciplinary seminar (6 CP) 2 MAS Colloquium (2 x 2CP)	

# Academic Skills

## Methodology Module

Courses are offered during winter terms only.

## Interdisciplinary Module

### MAS Colloquium

Dr. Wilfried Mausbach; Prof. Dr. Welf Werner

THU; 18:00 - 20:00; HCA / Atrium

#### Registration via LSF.

Course Description:

The Interdisciplinary Colloquium provides a venue for MAS students to meet with renowned experts from various fields, such as politics, economics, journalism, or academia. Most of them will be Americans who will share with us their current interests or most recent scholarship. The Interdisciplinary Colloquium will also serve as a forum for the presentation and discussion of state-of-the-art research in academic disciplines that are not otherwise represented in this year's curriculum.

Participation in the Interdisciplinary Colloquium is mandatory for MAS students.

### Interdisciplinary Seminar: Explaining America

Prof. Dr. Dietmar Schloss / PD Dr. Martin Thunert

WED; 11:15 – 12:45; HCA / Oculus

Registration via [dietmar.schloss@uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:dietmar.schloss@uni-heidelberg.de)

Course Description:

From the days it was 'discovered' by Europeans to our own time, "America" has provided a continuous challenge to the human intellect and imagination. Countless books have been

written to explain the special character of its society and culture. In this seminar we will sample some of these books – many of them very famous – and hopefully gain a sense of the different ways in which America and the United States have been conceptualized in the course of the centuries from the colonial era to the present. While some of the authors to be studied are foreigners who have looked at the country from outside, most of them are ‘natives’ who give us various insider views. Depending on the time in which they live and the position they occupy, they approach ‘America’ from different angles and focus on different aspects. The genre in which these views are expressed vary, too – we will read plays, novels, letters, travel reports, sermons, speeches, political treatises, and sociological studies. The readings selected will give students a theoretical foundation for understanding major processes, institutions and shifts in American culture, society and politics.

Co-taught by a political scientist and a literary historian, this interdisciplinary seminar will trace the relationship between the sphere of American politics and the cultural and literary realms from the early republic onwards to the present day. While the course is primarily designed for students of the HCA’s Masters in American Studies program and advanced students of the HCA’s Bachelor Program in American Studies, we will also admit (advanced) Bachelor and Hauptstudium students from the Anglistisches Seminar as well as advanced international exchange students. Students will be introduced to various controversies, theories, and multidisciplinary perspectives concerning the U.S. political, cultural and literary development.

Literature:

Most of the material to be discussed will be made available on Moodle2.

## **Interdisciplinary Seminar: Religion and Politics in Modern American History**

Prof. Dr. Jan Stievermann / Prof. Dr. Darren Dochuck (University of Notre Dame)

June 12/13; July 03/04; 10:00 - 17:30; HCA / Oculus

**Registration via [jstievermann@hca.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:jstievermann@hca.uni-heidelberg.de)**

Course Description:

This course provides both a chronological and thematic overview of the history of U.S. religion, political culture, and society in the twentieth century. While moving sequentially through key transformations running from the beginning to end of the century, we will also pause each week to examine particular episodes and themes that illuminate key societal turns. Specifically,

this course will encourage us to think more deeply about the ways religious ideas, institutions, and individuals intersect with and weave through broad political developments like corporate and labor activism, the rise and decline of New Deal liberalism, war and American empire building, the power shift to the Sunbelt, urban and suburban power struggles, social movements of the Left and the Right, the politics of family, education, and community, civil rights and ethnic identity, conservatism and globalization. The overarching goal of this course is to place religion at the center of political development in the twentieth century, and at the center of our understanding of this recent past. Here religion will not (as is often done by political historians) be cordoned off as an agent of change worthy of consideration only under exceptional circumstances and in rare moments, but rather be considered as a consistent, powerful player that always brings competing passions and interests, drama and controversy to the political realm.

Literature:

A reading list will be provided at the beginning of the semester.

## Flexibility Module

In the flexibility module students can take courses from all disciplines **within** the field of American Studies. Please consult the course catalogue to find courses that fit your interests. Each course is awarded 4 CP.

## Cross-Cutting Perspectives

In this module students can choose 2 classes from **outside** the field of American Studies. Please consult the university's course catalogue (LSF) to find courses in other disciplines. Each course is awarded 4 CP.

# Courses by Discipline

## Geography

### **Advanced Seminar: Claiming the Backyard: A political geography of financial flows, capital over accumulation and American Imperialism in the Caribbean**

Eligibility: Main Module Geography, Research Module Geography, Flexibility Module

Prof. Dr. Ulrike Gerhard

THU; 14:15 - 15:45; HCA / Oculus

**Registration via [nordamerika@geog.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:nordamerika@geog.uni-heidelberg.de) by 31.3.2020**

Course Description:

American imperialism is often understood as the consequence of the pursuit of strategic and political interest in regions over which the United States extends its sovereignty. Historians, especially those who focus on diplomacy, tend to overestimate the agency of individuals in power and disregard the explanatory potential of structures in the process of decision making. This shortsighted reasoning tends to overlook the economic logic behind American expansionism across the globe, which is better understood when one focuses on the power of capitalism to shape empire.

