Achtung: Es handelt sich nicht um die aktuellste Version. Bitte informieren Sie sich über Abweichungen bei Ihren Lehrenden.

Course Catalogue Winter Semester 2026/2027

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 12, 2026**.

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

Table of Contents

1 Information 2

2 BA Courses 3

2.1 Literature and Culture I (04-001-1001) **3**

2.2 iTASK (international, interdisciplinary, integrated: Technical, Academic, Soft, and Career Skills) (04-001-1004) **5**

2.3 Language and Society II - Synchronic and Diachronic Varieties of English (04-001-1005) **7**

2.4 Society, History, and Politics II (04-001-1006) **9**

2.5 Project Module (04-001-1009) **12**

2.6 Ethnicity and Diversity in US Culture (04-001-1018) **13**

3 MA Courses 15

3.1 Methods and Theories in American Studies (04-038-2001) **16**

3.2 Graduate Colloquium in American Studies (04-038-2002) **17**

3.3 iCAN: international, interdisciplinary and integrated Career and Academic Knowledge (04-038-2003) **19**

3.4 Cultures of Difference (04-038-2007) **21**

3.5 Global America (04-038-2010) **23**

3.6 Immigration, Community, and Citizenship (04-038-2012) **25**

4 Lehramt Courses 27

4.1 Module *-2401: “American Literatures, American Societies” **27**

4.2 Module *-1601 “US Society and Diversity: Politics, History and Culture” (Ergänzungsstudien) 29

5 Creative Writing and Other Courses 32

5.1 Professional Skills Module “Creative Writing: Imagining America” (04-001-1019 | 5 Credits) 32

5.2 Writing Clinic **33**

1 Information

Contact Information

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

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

Registration for Classes

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

American Studies Modules

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

International Students

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

Courses

Course catalogs of past semesters can be found in the Downloads and Documents area.

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

Unless stated otherwise, **classes start in the week of October 12, 2026**. 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. Katja Schmieder

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

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

Lecture: US-American Literature: Beginnings to Present

Tuesday, 9 – 11 am, HS 12
Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

This lecture will provide a survey of American literary history from its colonial beginnings to the present. It will discuss important themes, modes, and genres that characterize American literature throughout its history, its cultural contexts, and the literary periods into which these developments have been organized. In the course of this survey, we will explore the – partly very different, partly continuous – ways in which texts across these periods define 'Americanness,' in which they approach human nature and social differences, and the ideas about the role and operations of literature that they reflect.

Seminar:

either a) Monday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG 328
Dr. Katja Schmieder

or b) Tuesday, 3 – 5 pm, NSG 322
Dr. habil. Sebastian Herrmann

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 of contemporary approaches in literary and cultural theory.

Both seminars will start in the 2nd week of classes, on October 19 and 20 respectively.

Tutorial (Übung):

either a) Wednesday, 9 – 11 am, NSG 410
Heather Pruessing

or b) 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.

This course starts on **October 28, 2026.**

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

Thursday, 11 am – 1 pm **(every other week),** NSG 428
Heather Pruessing

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

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

This course starts on **October 29, 2026.**

Praxis Seminar

Thursday, 9 am – 11 am, NSG 428
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.

This course starts on **October 29, 2026.**

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, HSG, HS 3
Prof. Dr. Ole Schützler

Reading list: will be provided in the course

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

1005-2 Seminar: Historical Roots of US-English

Monday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG, S 121
Martin Schäfer

Exam: written examination (60 min)

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.

1005-3 Seminar Varietäten: From prescribing to describing (American) English usage

Thursday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG, S 101
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.

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz
Module organization & coordination: Heather Pruessing

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 the two seminars.

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

Monday, 5 – 7 pm, HS 6
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 impacts, reform and civil rights movements, the globalization of American culture, and many more. While emphasizing a social and cultural history approach to American history, the course also integrates global, transatlantic, and international developments to better understand the nature of the American experience and its impact on international affairs.

For students of the BA in American Studies, the course ends with an in-class final exam.

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.

