

[Masterstudiengang JFKI, Kultur,
Modul C: Hauptseminar]

American Culture, 1900-1945: Modernities and Modernisms

Prof. Dr. F. Kelleter

Monday, 16.15 – 18.00 (JFK 319)
(Summer Term 2017)

Important Notice: Since we only have 10 sessions this semester,—and since there will be no session in the second week (May Day)—we will have to **finalize our class schedule already in our first meeting!** This means that everyone who wants to attend this course needs to (1) **send me Topic Proposals (via e-mail) by April 19**, and (2) **be present in the first session** (April 24) or have contacted me before the first session but no later than April 19. **No additional students can be admitted after our first meeting on April 24!** Please understand that no exceptions can be made. Please read this syllabus carefully; you will find detailed descriptions of the seminar's organizational structure (which, after the first session, will be entirely student-run), the requirements for Topic Proposals, and the rules for preparing “your” session. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Course Organization: This seminar serves as **Hauptseminar** within **Culture-Module C** in the Master's program. Alternatively, if you want me to supervise your M.A. thesis, you can use this seminar to discuss your M.A. project (as a substitute for *Master-Kolloquium*; see “M.A. Policy” below). In both cases, the seminar builds on—and ideally should be taken in conjunction with—the lecture course “American Modernities” (same room, immediately preceding seminar, 2-4 p.m.; see Appendix below). The **same course reader** will be used in both courses. The seminar sessions will expand on themes and topics introduced in the lecture course (see description in the Appendix), but **in contrast to the lecture course, the seminar will be completely student-run: participants will be in charge of all sessions, topics, and discussions.** There is no auditing this course.

Registration: To gain credit for this course, you need to have registered on Blackboard *and* Campus Management System. **Please do so in advance of our first session!** If you are not a student of Freie Universität and cannot register on either Blackboard or Campus Management, please immediately contact Regina Wenzel, secretary of the Kennedy Institute's Department of Culture, who will set up an account for you or manually register you for this class. Please note that your **registration is only finalized after you have sent me Topic Proposals** for organizing a session; this needs to be done **by April 19.**

Attendance Policy: To participate in this course, you must be present in the first session and have proposed two topics (one “favorite” and one “alternative”) for student-run sessions (individually or as a group) by April 19. (For how this is done, see “Topic Proposals” below.) If you cannot attend the first session, please **let me know in advance** (e-mail or office hours) but no later than April 19. Students who miss more than two classes altogether without medical notice will be taken off the class roster.

Course Material: The course reader for this class is **identical with the course reader for the lecture course** “American Modernities.” The reader can be found on the reserve shelf in the JFKI-library; for electronic access please contact Uwe Oehm (uoehm@zedat.fu-berlin.de). Texts in the reader can serve as basis for student-run sessions but you are invited to bring in additional material, including recent secondary literature or theoretical background readings that illuminate or help contextualize this

material beyond the concerns of the lecture course. Once you have signed up for a particular session (individually or as a group), you are completely in charge of all organizational details. This includes **making available all additional course material for your session at least one week (seven days) ahead of time on Blackboard (e-mailing all participants).**

Requirements: Each participant will organize and conduct **one session** building on—or going beyond—one reading assignment of that week’s lecture course (see below). If less than 5 students attend this course, each participant will organize two sessions. If more than 9 students attend this course, individual sessions will be organized as group-led sessions. In case of group-led sessions, the students in charge need to **coordinate their efforts both logistically and thematically**, so that their session will be a **joint and coherent endeavor** rather than a disconnected collection of individual presentations. Even as a group, they will need to focus on **one text passage or film scene**, and be guided by **one overarching research question**.

Topic Proposals: Each participant needs to propose **two topics** (one “favorite” and one “alternative”) for student-run sessions via e-mail to me by April 19. A Topic Proposal consists of **one sentence** of the form:

“I want to look at [A], focusing on [B] in order to find out [C],”

with [A] being **one text or film or other piece of material** from the reader or of your own choice (but pertaining to the seminar’s time frame and topic), [B] being a **particular passage or scene** from this text or film (usually not exceeding two pages or six minutes), and [C] being a concrete problem that connects your analysis to the lecture course’s overall theme of American modernity and modernism. Possible objects of study can be taken from the **three subject areas** that organize the lecture course: (1) modernist literature, (2) Hollywood film and Depression-era radio, (3) political documents, public documents and theoretical self-reflections of modernity (e.g., sociologies, journalism, etc.).

Please indicate a “favorite” topic (Topic Proposal No. 1) and an “alternative” topic (Topic Proposal No. 2) and always make sure that these proposals are **taken from different subject areas** (e.g. one from Literature, one from Film; or one from Film and one from Self-Reflection, etc.). *Exception:* you can propose two Film topics if one of them focuses on a film from the 1920s (i.e. silent or early sound era).