In this course we shall focus on American imperialism at the beginning of the 20th century (1898-1920). Based on the works of David Harvey and Hannah Arendt, we shall seek to understand the role capital accumulation plays in the creation of empire and study how these entities perpetuate that growth in a dynamic of accumulation by dispossession. We shall also draw on the work of Charles Tilly in an effort to reconceptualize our understanding of the state and the part war plays in constructing, shaping and determining the future actions of a nation.

## History

### Lecture: The African American Freedom Struggle from the Civil War to the Twenty-First Century

Eligibility: Main Module History, Flexibility Module

Prof. Dr. Manfred Berg

MON; 11:15 - 12:45; Grabengasse 3-5 / HistSem HS

#### Registration during first session.

#### Course Description:

Historians have called the black civil rights movement the most important social movement in American history. This movement is often confined to the activist era in the 1950s and 1960s but the African American struggle for freedom and equality has a much longer history and it has had a profound impact on virtually every aspect of American politics, society, and culture. In this lecture course I will present its history from Emancipation during the Civil War to the present. In addition to tracing events, actors, developments, and structural issues, I will introduce students to the major historiographical trends that have shaped the field over the past thirty years.

Students may register in class on April 20, 2020.

#### Suggested Reading:

Berg, Manfred. *"The Ticket to Freedom": The NAACP and the Struggle for Black Political Integration*. Gainesville, FL: The University Press of Florida, 2005

Fairclough, Adam. *Better Day Coming. Blacks and Equality 1890 - 2000*. New York: Viking Penguin, 2001

Tuck, Stephen. *We Ain't What We Ought to Be: The Black Freedom Struggle from Emancipation to Obama*. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 2010;

Holt, Thomas, and Elsa Barkeley Brown. *Major Problems in African-American History. Vol. II: From Freedom to 'Freedom Now'*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000.

## **Lecture: The U.S. in the World Economy since 1945**

Eligibility: Main Module History, Flexibility Module

Prof. Dr. Welf Werner, Natalie Rauscher, M.A.

THU; 09:15 - 10:45; Neue Uni / Neue Aula

### **Registration via LSF.**

#### Course Description:

The U.S. has had a decisive influence on international economic policy issues for more than seventy years. U.S. governments were influential in opening borders to free international trade in international organizations such as the GATT in the post-war era. After the collapse of the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates in the early 1970s, the U.S. opened a new chapter in the international globalization process by encouraging the liberalization of financial flows and markets. In recent years the North American hegemon has entered yet another stage of global involvement. In times of rising international competition from emerging economies and developing countries, trans-border economic activities and international institutions of the liberal world order are viewed more critically by U.S. citizens and governments. In the presidential elections of 2016 all three major contenders had a protectionist agenda.

This lecture provides a basis for understanding changing U.S. international economic policies at the beginning of the 21st century, with a focus on historical developments since 1945 and essential academic discourses from three academic fields: economic history, international economics and international political economy. After an overview of the characteristics and historical precedents of economic globalization, students are introduced to theories, analytical tools, empirical studies, prominent policy issues and factual knowledge from these three fields.

#### Literature:

A reader with all mandatory readings will be made available before the beginning of the semester on Moodle.

## **Advanced Seminar: U.S. International Economic Policy Issues since 1945**

Eligibility: Main Module History, Research Module History, Flexibility Module

Prof. Dr. Welf Werner, Natalie Rauscher, M.A.

THU; 11:15 – 12:45; HCA / Oculus

### **Registration via LSF.**

#### Course Description:

Based on the knowledge acquired in the lecture The U.S. in the World Economy Since 1945, this seminar offers opportunities for a more in-depth look at U.S. international economic policy issues as they have emerged in the current globalization era.

Attending the lecture The U.S. in the World Economy Since 1945 in the summer semester 2020 is a prerequisite for this seminar.

The Wednesday hour (14-15 hrs.) is set aside for individual tutoring. Please e-mail in advance to register. The classroom language is English, including student presentations and papers. HCA students have priority to attend.

#### Literature:

A reader with all mandatory readings will be made available at the beginning of the semester.

## **Advanced Seminar: History of Women, Gender, and Sexuality in the United States**

Eligibility: Main Module History, Research Module History, Flexibility Module

Prof. Dr. Michelle Nickerson

WED; 14:15-15:45; HCA, Oculus (R 120)

### **Registration via LSF**

#### Course Description:

Organized chronologically and topically, the course will introduce graduate students to current methods and major themes in the field. Starting from the colonial period and ending with the present day, class discussions will focus on the tools of analysis and source materials used by historians. We will trace the emergence of gender history out of women's history and talk about how both fields have shaped U.S. historiography over all. Themes will include: the

racialized system of sexual relations and violence that undergird the Jim Crow system of segregation, the gendered dimensions of the carceral state, and the formation of feminist consciousness in the United States.