Seminar 1: The (Cultural) Politics of the Supreme Court

Tuesday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 428
Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

Chief Justice John Roberts has recently insisted that the Supreme Court is "simply not part of the political process" and that its justices are not "political actors." Yet in recent decades, this view of the Court as a neutral and apolitical institution has been met with growing skepticism. Decisions such as Dobbs v. Jackson, Citizens United v. FEC, and Bush v. Gore have fueled debates about the Court's role in American politics and the extent to which judicial decisions reflect, or rather shape, broader ideological and political struggles.

This seminar explores the Supreme Court not only as a legal institution but also as a powerful political actor that has shaped the course of US history. Through an examination of landmark Supreme Court decisions, we will investigate how the Court has influenced citizenship, voting rights, civil liberties, economic regulation, and the political process itself. The seminar will also examine the Supreme Court as an institution, exploring how justices build coalitions, negotiate disagreements, and exercise power through both formal opinions and less visible procedural mechanisms, including the increasingly significant "shadow docket."

In this class, we will read excerpts from majority, concurring, and dissenting opinions, analyzing both the legal reasoning employed by the justices as well as a wide range of related texts, including constitutional debates, political speeches, newspaper coverage, congressional documents, and personal correspondence. These materials will allow us to examine the political consequences of the Court's decisions and to place them within their broader historical, social, and cultural contexts.

By examining the historical evolution of the Supreme Court and its relationship to American politics, the seminar will consider whether the Court functions as an impartial interpreter of the Constitution, a political institution, or something in between. Ultimately, we will explore how the Court has shaped—and been shaped by—the major political, social, and cultural conflicts that have defined US history.

Seminar 2: Voices of American Eras: American History Through the Spoken Word

Wednesday, 1 – 3 pm, NSG 410
Heather Pruessing

From Frederick Douglass to Donald Trump, many defining moments in US American history have been shaped by the words used to describe, defend, and contest them. A great speech can sharpen a nation's anxieties, reframe a political debate, rally the marginalized, or lend legitimacy to the indefensible. This course traces the progression of US history from Reconstruction to the present day through the examination of landmark speeches. These texts serve as our primary source windows into each era's central conflicts, aspirations, tensions, and transitions, revealing not only what Americans believed, but how they fought, in public and in language, over what their country should become.

The voices we encounter will be as varied as the eras they represent: presidents and protesters, senators and activists, war hawks and peace advocates. We will read speeches that sought to expand the circle of American belonging and speeches that aimed to contract it.

“Voices of American Eras: American History Through the Spoken Word” 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.

This course starts on **October 28, 2026.**

2.5 Project Module (04-001-1009)

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez
Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez

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

The module consists of one colloquium and one tutorial

Research Project

Monday, 5 – 7 pm, NSG 226
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez

The seminar is designed to facilitate the acquisition of skills that prepare students to write a BA thesis in the near future. It will assist them in taking the necessary steps for developing a research project. This includes adequate ways of identifying the subject matter of a research project; researching relevant scholarship; formulating a research question; delimiting the body of material to be analyzed, determining appropriate research methods, and thus finding the topic for a scholarly project. In the course of the semester, students will be required to design a research project of their own choice.

This course starts on **October 19, 2026.**

Tutorial: Study and Career Planning

Thursday, 11 am – 1 pm **(every other week)**, NSG 428
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.

This course starts on **October 29, 2026.**

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez
Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez

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

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

Lecture

Thursday, 9 – 11 am, HS 6
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez

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

The lecture starts on **October 22, 2026**.

Choose one out of two seminars:

(Either) Seminar 1: Consuming Difference: Race and Consumer Culture in the United States

Monday, 1 – 3 pm, NSG 226
Dr. Steffen Wöll

How do consumer cultures shape ideas about race and ethnicity? In her influential essay "Eating the Other," bell hooks argues that within contemporary capitalism, cultural difference is often transformed into a commodity that promises novelty, authenticity, or transgression. Race, in this sense, becomes something that can be consumed.

Taking this insight as a starting point, the seminar examines how ethnic identities circulate through markets, media, and everyday life. We will explore the commodification of difference in areas such as food, tourism, fashion, music, advertising, and digital culture, while also considering less conventional sites of racial consumption, including horror fiction, true crime, video games, and representations of animals and bodies.

