

Masterstudiengang JFKI:

Kultur-Modul A

*(Amerikanische Ideengeschichte und Theorien amerikanischer Kultur):*

Vorlesung

**Lecture Course A2:  
A Revolutionary Culture:  
Sources of America's Political Imaginary**

Prof. Dr. F. Kelleter

Tuesday, 16.15–18.00 (JFK 319)  
(Summer Semester 2018)

This lecture course deals with the sources of a political imaginary in the United States, focusing on documents, debates, and artifacts from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Topics include the emergence and consolidation of a “republican elite” during and after the American Revolution, the cultural work of *The Federalist*, the French Revolution in America, the parallel emergence of political parties and a national political press, the Haitian Revolution, the South and slavery, the impact of the American Revolution on native cultures, as well as other issues.

The lecture course serves as “**Vorlesung**” of Culture-**Module A** (*Amerikanische Ideengeschichte und Theorien amerikanischer Kultur*) in the **Master's degree program**. Recommended preparatory background reading: Frank Kelleter, *Amerikanische Aufklärung: Sprachen der Rationalität im Zeitalter der Revolution* (2002, will be made available on the reserve shelf in the library; there is no English-language version of this book, so that reading is optional). **Registration:** All participants must be registered via Blackboard *and* Campus Management before the first session. If you cannot register online or cannot attend the first session, please contact Prof. Kelleter before the beginning of the term. **Requirements:** see Syllabus and Course Description (on Blackboard). **Note:** **This course starts in the second week of the semester; the first session is on April 24.**

17 April 2018

**[No Session: CUNY Workshop]**

24 April 2018

**Introduction: Discourses and Ideologies of the American Revolution**

Reading: John Dickinson, from *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*: “Letter I”; from *The Letters of John and Abigail Adams* (selections); Thomas Paine, from *The Age of Reason*

(selections); Thomas Jefferson, from “The Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson” (selections).  
Suggested: Frank Kelleter, from *Amerikanische Aufklärung*: chapter 7 (381–429) (\*).

1 May 2018

**[No Session: Holiday]**

8 May 2018

**Consolidation of the Revolutionary-Republican Elite (1): From the French and Indian War to *Common Sense* and the Declaration of Independence**

Reading: Thomas Paine, from *Common Sense*: “Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs”; [Thomas Jefferson et al.,] *The Declaration of Independence*; Frank Kelleter, “1776: John Adams Disclaims Authorship of *Common Sense* but Helps Declare Independence.”

15 May 2018

**Consolidation of the Revolutionary-Republican Elite (2): The Cultural Work of *The Federalist Papers***

Reading: Alexander Hamilton, “The Federalist No. 1”; James Madison, “The Federalist No. 10.”

Suggested: *The Constitution of the United States of America*; Frank Kelleter, from *Amerikanische Aufklärung*: chapter 8.2 (474–500). (\*)

Further Suggested Reading: Frank Kelleter, from *Amerikanische Aufklärung*: chapters 8.3 (500–533) and 8.4 (533–46) (\*).

22 May 2018

**[No Session: Week of the Annual Convention DGfA/GAAS: “American Counter/Publics”; public program starts on Thursday]**

29 May 2018

**The French Revolution in America**

Reading: Edmund Burke, from *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (selections); Thomas Paine, from *Rights of Man* (selections); Noah Webster, from *The Revolution in France*: chapter “Religion”; John Adams, *Discourses on Davila* (selections).

5 June 2018

**Newspaper Wars and the Beginnings of Party Politics**

Reading: “The Alien and Sedition Acts”; Thomas Jefferson, “Draft of the Kentucky Resolutions”; [James Madison,] “Virginia Resolutions Against the Alien and Sedition Acts”; selections from *Aurora General Advertiser*, *Porcupine’s Gazette*, *Gazette of the United States* and other sources.

Suggested: James Madison, “Report on the Alien and Sedition Acts.”

12 June 2018

## **The Haitian Revolution(s) and the United States: Colonial Capitalism, Bio-Politics, and the Invention of “Whiteness” in the Revolutionary Atlantic**

Reading: Selections from Laurent Dubois, John Garrius, *Slave Revolution in the Carribean, 1789-1805*.

Specifically: from the 1685 *Code Noir*; [Louis-Sébastien Mercier, Denis Diderot,] “Prophesies of Slave Revolution (1771 and 1780)”; Julien Raimond, from *Observations on the Origin and Progression of White Colonists’ Prejudice against Men of Color*; The National Assembly, from “Law on the Colonies”; Jean-François and Biassou, “Letters to the Commissioners”; The National Assembly, from “Law of April 4, 1792”; Léger Félicité Sonthonax, from *Decree of General Liberty*; The National Convention, from “The Abolition of Slavery”; from *The Plantation Policies of Étienne Polverel*; Toussaint Louverture, from *A Refutation of Some Assertions in a Speech Pronounced in the Corps Législatif by Viénot Vaublanc*; Thomas Jefferson, from *Letters 1797–1802*; Toussaint Louverture, from *Constitution of the French Colony of Saint-Domingue*; Napoléon Bonaparte and Charles-Victor-Emmanuel Leclerc, from *Letters 1802–1804*; [Jean-Jacques Dessalines/Louis Boisrond-Tonnerre,] *The Haitian Declaration of Independence*; from *The Haitian Constitution*; Charles Brockden Brown, “St. Domingo.”