Literature:

Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016)

Additional materials will be made available online.

## **Übung: Washington: Exploring the History of the U.S. Capital, 1790-2020**

Eligibility: Main Module History, Flexibility Module

Dr. Wilfried Mausbach

MON, 14:15 – 15:45, HCA, Stucco (R. 120)

**Registration via [wmausbach@hca.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:wmausbach@hca.uni-heidelberg.de)**

Course Description:

Washington, DC has it all wrong. A long-standing joke, attributed to John F. Kennedy and subsequently enshrined in a plaque on Freedom Plaza, acknowledges that it is “a city of Southern efficiency and Northern charm.” But this is by no means the only paradox that distinguishes the U.S. capital. It is the administrative center of a superpower but also a town that regularly fails at snow removal. It is the site of congressional hearings and gangland murders, designed to symbolize the American experiment of liberty, democracy, and self-determination yet repeatedly riven by corruption, polarized by race, class, and power, and populated by residents whom Congress denied home rule until 1973 and who spitefully sport license plates complaining about “taxation without representation,” given that they can still only send a single, non-voting representative to the U.S. House (and none to the Senate).

In this course, we will take a closer look at these paradoxes by focusing on primary source material.

You will be asked to introduce one or two primary sources to the class and to contribute questions and/or comments about both primary sources and secondary literature to an online forum on a weekly basis. After taking this course, you should have been able to develop your

skills at research into and analysis of both primary and secondary sources – and you will hopefully have become an expert on the history of the U.S. capital!

Literature:

Tom Lewis, *Washington: A History of Our National City* (New York: Basic Books, 2015);

Howard Gillette, *Between Justice and Beauty: Race, Planning, and the Failure of Urban Policy in Washington, D.C.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

## Literature and Culture

### Lecture: The Literature of the American Renaissance

Eligibility: Main Module Literature and Culture, Flexibility Module

Prof. Dr. Dietmar Schloss

THU; 11:15 - 12:45; English Department / Kettengasse 12, R. 108

Course Description:

In 1941, Harvard Professor F.O. Matthiessen published a study entitled *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* that is regarded by many critics as the founding book of American literary studies. Matthiessen identified the second third of the nineteenth century as the age in which American literature experienced its first “flowering”; henceforth this period came to be considered American literature’s classical age. Matthiessen also assembled a list of writers – Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman – who came to be looked upon as the core authors of the American literary canon.

In this lecture course, we will study selected works by the writers included in Matthiessen’s canon and explore their literary, social, and ethical philosophies. In addition, we will consider works by authors of the period excluded from his list, namely those written by women and African Americans. In studying the literature of the American Renaissance, we will try to understand the processes by which a particular brand of individualism, namely non-conformism and anti-establishment thinking, came to be considered to make up the core of American democratic culture and hopefully find an explanation for why this ethos has remained attractive ever since. In looking at the critical debates that have surrounded Matthiessen’s American Renaissance

canon, however, we will also learn how contested this ethos has become in the latter decades of the twentieth century and thus also get a sense of its limitations.

The following works will be discussed in detail: "The American Scholar", "Self-Reliance", "Experience", and "The Poet" by Ralph Waldo Emerson; *Walden* (in particular the "Economy" chapter) and "Civil Disobedience" by Henry David Thoreau; "The House of Usher" and "The Philosophy of Composition" by Edgar Allan Poe; *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne; "Bartleby the Scrivener", "Benito Cereno" by Herman Melville; *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe; *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself*, Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*; and Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*.

Literature:

Most of the readings can be found in Vol. B. of Robert S. Levine (ed.), *The Norton Anthology of American Literature: American Literature 1820-1865*, ninth ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2017). [Older editions of the NA can be used, too.] Additional texts will be made available on Moodle2.

## **Advanced Seminar: Trust and Suspicion: American Literature and the Emotional Foundations of Democracy**

Eligibility: Main Module Literature and Culture, Research Module Literature and Culture, Flexibility Module

Prof. Dr. Dietmar Schloss

TUE; 14:15 - 15:45; English Department / Kettengasse 12, R. 108

**Registration via email: [dietmar.schloss@urz.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:dietmar.schloss@urz.uni-heidelberg.de)**

Course Description:

Enlightenment philosophers have taught us not to take anything on trust and to subject everything to the test of critical rationality. However, social thinkers and psychologists in our own time have pointed out that trust is the very foundation of human activity and that the processes in all spheres of life – society, politics, economy, private life – vitally depend on it. How can modern democracies function considering these conflicting impulses of suspicion and trust?