Combining approaches from American Studies, Cultural Studies, and Media Studies, the seminar covers a wide range of literary, visual, and pop-cultural sites. By tracing the connections between race and consumption, students will develop critical tools for understanding how consumer culture shapes perceptions of identity, difference, and belonging in the contemporary United States.

(Or) Seminar 2: When Harlem Was in Vogue: Reading the Harlem Renaissance

29 and 30 January, 9am – 5 pm, TBA
N.N.

Roughly between World War I and the Great Depression, African American culture experienced an unprecedented florescence in literature and the arts that became known as the Harlem Renaissance. While the movement centered in New York City, it also reached out to other places both inside and outside of the US and has had a tremendous impact on African American culture ever since. In this course, we will study the rich literature of the Harlem Renaissance in its cultural, political, and transnational contexts. We will examine canonical texts of the Harlem Renaissance, such as writings by Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, and Jean Toomer, both as works of art and in the context of contemporary debates regarding the role of art in the African American community and their struggles for self-determination and freedom. We will also ask questions such as: Why Harlem? What is the relationship between literature and other forms of art such as Jazz in the Harlem Renaissance? What was the role of so-called white patronage? Can there actually be such a thing as "authentic" African American art? What was the relationship of the Harlem Renaissance to High Modernism? Etc.

Please keep in mind that this is a discussion-based course. Background and context will be offered as needed, but we will spend the great majority of our time carefully reading and discussing the primary texts together. As such, it is expected that you to carefully read all assigned texts and come to class prepared to share your thoughts, ideas, and questions. If you want to get started, an excellent (if at points a bit dated) introduction to the Harlem Renaissance is David Levering Lewis's When Harlem Was in Vogue.

This class will be taught as a **"Blockseminar"**—that is, across two full days instead of weekly 90 min sessions. The dates for the Blockseminar are **Friday, January 29 (9am-5pm) and Saturday, January 30 (9am-5pm)**.

Tutorial: Spoken Academic Discourse

either a) Wednesday, 11 am – 1 pm, TBA
Lench (Institut für Anglistik)

or b) Friday, 9 – 11 am, TBA
Lench (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 six 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 semesters 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 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. habil. Sebastian Herrmann

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

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar: Theory in American Studies

Wednesday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG 301
Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

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

Seminar: Methods: American Studies and/as Cultural Studies

Thursday, 1 - 3 pm, GWZ 3 5.15
Dr. habil. Sebastian Herrmann

This seminar will address major paradigms of and theories used in the field of American studies, tracing their evolution and contestation in the past decades of scholarship within the field. Our focus will lie on the field's relation to cultural studies and its particular methods and approaches. In addition, we will briefly 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.' Overall, 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 practice applying them in critical readings, scholarly arguments, and research projects.

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez, Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz
Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez, Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

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

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar 1: History Wars – Negotiating America's Past from the Bicentennial to America 250

Tuesday, 11 am – 1 pm, NSG 223
Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

Who owns the American past? This seminar explores the "History Wars"—the ongoing, often vitriolic debates over the narrative, teaching, and memorialization of United States history. Spanning the period from the 1976 Bicentennial to the 2026 Semiquincentennial, this course examines how Americans have contested the meaning of their nation's founding, its many highly problematic issues, and its collective future.

We will analyze how historical memory is constructed and weaponized in the public square, moving beyond traditional historiography to investigate the role of museums, textbooks, political speeches, monuments, and digital culture. Students will engage with the competing visions of American exceptionalism and critical historical inquiry, ultimately asking how a diverse democracy negotiates a "usable past" in an era of intense polarization.

All participants are requested to read the assigned texts (primary sources and secondary texts) for each class meeting and take an active part in group discussions. Several class meetings will be moderated and additionally prepared by a group of selected students who 'adopt' that meeting's topic, selecting additional or different material and guide through our discussions (Studienleistung / PVL). Final exam for this class will be a term paper (about 6.500 words).