Alternatively, students can already organize in groups of 3-4 participants before our first session. In this case, the **student group** will be asked to propose **only one topic** by April 19. By contrast, students who attend the first session without having submitted topics beforehand will be asked to propose **three topics (from different subject areas)** in the session itself.

In either case, you need to have familiarized yourself with some lecture-course assignments before the semester starts (i.e. watched some films, read some texts). You also need to have thought about how to organize a seminar session on them and ideally you will have started to look into recent studies or theoretical frameworks that go beyond the lecture course. Thus, already identifying a focal passage, scene, or feature (even if you should decide to choose another focus later on) is a central part of this assignment.

Examples for Topic Proposals:

AREA 1. MODERNIST LITERATURE:

“I want to look at Ernest Hemingway’s A Farewell to Arms, focusing on the final scene (starting with ‘Upstairs I met the nurse’ until the end) in order to find out about existentialism’s ambivalent relationship with sentimentalism (or: in order to trace how American existentialism paradoxically develops a modern type of sentimentality—and to identify its salient features).”

AREA 1. MODERNIST LITERATURE:

“I want to look at T.S. Eliot’s The Waste Land, focusing on Ezra Pound’s Annotations (in the Facsimile Edition) to determine in how far the poem was published with an agenda of promoting modernism.”

AREA 1. MODERNIST LITERATURE:

“I want to look at Nella Larsen’s Passing, focusing on overt allusions to W.E.B. Du Bois (and possibly other African American writers) to gauge the novel’s self-positioning within the Harlem Renaissance.”

AREA 2. HOLLYWOOD:

“I want to look at UA’s Scarface (1932), focusing on the film’s alternate endings in order to identify the film’s (meta-medial) attitude towards its own aesthetic of violence.”

AREA 2. HOLLYWOOD:

“I want to look at UA’s Stagecoach (1939), focusing on the introduction of John Wayne’s character, in order to find out how Wayne’s ‘star text’ (Richard Dyer) interacts with the film’s narrative text.”

AREA 2. HOLLYWOOD:

“I want to look at MGM’s The Women (1939), focusing on the original trailer (and perhaps other marketing material) to pinpoint tensions and/or convergences between the film’s commercial identity and its all-female theme.”

AREA 2. RADIO:

“I want to look at Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Second Fireside Chat (March 7, 1933), focusing on FDR’s back-references to the first Chat as well as his announcements of future Chats, in order to determine (1) the serial qualities of these radio addresses and (2) how this seriality affects the president’s policy announcements.”

AREA 3. PUBLIC DOCUMENTS:

“I want to look at George Schuyler’s short article ‘The Negro-Art Hokum,’ focusing on the polemical quality of its rhetoric in order to see if the aesthetic controversies within the Harlem Renaissance were indicative of political controversies too—and, if so, which ones.”

AREA 3. SELF-REFLECTIONS OF MODERNITY:

“I want to look at Sigmund Freud’s Civilization and Its Discontents, focusing on passages highlighted in American reviews, in order to determine the attraction of psychoanalysis to American modernity.”

[With a topic like this, you may want to organize as a group in the first place and add a research component about the American reception of psychoanalysis between the wars.]

As indicated in these examples, **you can also propose texts/films that are not included in the lecture’s syllabus.** A list of suggestions for additional material can be found at the end of this document. If you’re not sure if a topic is suitable or not, feel free to contact me by e-mail (frank.kelleter@fu-berlin.de) or let’s discuss it in my office hours.

Organization of Syllabus: Based on the Topic Proposals I have received until April 19, I will suggest certain groupings and an overall semester schedule (more or less synchronized with the lecture’s thematic schedule) in our first session on April 24. This means that not everyone might get to work on *exactly* the topic that he or she proposed. Some participants will be asked to “join” a different Topic Proposal, preferably one that is thematically close to their own but already further developed. (Example: A student proposing a rather general question about Ernest Hemingway might be asked to join a session proposed by another student for a more concrete question on Gertrude Stein.) If this happens, students can still use their original proposal as a starting point for the topic of their final paper.

Organizing and Conducting a Session: You are **in full charge of “your” session** (i.e., all 90 minutes), including time management and learning objectives. You will be in charge of starting and ending your session. You will be expected to **act as an expert on your topic**, having studied your material in depth, including secondary literature, larger historical contexts and cultural implications. Although not everything you have read and researched will—or should—be “presented” in your session, it should nevertheless be reflected in the way you approach your topic and organize your

session. The further the semester has progressed, the more you will be expected to draw on—and engage with—the current state of research about your topic.

To ensure that your session will both **be interactive** (with a lot of student activity) and **engage in detailed analytical work** (rather than giving “another survey lecture” in the form of a presentation), you should structure your session according to the same model that rules your research question:

“We will now look at [A], focusing on [B] in order to find out [C].”