The writers of the American Renaissance were deeply concerned with this question. In stories such as "Young Goodman Brown" or "My Kinsman, Major Molineux", Hawthorne dramatizes

the crisis that occurs when human beings lose trust in their world, and shows how they are at risk of becoming dysfunctional. Melville's novel, *The Confidence Man* (which we will read in excerpts), provides a view of American society as being caught in a limbo between trust and suspicion, while Emerson's transcendentalism can be seen as a philosophy that attempts to rebuild trust under the conditions of modern skepticism. Novels such as Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1905) Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1941) and Dave Eggers' *The Circle* (2013) provide more recent contributions to the literary debate concerning social trust. We will read these texts in conjunction with essays by contemporary social theorists such as Antony Giddens, Niklas Luhmann, Francis Fukuyama, and Martin Hartmann, in the hope of gaining some interesting insights into the precarious emotional foundations of modern democracy. Students with a background in sociology or political science are particularly welcome.

#### Literature:

The texts by Nathaniel Hawthorne and Ralph Waldo Emerson can be found in Robert S. Levine (ed.), *The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Volume B*. Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* is available in a *Norton Critical Edition*; Wright's *Native Son* (Vintage Classics) and Eggers' *The Circle* (Penguin) have come out in inexpensive paperback editions. Additional readings will be made available on Moodle2.

### **Proseminar: Contemporary Historical Fiction**

Eligibility: Main Module Literature and Culture, Flexibility Module

David Eisler

TUE; 9:15 - 10:45; English Department / Kettengasse 12, R. 108

#### **Registration via Signup.**

#### Course Description:

Historical fiction provides a window into the past that is tinted by the colors of the present. From historical dramas and war novels to works that cross into other genres (such as science fiction), contemporary historical fiction offers a rich, diverse range of texts and far-reaching interpretive possibilities.

In this course we will think about the relationship between fiction and history and use contemporary historical novels as a way to reflect on the interaction between what happened in

the past and its relevance for the present. We will ask questions such as: What is the role of authenticity in historical fiction? Does historical fiction illuminate or distort our understanding of history? Do certain genres of historical fiction capture the essence of events in ways that nonfiction accounts cannot? Is history itself simply a form of fiction? How do historical novels contribute to the formation of collective memory?

Literature:

Please read the following novels before the term begins:

Colson Whitehead, *The Nickel Boys* (2019); Octavia Butler, *Kindred* (1979); Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969)

## **Proseminar: Herman Melville's "Adventure" Narratives**

Eligibility: Main Module Literature and Culture, Flexibility Module

Sebastian Tants

MON; 09:15 - 10:45; English Department / Kettengasse 12, R. 112

### **Registration via Signup.**

Course Description:

Herman Melville (1819-1891) is nowadays best known as the writer of *Moby-Dick* (1851). However, his most successful work during his own lifetime was *Typee* (1846), a thrilling travel narrative set on a Pacific island. Drawing partly on Melville's own experiences as a young sailor and partly on a variety of historical and fictional sources, *Typee* turned Melville into a well-known writer. Years later, trying to replicate his early success, Melville wrote *Israel Potter* (1854). An adventure narrative based on a historical character, the story deals with a struggling revolutionary hero and his misfortunes, often in a humorous way.

In this class, we will discuss both *Typee* and *Israel Potter*, focusing especially on a number of shared characteristics. Reading excerpts from key source texts and from some of Melville's other prose writings, we will explore historical, political, and intertextual links in these two works. Through close reading of the novels, essential skills for literary analysis will also be practiced.

Literature:

Please purchase and read the Penguin edition of both texts by the start of term:

## Proseminar: Literature and/in the Archive

Eligibility: Main Module Literature and Culture, Flexibility Module

Tim Sommer

THU; 14:15 - 15:45; English Department / Kettengasse 12, R. 112

### Registration via Signup.

#### Course Description:

What happens to literary manuscripts after the death of the author? Do they allow us to retrieve the literary or the historical past? And how do we measure their philological, economic, or aesthetic value? Compared to cultural institutions such as libraries and museums, professional literary archives are a relatively recent phenomenon – although practices of collecting and ordering of course predate them. Rather than focusing on the history of the archive as an institution, this seminar will cover literary narratives about authors' papers and their preservation and consumption. Set in a pre-archival era in which posthumous papers are still largely in the hands of private individuals, Henry James's novella "The Aspern Papers" (1888) describes an unnamed narrator's desperate attempt at recovering the literary remains of a venerated poet. A. S. Byatt's Booker Prize-winning *Possession: A Romance* (1990) revolves around an archival paper-chase that sees two modern literary scholars reconstruct a Victorian love story. Covering a similar tension between privacy and public access as James's and Byatt's texts, Martha Cooley's novel *The Archivist* (1998) deals more specifically with the institutional framework of the modern literary archive (the moral qualms of a professional archivist who illicitly pries into a collection of T. S. Eliot letters). We will focus on how these suspense-driven narratives of detection deal with the relationship between manuscripts and texts, between the material and the intellectual, between the present and the past, and between life and art.