Seminar 2: Mobility Narratives: Movement, Space, and Power in American Culture

Tuesday, 3 – 5 pm, GWZ 2 5.16
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez

Movement is often associated with freedom, opportunity, and self-determination. Yet not all movement is voluntary, equally accessible, or socially valued. Mobility can signify exploration and adventure, but also displacement, exile, surveillance, confinement, and exclusion. This course explores mobility as a cultural practice and social imaginary, examining how movement and immobility are represented, negotiated, and contested in U.S. literature, film, visual culture, and other media. We will investigate

narratives about migrants, tourists, settlers, nomads, and other mobile subjects, asking how mobility intersects with questions of race, class, gender, citizenship, and power. Particular attention will be paid to the spatial dimensions of mobility and immobility by exploring sites where movement is enabled, restricted, or controlled, including borders, cities, frontiers, highways, and neighborhoods. The final sessions of the course will be devoted to student group projects exploring selected themes and case studies related to the course.

This course starts on **October 20, 2026**.

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler
Module organization & coordination: Dr. Stefan Schubert

The 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
Dr. Stefan Schubert

and

Thursday, 11 am - 1 pm*, GWZ 3 5.15
Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

***plus additional time slots** (likely: Monday, 1 pm - 3 pm;
Monday, 3 pm - 5 pm; Wednesday, 1 pm - 3 pm)

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 nonacademic work settings alike.

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

This semester, we will work to edit the 20th 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 quite an extensive time commitment outside of the two slots indicated here, which you will spend on completing a variety of tasks individually or in groups. In some weeks (mainly in October and parts of November), we will need additional fixed slots to discuss the submissions. The exact time slots will be discussed in the first weeks of the semester, but for now, please plan for **Mondays, 1 – 3 pm and 3 – 5 pm** as well **Wednesdays, 1 – 3 pm** 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. Katja Kanzler, Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez
Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler, Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez

The module interrogates central myths, narratives, and other forms of meaning-making that US culture likes to tell about itself, that it has used to construct certain self-understandings, and that have been majorly contested and debated throughout US history and politics as well as within literature and popular culture. By studying these dynamics, students will also scrutinize the role of imagination and memory for US culture and how they are interwoven with mythical images and narratives about the US.

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar 1: The Freak Show and Its Legacies

Tuesday, 1 – 3 pm, NSG 321
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?

Seminar 2: Who Belongs? Outsiders in American Literature and Culture

Wednesday, 1 – 3 pm, GWZ 2 5.16
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez

American public debate increasingly appears divided into opposing camps: insiders and outsiders, "real Americans" and "others," elites and ordinary citizens, patriots and enemies. Across the political spectrum, competing groups portray themselves as excluded while questioning the legitimacy of others' claims to belonging. Yet the distinction between insider and outsider has never been fixed. Rather, every society continuously redraws the boundaries between those who belong and those who do not. American literature has long explored these shifting boundaries through characters who challenge, transgress, or simply fail to meet social expectations. They may be rebels, migrants, political radicals, racialized minorities, eccentrics, criminals, or solitary nonconformists. Some become heroes, others scapegoats; some expose the shortcomings of the societies that reject them, while others are portrayed as genuine threats to the social order.

This course examines the changing figure of the outsider in American literature and culture from the nineteenth century to the present. Instead of treating outsiderhood as a fixed social identity, we will ask how literary and cultural texts participate in defining the boundaries of normality, citizenship, and community. Who decides who belongs? Which forms of nonconformity are celebrated, tolerated, or condemned? Under what historical conditions do outsiders become symbols of freedom, danger, or social change? Reading novels, short stories, films, and other cultural texts alongside selected theoretical approaches, we will explore the outsider as one of the central figures through which American culture negotiates its values, anxieties, and changing understandings of itself.

This class starts on October 21, 2026.

3.5 Global America (04-038-2010)

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz
Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

The module investigates the United States in a global context, including the role that US cultural productions and processes, literature, political and economic actors, and specific (sub)national communities play—and have historically played—in processes of globalization and transnational entanglements. Topics can include concrete manifestations of global interconnections as well as their characteristics and effects just as much as examinations of how the history and current state of global phenomena has been addressed in various US 'texts' and cultural artifacts

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar 1: Slavery in the Americas: History and Memory

Wednesday, 11 am – 1 pm, GWZ 2 5.16
Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

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 (and beyond). 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.