In terms of structuring your session, this means:

- In the beginning, you should shortly present [A], i.e. your larger text or material, especially if it is not taken from the lecture reader, and then explain your research question [C], connecting it to current debates in secondary literature and/or to the specific aspect of American modernity you are interested in. This part (which is probably best done in the form of a presentation) **should not exceed 10-15 minutes!** Please avoid reciting historical data or biographical information if there is no analytical or argumentative engagement with them. In other words: everything presented should be functional to your analytical goals!
- The bulk of the session (**approx. 60 minutes**) should then consist of [B], i.e. a close analysis—together with all seminar participants!—of **one particular passage or scene** (usually not exceeding two pages or six minutes) from this larger source. You may want to begin this part with a reading or viewing of the passage or scene in question. However, **this part should not be done in the form of one uninterrupted presentation but in more interactive ways**, such as a moderated discussion, group work, Q&A, interspersed video essays, short “theoretical” prompts about core concepts, pre-assigned tasks for all participants (via Blackboard), bringing in additional material for contextualization and contrast (reviews, other scenes, film posters, sources you have researched), shortly presenting a canonized reading in order to challenge it or to carry it forward, or any other measure or combination of methods you think appropriate and efficient to answer your research question [C] while engaging all participants in a discussion of your focal object [B]! **Unconventional and creative approaches to class organization are explicitly encouraged for this part**—anything goes! In other words, you are not stuck with just two pages of text or six minutes of film for 60 minutes, but as “the expert in the room” you can bring in other material as long as it meaningfully relates to your focus and research question. Thus, everything you discuss (or put up for discussion) should *explicitly* contribute to an understanding of your focal object [B]. This is your anchor for everything else in this part of your session—and you may want to return to your passage or scene repeatedly, perhaps even reading and showing it again at the end of this part, to highlight our deepened understanding of it, now that we’ve seen just how many things are connected *to* or conducted *through* it.
- In the end of your session, you should leave another 10-15 minutes in which you summarize the session’s results, compare them to your initial goals, and give yourself and everyone else (including me) some time to “critique” the session. (What worked well? What didn’t? Are there any lessons for future session organizers?)

Remember that every **group session should be a concerted effort** that focuses on *one* passage/scene from *one* text and approaches it with *one* research question in mind.

Audiovisuals and technological requirements: If you plan to make use of audiovisual equipment, **have all media clips saved as files to your hard-drive—do not rely on internet access for a presentation**, as this can derail the “flow” of your session when everyone is waiting for a video to load! For the same reason, please **have tested and resolved all technological requirements (software and hardware compatibility, sound, adapter cables, aspect ratio, etc.) before class—do not start to take care of these issues during class!**

Assigning Additional Material: One of the best ways to prepare your session is to **tell us how we should prepare** for it! Thus, you can explicitly re-assign readings/viewings (or parts thereof) from the lecture course, or give us additional material to study, or tell us what else we should research or

read/view (this can include texts written by yourself). For all these assignments, please use **Blackboard's e-mail function**, announcing assignments, attaching reading material, etc. **at least seven days prior to your session (i.e. before 4 p.m. on the Monday before your session).**

If you opt for reading/viewing assignments *beyond the lecture course's assignments*, they should not exceed 15 pages or forty-five minutes of viewing per session. Never assign something which you are not going to make (central) use of in your session!

In sum, there are two important points here concerning additional material:

- Your e-mail containing this information and **making available all additional material** should be sent **at least one week (seven days) prior to your session** (i.e., Monday before 4 p.m.)!
- When you send out additional material, **always include the proper and complete bibliographical information** for this material, ideally documented directly on the material itself (not just in your e-mail), so that other students can use it for their own research and cite it. In case of **primary material**, you always need to **assess your sources**, i.e. **select the most authoritative text/film version** you can find. For example, if there is a critical edition available, do not link to some unedited online text edition, even if it comes with a university affiliation. If there are different authoritative editions—or only various non-authoritative film versions—always indicate *which* version you have selected and why. This kind of source criticism is an important and **indispensable** part of any type of research in our field. In fact, you may want to explicitly address these points in the beginning of your session.

A Note on Video Essays: If you want to produce video essays (or if you want to learn more about the video essay as an educational and scholarly genre), have a look at the MediaCommons project [*in*] *Transition: Journal of Videographic Film and Moving Image Studies* (online: <http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/intransition/>). Your final paper can consist of a video essay plus written discussion. Please contact me if this is your goal.