#### Literature:

Participants should acquire the following primary texts and have read them by the beginning of the semester:

Henry James, "The Aspern Papers" (1888) (any edition)

A. S. Byatt, *Possession: A Romance* (1990) (Chatto & Windus / Vintage)

Martha Cooley, *The Archivist* (1998) (Little, Brown / Back Bay Books / Abacus)

Secondary reading will be made available on Moodle.

## **Proseminar: Literature and Culture of the Progressive Era**

Eligibility: Main Module Literature and Culture, Flexibility Module

Priv.-Doz. Dr. Margit Peterfy

TUE; 14:15 - 15:45; English Department / Kettengasse 12, R. 115

### **Registration via Signup.**

Course Description:

The Progressive Era is generally considered a period in American history between the 1890s and the beginning of WW I. After the so-called 'closing of the frontier', this age was marked by a number of social and political developments, the results of which are still relevant to American life today. At the same time, this era represents the backdrop to the cultural changes that lead to the modernist revolution in literature and the arts. In this course, we will approach these new artistic developments by recognizing the progressive contributions of culturally and politically marginalized groups, above all the remarkable achievements of African Americans and of women in the face of an oppressively racist and sexist environment.

Literature:

Please read Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* before the semester and buy the Course Reader with additional texts, available at the Copy Corner as of the beginning of the semester.

## **Proseminar: American Cyborgs**

Eligibility: Main Module Literature and Culture, Flexibility Module

Dr. Heiko Jakubzik

WED; 11:15 - 12:45; English Department / Kettengasse 12, R. 108

### **Registration via Signup.**

Course Description:

Computers have recently moved from industrial machine rooms into our homes, onto our desktops, into our laps, around our wrists, and are continuing their journey into our bodies. At the same time, popular science fiction has re-defined the cyborg – formerly a threat (e.g. *Terminator I*, 1984) – as the last chance for our civilization (e.g. *Terminator II*, 1991).

What is the relation of the cyborg to the human? In what way does the notion of our future as cyborgs challenge anthropocentricity and humanism? Are these recent changes in our attitudes towards cyborgism collateral effects of modern information societies, or projected developments, driven by specific interests?

We will approach the American cyborg from two directions: philosophical and sociological texts (Kristeva, Foucault, Haraway, Herbrechter, Heise, Han and others). Then we will take closer looks at selected popular phenomena (from fiction, film, and journalism) of the last sixty years up to recent trends.

## **Proseminar: American Women Playwrights**

Eligibility: Main Module Literature and Culture, Flexibility Module

Dr. Eva Hänßgen

FRI; 11:15-12:45; English Department / Kettengasse 12, R. 116

### **Registration via Signup.**

Course Description:

In this course, we will combine the analysis of a few plays by Susan Glaspell, a once famous contemporary and co-worker of Nobel laureate Eugene O'Neill, with the analysis of plays by 21st-century women playwrights whose work was staged at the Contemporary American Theater Festival between 2012 and 2018 and published in an anthology in 2019 (Johnna Adams, Eleanor Burgess, D. W. Gregory, Chisa Hutchinson and Susan Miller).

On Glaspell, we can work with a variety of monographs, collections of essays and individual articles. For the other playwrights, interviews and reviews are the only secondary sources available, and we will gain helpful perspectives through the work with Glaspell's plays. On the whole, we will try to put women on the map in this male-dominated genre.

Literature:

Please purchase and read both books before the term starts:

Glaspell, Susan. *Plays*. North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014.

McKowen, Peggy, and Ed Herendeen, eds. *Plays by Women from the Contemporary American Theater Festival: Gidion's Knot, The Niceties, Memoirs of a Forgotten Man, Dead and Breathing, 20th Century Blues*. London et al.: Methuen Drama, 2019.

## **Proseminar: The Visual Turn in Cultural Studies**

Eligibility: Main Module Literature and Culture, Flexibility Module

Priv.-Doz. Dr. Margit Peterfy

TUE; 9:15 - 10:45; English Department / Kettengasse 12, R. 110

### **Registration via Signup.**

Course Description:

The analysis of visual culture in all its aspects has become a central object of cultural studies in the recent decades. In this course, you will learn about methods of visual analysis in different areas of culture. The study of visual cultures requires methodical and theoretical awareness – just as much as the study of text and discourse. We know this from the field of art history, but pictures without a claim to artistic expression, are not “self-evident” and do not “speak for themselves” either. Whereas there are overlapping areas between textual analysis and the interpretation of images, there are also areas of significant differences. In this course, we will not just read and discuss theoretical texts about visual representation, but will also test their practical validity in the analyses of concrete examples, from “simple” illustration to the use of the “image” in memory culture and film and video.