On another level, the class will also address the representations of the institution of slavery in the public memory of the United States and other nations. Remembering slavery and centering the histories of enslavement has become a cornerstone in many various memory projects worldwide, and the class will interrogate how scholarly histories of slavery and of enslaved people are articulated in discourses of rights and justice.

All participants are requested to read the assigned texts (primary sources and secondary texts) for each class meeting and take an active part in group discussions. Several class meetings will be moderated and additionally prepared by a group of selected students who 'adopt' that meeting's topic, selecting additional or different material and guide through our discussions (Studienleistung / PVL). Students can enroll in either the "Research Project" (= seminar paper) or the "Academic Discourse" (= portfolio exam) variety of the module, details in our first course meeting.

Seminar 2: Where Home is the Center of the Map: North American Indigenous Literatures and Personal Canons

Monday, 3 pm – 5 pm, GWZ 3 5.15
Picador Professor (Annie Wenstrup)

How do you know where your homeplace is? Moreover, what does it mean to claim a homeplace? In this course we'll read literature by North American Indigenous authors that explores how a relationship with place informs cultural and political identities. At the same time, students will work on creating their personal canon of literature, one that informs their understanding of their homeplace. Our work will be guided by Robin Wall Kimmerer's teaching that, "to love a place is not enough. We must find ways to heal it." In doing so, we'll chart the landscapes we belong to and what cultivating a reciprocal relationship with them entails.

This course starts in the week of November 16 and ends in the week of January 25. There may be some double sessions to accommodate the shorter teaching period. More information on this will provided in the first session of the course.

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler, Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz
Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler, Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

The module examines the role of (im)migration as a central characteristic of American society and culture. In addition to investigating historically specific constellations of immigration, it addresses the extent to which geographical mobility fuels and challenges fundamental notions of (national, ethnic, etc.) community and leads societies to reconsider the conditions for belonging or citizenship.

The module consists of two seminars

Seminar 1: The Right to Belong: Urban Struggle and Community-Making in Detroit and Mobile since 1945 (with Corwin Sandiford)

Tuesday, 3 – 5 pm, NSG 315
Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz

This seminar investigates the making and remaking of urban communities in the United States by comparing Detroit, Michigan, and Mobile, Alabama, from the mid-twentieth century until the recent past. While often analyzed in isolation—Detroit as the archetype of industrial collapse and "Motor City" identity, and Mobile as a site of Southern maritime heritage and racial contestation—this course brings them into dialogue to reveal how residents negotiate their "right to the city."

By centering the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality, this course examines how diverse communities—from Black industrial workers and Civil Rights leaders to LGBTQ+ activists and women's organizations—have shaped, occupied, and contested urban space. Through an analysis of primary archives (oral histories, city planning documents, protest manifestos, novels, music and films) and interdisciplinary scholarly literature, students will critically evaluate how the "urban social contract" is written, broken, and rewritten in the face of structural change and grassroots resistance.

All participants are requested to read the assigned texts (primary sources and secondary texts) for each class meeting and take an active part in group discussions. Several class meetings will be moderated and additionally prepared by a group of selected students who 'adopt' that meeting's topic, selecting additional or different material and guide through our discussions (Studienleistung / PVL). Students can enroll in either the "Research Project" (= seminar paper) or the "Academic Discourse" (= portfolio exam) variety of the module, details in our first course meeting.

Seminar 2: Negotiations of Citizenship in Contemporary Speculative Fiction

Wednesday, 3 – 5 pm, GWZ 3 5.15
Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler

The interdisciplinary field of Citizenship Studies has reframed citizenship as more than a merely legal category. As Engin Isin argues, "citizenship, while typically understood as a legal status of membership in the state, if not the nation-state, became increasingly defined as practices of becoming claim-making subjects in and through various sites and scales." Scholars in the field have emphasized that the nation-state is only one possible frame of reference for such negotiations—the scales at which citizenship is enacted and contested may encompass a wide range of frameworks of belonging (local, national, global, planetary, etc.). Likewise, the practices through which citizenship is articulated are diverse, ranging from civic engagement and political action to discursive practices and cultural forms of expression.