Suggested: “Major Revolutionary Figures and Groups,” “A Chronology of Events Related to the Slave Revolution in the Carribean (1635–1805)” [from Dubois, Garrius, *Slave Revolution in the Carribean*].

Note: There are a lot of texts included in this week’s reading assignments, but they are all very short. Please read all of them! These documents mutually elucidate each other. Together, they trace the most pertinent stages of the revolution(s) in Saint-Domingue/Haiti.

19 June 2018

## **The South and Slavery: Jeffersonian Racism to 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Plantation Romanticism**

Reading: Thomas Jefferson, from *Notes on the State of Virginia*: selections from “Query XIV: Laws”; John Pendleton Kennedy, from *Swallow Barn*: “A word in advance from the Author to the Reader” (Preface to the 1851-edition), “Introductory Epistle,” chapters 1, 2, 7, 18, 31, 46–48; selections from *The Confessions of Nat Turner*.

26 June 2018

## **The Beginnings of Non-Revolutionary Ethnic Identity Politics**

Reading: Olaudah Equiano, from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*: “To the Lords Spiritual and Temporal,” selected chapters; William Apess, “An Indian’s Looking Glass for the White Man.”

3 July 2018

## **Republican Poetry**

Reading: Timothy Dwight, from *Greenfield Hill*: “The Flourishing Village,” “The Destruction of the Pequods” (selections); Phillis Wheatley, “On Being Brought from Africa to America,” “To the University of Cambridge, in New England”; Philip Freneau, “The Wild Honey Suckle,” “The Indian Burying Ground.”

Suggested: Oliver Goldsmith, “The Deserted Village”; George Crabbe, “The Village” (selections); Joel Barlow, “The Hasty Pudding”; Phillis Wheatley, “On the Death of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, 1770.”

10 July 2018

## **Nationalist Agrarians, Vanishing Indians**

Reading: Thomas Jefferson, from *Notes on the State of Virginia*: selections from “Query VI: A notice of the mines and other subterraneous riches”; François Marbois, “Journey to the Oneidas”; Philip Freneau, “The Indian Student, or Force of Nature”; William Cullen Bryant, “The Prairies.”

17 July 2018

## **Gender, Genre, Nation: The Political Imaginary of the Sentimental Novel between Enlightened Ethics and Bourgeois Morality**

Reading: Susanna Rowson, from *Charlotte Temple*: “Preface,” chapters 1, 6–7, 14–15, 17–18, 20, 22, 25–28, 32–35 or Hannah Webster Foster, from *The Coquette*: Letters 1–6, 8, 11–13, 15, 18, 21–22, 25, 36, 42–43, 48, 57, 61–62, 70–74.

Suggested: Frank Kelleter, from *Amerikanische Aufklärung*: chapter 12 (708–66) (\*); Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette* (complete text) (\*).

Unmarked texts are included in the course reader. The course reader can be found on the reserve shelf in the JFKI-library; for electronic access please contact Solveig Raschpichler (solveig.raschpichler@gmx.de). Marked texts (\*) are not included in the course reader; they will be made available on the reserve shelf in the JFKI library.

This course will **not be graded**. The grade of your module will be identical with the grade received in the module’s seminar. To **gain credit** for the lecture course, you need to document both your **regular attendance** and your **active attendance** (“regelmäßige und aktive Teilnahme” according to Campus Management).

**Documentation of Regular Attendance:** In each session (except the first), you will be asked to quote (in writing, in-class) one **key-sentence** from the material you have studied **for this session**. Alternatively, you can provide what you consider a **key thought (in one or two sentences) from last week’s lecture**. To gain credit for attendance, you need to have provided **at least 8 such in-class notes** by the end of the semester.

(If you cannot attend a specific session, the in-class note can be substituted by a 600-word abstract of the reading assignments for the class you’ve missed or a 600-word summary of last week’s class, to be e-mailed to me no later than the day you’re missing class!)

**Documentation of Active Attendance (and full credit): One-page informal reflection paper** on a session of your choice, to be handed in (e-mail attachment) **by 17 July 2018**.

**Electronic Etiquette Policy:** You will not be able to follow a lecture with undivided attention when you’re simultaneously surfing the Web. Laptop or tablet screens can also be a distraction for other students in the classroom. Therefore, I kindly ask you to take your notes on paper. Only if absolutely necessary, use laptops or tablets for note-taking, and if you do, please disconnect your device from the internet. In addition, please turn off all cell phones in the beginning of class. Thank you!

**A Note on the Selection of Course Material:** The material for this course has not been selected in order to canonize, celebrate or condone it. Rather, this is a course in cultural history which analyzes powerful American self-descriptions and self-performances from a non-US perspective. Thus, some canonical sources have been selected precisely *because* they

are canonical, i.e., because of their prevailing agency within the cultural system we're investigating as observers (not contributors). As always, studying cultural history can be intense and disturbing. This course assumes that students are able to engage with material that is challenging in its representations and agendas without need for protection or warning. In fact, engaging with (political or aesthetic) discomfort is a significant part of an American Studies education and an opportunity for discussion and learning. However, there are some instances where a student may have experienced personal trauma that creates specific triggers for severe emotional distress. If this applies to you, please take responsibility to research all material we will be reading ahead of time, and let me know if you think that studying a particular document would create a significant issue for you—we can then work out alternative arrangements.