Literature:

Please buy the Reader in the Copy Corner as of the beginning of the semester.

## Proseminar: A Cultural History of Disability in the US

Eligibility: Main Module Literature and Culture, Flexibility Module

Dr. S. Föhr

TUE; 9:15 - 10:45; English Department / Kettengasse 12, R. 112

### Registration via Signup.

#### Course Description:

Representations of disability abound in literature. From Captain Ahab to Benjy Compson, "Boo" Radley to Beth March, characters with disabilities play key roles in a wide range of American classics. In many works of fiction, disability serves as a device that drives the plot forward, presenting the other characters with a challenge to overcome, a source of inspiration or a confirmation of the threats posed by abnormality, frailty and incompleteness.

These representations reflect popular perceptions of disability as a defect, deficiency or curse that causes suffering and pain rather than a way of being. They also reinforce a long tradition of using the language of disability to justify discriminatory treatment not only of people with supposed mental or physical impairments, but of marginalized groups including women, people of color and immigrants. Woman suffragists had to fight the common belief that women were fragile, mentally weak and susceptible to hysteria just as civil rights advocates had to fight popular assumptions that immigrants and people of color were inherently less intelligent and thus less capable of political participation than Anglo-Saxon males.

In order to explore the roots of these and other popular perceptions, this course examines the actual experiences of disabled people in the United States from the colonial era to the present. Using a variety of primary sources, including texts created by people with disabilities themselves, we will trace the political, social and cultural developments that shaped Americans' understanding of disability and people with disabilities, considering disability as a social category that is crucial for understanding the way American culture defined the "proper" social order and justified the need for social control.

The course is structured as a series of discussions centered on weekly readings, so it is important that you complete the reading assignments on time. Assignments include regular participation, a number of short writing assignments and a final exam. No research paper is required.

Literature: A class reader will be made available at Copy Corner in mid-March.

## **Book Club: Hot Off the Press**

Eligibility: Flexibility Module

Prof. Dr. Schloss / Dr. Jakubzik

WED; 16:15 - 17:45; English Department / Kettengasse 12, R. 113

### **Registration during first session.**

Course Description:

What's new in the cultural sphere of the United States? In this class, we will sample new books, films, tv-series, music etc. in order to find out what stirs the American minds and hearts at the present moment. While there will be a focus on new publications in literature and the arts, new contributions in the fields of politics, history, religion, and popular science writing will also be assessed. We will discuss a different 'work' every week and students will take part in the choice and presentation of topics. In order to keep the workload manageable, we will read most of the works in excerpts and students who have familiarized themselves with the entire work will guide us through the discussion.

## **Political Science**

### **Advanced Seminar: US Global Hegemony**

Eligibility: Main Module Politics, Research Module Politics, Flexibility Module

Dr. Gordon Friedrichs

THU; 14:15 – 15:45; HCA / Stucco

### **Registration via LSF.**

Course Description:

This course examines the rise and potential decline of the United States as a global hegemon. Students will engage with a wide variety of theoretical approaches to the concept of hegemony in world politics with a particular focus on the academic debate surrounding the current state of US global affairs. The goal is to provide students with advanced theoretical knowledge that allow them to think critically about the stability, transition, and construction of hegemony in the discipline and practice of international relations.

Besides acquiring theoretical and analytical knowledge, students will engage with a broad variety of empirical cases. These include, but are not limited to, US military interventions, the US role in global governance regimes, international sanctions practice, as well as the domestic politics of US global hegemony. In addition, cases will explore some of the challenges to US hegemony posed by rising powers and non-state actors. The cases will illuminate general patterns and processes, but also specific strategies and trade-offs of US global hegemony, covering a range of policy areas such as security, trade, finance, foreign aid, or democracy promotion.

Students are required to regularly present critical summaries of the course's reading material in class as well as write a longer term paper either during the semester or afterwards (all in English). The course is designed for MA students with basic or advanced knowledge of IR.

#### Literature:

Brook, Stephen, and William Wohlforth. 2016. *America Abroad: The United States' Global Role in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press.

Daalder, Ivo H., and James M. Lindsay. 2018. *The Empty Throne: America's Abdication of Global Leadership*. New York: PublicAffairs.

Hastedt, Glenn P. 2017. *American Foreign Policy: Past, Present, and Future*. 11 ed. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.

Herring, George C. 2011. *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776*. 1 ed, Oxford History of the United States. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hook, Steven W. 2017. *U.S. Foreign Policy: The Paradox of World Power*. 5 ed. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Grygiel, Jakub J., and A. Wess Mitchell. 2016. *The Unquiet Frontier: Rising Rivals, Vulnerable Allies, and the Crisis of American Power*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ikenberry, G. John. 2011. *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kagan, Robert. 2018. *The Jungle Grows Back: America and Our Imperiled World*. New York: Knopf.