This seminar explores how the discursive practices of speculative fiction facilitate negotiations of citizenship. Our guiding premise is that speculative fiction—a genre encompassing a variety of non-realist literary forms—provides a particularly productive space for reflecting on questions of belonging, agency, recognition, and rights. Drawing on key contributions from Citizenship Studies, we will read and analyze selected works of speculative fiction, with particular attention to texts by minoritized writers. Through these readings and discussions, we will consider questions such as: How do speculative and fantastic modes enable texts to imagine alternative configurations of belonging and civic agency? How do the texts expose, critique, or reconfigure the exclusionary logics of existing social and political orders? How do they represent the process of "becoming claim-making subjects" in contexts that challenge conventional understandings of citizenship?

4 Lehramt Courses

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez, Prof. Dr. Olaf Stieglitz
Module organization & coordination: Dr. habil. Sebastian Herrmann, Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

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

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

2401-1 Lecture

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

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

Monday, 5 – 7 pm, HS 6
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 impacts, reform and civil rights movements, the globalization of American culture, and many more. While emphasizing a social and cultural history approach to American history, the course also integrates global, transatlantic, and international developments to better understand the nature of the American experience and its impact on international affairs.

2401-1b Ethnicity and Diversity in US Culture

Thursday, 9 – 11 am, HS 6
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez

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

The lecture starts on **October 22, 2026**.

2401-2 Seminar

<u>Choose one out of two seminars (2401-2a or 2401-2b):</u>

2401-2 a: Screening Identity: Race, Gender, and Class in US Film

Tuesday, 3 – 5 pm, NSG 428
Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

This seminar explores how American films construct, reflect, and challenge cultural understandings of identity. Focusing on the intersection of gender, race, and class, we will analyze how narratives, visual styles, and character portrayals contribute to broader conversations about power, representation, and social difference.

Throughout the course, we will engage with a range of films—spanning genres and time periods—to investigate how identity is performed and mediated on screen. Topics will include the visual presentation of gendered bodies, the construction of racialized 'others,' and the depiction of class-based struggle and mobility. We will also consider how genre conventions and filmmaking techniques reinforce or subvert dominant cultural narratives. Through critical readings, film analysis, and class discussion, students will develop tools for interpreting how identity operates in visual culture. Overall, we will focus on how film can work as a site of identity construction and critique and what its cultural work is.

The seminar will enable students to deepen their understanding of American literature and culture as well as to engage with literary and cultural theory in order to analyze a primary text of their choice. The exam for this module is a portfolio exam that will consist of different written components which will showcase what students have learned throughout the semester.

Please note: The seminars in this module are offered alongside additional workshop sessions. While it is possible to take the seminar (and pass the module) without this workshop, attending it is strongly recommended. The workshop covers key skills that help with the portfolio.

2401-2 b: Reading American Fiction: Canons and/of Popular Culture

Tuesday 1 – 3 pm, NSG 322
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 additional workshop sessions. While it is possible to take the seminar (and pass the module) without the workshop, attending it is strongly recommended. The workshop covers key skills that help with the portfolio.

Workshop:

As an addition to the seminar, a workshop will be offered by Annika Schadewaldt: **Tuesday 5 – 7 pm** (GWZ 2.5 16). The workshop helps 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.

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez
Module organization & coordination: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-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. Pisarz-Ramirez in module 2401.

The module consists of one lecture and one seminar

To complete the module, students need to attend the Lecture and one Seminar (Seminar 1 or 2)

Lecture "Ethnicity and Diversity in US Culture"

Thursday, 9 – 11 am, HS 6
Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez

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

The lecture starts on **October 22, 2026**.