Lieber, Robert J. 2012. *Power and Willpower in the American Future: Why the United States Is Not Destined to Decline*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Norrlof, Carla. 2010. *America's Global Advantage: US Hegemony and International Cooperation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Patrick, Stewart. 2009. *The Best Laid Plans: The Origins of American Multilateralism and the Dawn of the Cold War*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Thompson, John A. 2015. *A Sense of Power: The Roots of America's Global Role*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Walt, Stephen M. 2018. *The Hell of Good Intentions: America's Foreign Policy Elite and the Decline of U.S. Primacy*. New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux.

## Religion and Culture

### Lecture: History of Christianity in North America, 1800-1900

Eligibility: Main Module Religion and Culture, Flexibility Module

Prof. Dr. Jan Stievermann

TUE; 11:15 - 12:45; Neue Uni / HS 05

WED; 11:15 - 12:45; Neue Uni / HS 05

Course Description:

This lecture course offers a survey of the history of Christianity in North America from the revolutionary period to the end of the nineteenth century. Always with an eye on the European background, the course will examine the often surprising ways in which the various forms of Christianity that were imported from the Old World developed in different contexts of westward expansion, immigration, revivalism, intercultural contact and conflict. While special attention will be given to the American transformations of Christianity, we will also discuss the fate of indigenous religions, and look at the development of non-Christian immigrant faiths and the birth of new religious movements such as Mormonism, Spiritualism, and New Thought. As we trace the evolution of churches, traditions, beliefs, practices and communities from independence to the closing of the frontier, students will be familiarized with important primary sources and key-concepts for this period of American religious history.

After the lecture class on Wednesday (11-12) we will discuss one central primary document relevant to each week's topic. This additional "Quellenübung" is highly recommended but optional.

Literature:

Recommended Reading:

Edwin Gaustad and Leigh Schmidt. *The Religious History of America* (Harper, 2002)

Sidney E. Ahlstrom. *A Religious History of the American People* (Yale UP, 1972)

## **Advanced Seminar: Issues and Theories in American Religious History**

Eligibility: Main Module Religion and Culture, Research Module Religion and Culture, Flexibility Module

Prof. Dr. Jan Stievermann; Prof. Dr. Darren Dochuck

THU; 14:15 - 15:45; HCA / Meeting Room

**Registration via [jstievermann@hca.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:jstievermann@hca.uni-heidelberg.de)**

Course Description:

Geared toward students specializing in American religious history, this advanced seminar will examine important theories and issues currently debated in the field. This semester's focus will be on recent literature exploring the history of American Puritanism and the early evangelicalism. But our course reading list will accommodate student interests and projects.

Literature:

A reading list will be provided at the beginning of the semester.

## **Proseminar: Christianity and Social Activism in the U.S.**

Eligibility: Main Module Religion and Culture, Flexibility Module

Ryan Hoselton, M.Div., M.Th.

TUE; 09:15 - 10:45; HCA / Oculus

**Registration via [ryan.hoselton@ts.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:ryan.hoselton@ts.uni-heidelberg.de)**

Course Description:

For most Christians throughout the history of the U.S., faith has yielded enormous implications for social life. Every year, American Christians give millions of dollars for global humanitarian efforts, aid the homeless and orphans, campaign for political candidates who reflect their values, combat sex trafficking and abuse, protest inequalities and injustices, debate hot-button

issues like immigration and religious liberty, clean parks and neighborhoods, and more. These efforts are part of a long and complex history of Christian social activism extending back to the colonial period. Through reading and discussing primary source texts, this course will introduce students to the thought processes, cultural conditions, and religious motivations that shaped a vast diversity of social activism through the centuries. We will explore the intersection of Christianity with voluntary moral societies and benevolence projects in colonial America, the “Benevolent Empire,” abolitionism and Reconstruction, the suffrage movement, humanitarianism and foreign missions, the social gospel, the civil rights movement, the emergence of multi-billion dollar Christian charities like World Vision and Compassion International, the Moral Majority, modern culture wars, and more.

Literature: Course texts provided on Moodle.

## **Proseminar: Introduction to American Religious History**

Eligibility: Main Module Religion and Culture, Flexibility Module

Dr. Benjamin Pietrenka

MON; 14:15 - 15:45; HCA / Oculus

**Registration via [bpietrenka@hca.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:bpietrenka@hca.uni-heidelberg.de)**

Course Description:

This proseminar will provide a general introduction to the history of religion in America from the earliest beginnings to the 21st century. A unit on methodologies used by scholars who study the history of religion in America will be followed by a roughly chronological overview of major issues, events, and figures that governed the development of a wide variety of religious traditions. Given its sustained prominence in American culture, this course will necessarily track the transfer, foundations, and transformations of Protestant Christian groups. These narratives, however, will be set alongside other hugely influential religious traditions, such as Catholicism, Indigenous American and African animism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism, as well as the emergence of new religious movements, such as Mormonism, New Thought, Christian Science, Spiritualism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Pentecostalism. Along the way, the course will address how American religion affected and mediated issues of liberty, freedom, empire, diversity, pluralism, Enlightenment, immigration, reform, politics, economics, cultural wars, social justice,

gender, ethnicity, and race. Students will gain an understanding of how religion shaped American society over the course of four centuries.

Literature:

A reading list will be provided at the beginning of the semester.

## **Übung: Contemporary American Evangelicalism**

Eligibility: Main Module Religion and Culture, Flexibility Module

Ryan Hoselton, M.Div., M.Th.

THU; 09:15 - 10:45; HCA / Oculus

**Registration via [ryan.hoselton@ts.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:ryan.hoselton@ts.uni-heidelberg.de)**

Course Description:

What is American evangelicalism, and who is an evangelical? These questions have puzzled many observers in the U.S. and abroad, especially those seeking to understand why so many have united their cause with the Republican party and boosted Ronald Reagan, George Bush Sr. and Jr., and Donald Trump to the presidency. The movement, however, is far more diverse and complex and thus cannot be reduced to its conservative politicization (led mainly by whites). Millions of Americans have been drawn to its pursuit of a vibrant and active Christian faith adapted for a modern world. Beginning with the mid-20th-century rise of the neo-evangelical movement to today, this course will introduce students to key events, figures, ideas, cultural conditions, and issues that have shaped contemporary American evangelicalism. We will read and discuss primary sources that shed light on complicated matters of a controversial movement: theology, religious practice, politics, global outreach, ethics, race, gender, media, culture, social activism, and more.

Literature:

Course texts provided on Moodle.

## Übung: Jonathan Edwards: His Life, Times, and Thought

Eligibility: Main Module Religion and Culture, Flexibility Module

Ryan Hoselton, M.Div., M.Th.

TUE; 14:15 - 15:45; Hauptstr. 231 / Theol. Dekanat SR

**Registration via [ryan.hoselton@ts.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:ryan.hoselton@ts.uni-heidelberg.de)**

Course Description:

A scholar once labeled Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) the “white whale of American religious history.” The legacy of the eighteenth-century New England Congregationalist minister has taken on manifold lives. He’s been seen as the faithful bearer of the colonial Puritan tradition, the father of American evangelicalism, and/or a child of the Enlightenment. The New Divinity theologians owned him as their theological mentor, Unitarians denounced him as a Calvinist enthusiast, twentieth-century Americanists saw him as the pioneer of a distinctly American intellectual tradition, and the vibrant New Calvinist movement today has made him their go-to theologian. Some have praised him as the “American Augustine,” while others like Mark Twain deemed him a “resplendent intellect gone mad.” The objective of the course is not to harpoon Edwards with another misguided label but rather understand him in light of his transatlantic and colonial historical context. Students willing to give Edwards a closer look will encounter a complex character, a formidable theological and philosophical mind, a discerning revivalist, and an innovative psychologist of religious experience. Moreover, they will gain a better grasp of the cultural, intellectual, and religious world in which Edwards lived.

Literature:

Please buy: George M. Marsden, *A Short Life of Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008)

## **Übung: Gender, Female Agency und Charismatic Authority in American Religious History**

Eligibility: Main Module Religion and Culture, Flexibility Module

Dr. Benjamin Pietrenka, Claudia Jetter

MON; 9:15 - 10:45; HCA / Oculus

**Registration via [benjamin.pietrenka@ts.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:benjamin.pietrenka@ts.uni-heidelberg.de)**

Course Description:

This course addresses the history of American religious culture through the lens of gender as an analytical category and highlights the influence and contributions of women from the colonial period to the present. Exploring a variety of interwoven topics, including female exhorters and charismatic prophets, religiously constructed gender roles, conflicted relationships between religion and sexuality, as well as gendered religious experiences, identities, and bodies, students will study the ways in which women and notions of gender have played crucial roles in the development and maintenance of religious traditions in America. Drawing upon theoretical concepts of charismatic authority and spiritual equality, this course will highlight the role of exceptional religious women who transcended patriarchal boundaries and established authoritative positions that enabled them to express dissent and emphasize reform. From the Puritan Anne Hutchinson in colonial New England to the 19th century African abolitionist preacher Sojourner Truth to the temperance reformer and suffragist Frances Willard to the anti-feminist conservative Phyllis Schlafly as well as contemporary religious debates about gender performativity and LGBTQIAPK+ concerns, this course will utilize historical documents and secondary source scholarship to explore the religious lives of women and religious constructions of femininities and masculinities over the long arc of American history.

Literature:

A reading list will be provided at the beginning of the semester.

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