Choose one out of two seminars

Seminar 1: The (Cultural) Politics of the Supreme Court

Tuesday, 1 - 3 pm, NSG 428
Dr. Eleonora Ravizza

Chief Justice John Roberts has recently insisted that the Supreme Court is “simply not part of the political process” and that its justices are not “political actors.” Yet in recent decades, this view of the Court as a neutral and apolitical institution has been met with growing skepticism. Decisions such as Dobbs v. Jackson, Citizens United v. FEC, and Bush v. Gore have fueled debates about the Court's role in American politics and the extent to which judicial decisions reflect, or rather shape, broader ideological and political struggles.

This seminar explores the Supreme Court not only as a legal institution but also as a powerful political actor that has shaped the course of US history. Through an examination of landmark Supreme Court decisions, we will investigate how the Court has influenced citizenship, voting rights, civil liberties, economic regulation, and the political process itself. The seminar will also examine the Supreme Court as an institution, exploring how justices build coalitions, negotiate disagreements, and exercise power through both formal opinions and less visible procedural mechanisms, including the increasingly significant “shadow docket.”

In this class, we will read excerpts from majority, concurring, and dissenting opinions, analyzing both the legal reasoning employed by the justices as well as a wide range of related texts, including constitutional debates, political speeches, newspaper coverage, congressional documents, and personal correspondence. These materials will allow us to examine the political consequences of the Court’s decisions and to place them within their broader historical, social, and cultural contexts.

By examining the historical evolution of the Supreme Court and its relationship to American politics, the seminar will consider whether the Court functions as an impartial interpreter of the Constitution, a

political institution, or something in between. Ultimately, we will explore how the Court has shaped—and been shaped by—the major political, social, and cultural conflicts that have defined US history.

Seminar 2: Voices of American Eras: American History Through the Spoken Word

Wednesday, 1 – 3 pm, NSG 410
Heather Pruessing

From Frederick Douglass to Donald Trump, many defining moments in US American history have been shaped by the words used to describe, defend, and contest them. A great speech can sharpen a nation's anxieties, reframe a political debate, rally the marginalized, or lend legitimacy to the indefensible. This course traces the progression of US history from Reconstruction to the present day through the examination of landmark speeches. These texts serve as our primary source windows into each era's central conflicts, aspirations, tensions, and transitions, revealing not only what Americans believed, but how they fought, in public and in language, over what their country should become.

The voices we encounter will be as varied as the eras they represent: presidents and protesters, senators and activists, war hawks and peace advocates. We will read speeches that sought to expand the circle of American belonging and speeches that aimed to contract it.

“Voices of American Eras: American History Through the Spoken Word” 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.

This course starts on **October 28, 2026.**

5 Creative Writing and Other Courses

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

Overall module responsibility: Prof. Dr. Katja Kanzler
Module organization & coordination: Annika Schadewaldt

Introduction to Creative Writing
Cultivating the Wunderkammer: Creative Writing and the Role of Curiosity

Monday, 11 am – 1 pm, GWZ 2 5.16
Picador Guest Professor (Annie Wenstrup)

On the wunderkammer's shelves, a seashell nestles a marble. In a nearby wooden box sits an open music box with a ballerina poised en-pointe atop a spring. On the shelf above her a stuffed armadillo clasps a green bottle to their breast. Each image compiles the viewer to look closer, to see what unexpected delight comes next. Perhaps a series of feathers painstakingly stitched to vellum above a wash of faded ink. No matter how disparate the images are the viewer looks closer, and looks for meaning to emerge from the assembled objects.

Since the wunderkammer's conception in the 16th century, wunderkammer curators have used the display to suggest narrative, values, and worldviews— both scientific and artistic. In this creative writing course we'll adopt the wunderkammer as our guide to exploring how style, structure, and image create compelling essays, poems, short stories, and hybrid forms. We'll read contemporary works that inform and subvert their genres and consider how we can apply those techniques to our own writing. Through prompts and exercises we'll develop our own writing practice that's guided by curiosity and play.

This course starts in the week of November 16 and ends in the week of January 25. There may be some double sessions to accommodate the shorter teaching period. More information on this will provided in the first session of the course.

Important Information
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.

5.2 Writing Clinic

Writing Clinic

Thursday, 1 – 3 pm, 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~~.

This course starts on **October 29, 2026.**