Final Papers: The topic of your final paper can—but does not have to—be based on the topic of your session. Paper topics need to address a **focused research question** (that is, a question to which you don't know the answer yet) connected to a **suitable set of material**. Thus, your paper should **foreground analytical engagement** with a **manageably sized research corpus**. *Example:* Rather than trying to write a term paper on “Pre-Code Hollywood Representation of Women” (which is the topic for an entire book), choose a specific film which you then analyze closely and contextualize densely by identifying specific cinematic practices of representing femininity, or specific generic variations and intermedial modes of distinction, or specific paratextual activities in trade journals, reviews, or other sources that illuminate this specific film in its specific cultural situation.

Particularly welcome are paper (and session) topics that engage in **original and archival research** (making new material accessible) or topics that **“follow” their texts into their wider spheres of cultural activity** (newspapers, paratexts, public debates, intertextual dialogues, media effects, etc.). M.A. thesis proposals, in particular, should engage in original/archival research.

For questions of methodology in the study of culture, you may want to consult Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005) or chapters 1 and 2 in Latour's *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2013). If you're interested in writing a more literary-studies-type of paper, close readings are welcome, especially when their textual analysis is sensitive to the cultural history of styles, formal conventions, types of rhetoric, or media. Avoid picking a “master theory” to project it unto the material (as in “A[n] ~ist/ ~ian reading of ...”).

For all formal questions, please follow the requirements specified in the *Modulkatalog / Studienordnung*. For citation, use MLA style throughout.

Papers are to be handed in by **October 9, 2017**. If you need an extension, it can be granted if you ask for it before this date. Please specify the reasons for your delay, indicate the exact date on which you intend to submit your paper, and document the state of your work.

Participants who don't have to write a paper can gain credit for participation (*Teilnahmeschein*) by organizing and conducting one or two class sessions (depending on the number of participants), according to the model described above.

Electronic Etiquette Policy: Studies have shown that students who bring laptops to class are much less likely to pay attention in class. Laptops or tablet computers can also be a distraction for other students. Since this seminar is meant to provide a more interactive learning format than the accompanying lecture course, please **keep all electronic screens turned off at all times**. As a courtesy to the students in charge of a session, **turn off all cell phones in the beginning of class (no text messaging)!** To access readings, please **bring print-outs (or the reader) to class**. *Exceptions:* Students with special needs that can be accommodated by using a computer should contact me in the beginning of the semester. Laptops, tablets, or cell phones can also be used during class if this is part of your planned setup for a session. Furthermore, students in charge of a session may use laptops or tablets to run clips, presentations, etc.

A Note on the Selection of Course Material: 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 had 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 and viewing ahead of time, and let me know if you think that studying a particular text or film would create a significant issue for you—we can then work out alternative arrangements.

Plagiarism: Always indicate your sources, even when you're "only" paraphrasing them. Everything else constitutes plagiarism and is a serious breach of academic ethics that will not only result in immediate failure of this course but can endanger your career as a student at this Institute. Please take this issue seriously, because plagiarism is a severe scholarly offense! This goes for papers as well as for presentations. To find out more about what constitutes plagiarism, see definitions and examples collected in the *MLA Handbook* (and similar textbooks). **All cases of plagiarism involving exchange students will be reported to the student's home institution. There are no exceptions to this rule.**

M.A. Policy: If you want me to supervise your Master's Thesis (*Abschlussarbeit*), you should have written at least one paper in one of my seminars. Alternatively, you can use one of my seminars (such as this one) as an M.A. colloquium, preferably in conjunction with the corresponding lecture course. You will have to choose a topic connected to the seminar's material; please see me in my office hours before the first session to discuss possible options. Similar arrangements can be made for B.A. theses. Seminar topics are always broad enough—usually covering an entire period—to provide fruitful material and interesting M.A. research questions for all students of American cultural history.

Examples of Additional Material: If you want to focus on a text, film, or piece of material that is not assigned or "suggested" in the lecture course syllabus, here is a—random, non-chronological, and incomplete—list of possible additional material from our three subject areas of modernist literature, Hollywood film and Depression-era radio (or other popular genres), political documents, public documents and theoretical self-reflections of modernity:

| Modernist Literature | Film, Radio, etc. | Political Discourse / Theories of Modernity |
|---|---|---|
| Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro" Ezra Pound, "A Pact" Ezra Pound & F.S. Flint, "Imagist Manifestoes" Early poetry by T.S. Eliot (e.g. "Preludes," "The Boston Evening Transcript," "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock") T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the | David W. Griffith's <i>Birth of a Nation</i> and/or <i>Intolerance</i> A Keystone Kops short <i>The Sheik</i> (Paramount) Charlie Chaplin (e.g. <i>The Gold Rush</i> , <i>Modern Times</i>) Harold Lloyd (e.g. <i>Safety Last</i>) Buster Keaton (<i>The Navigator</i> ; <i>Steamboat Bill, Jr.</i> ; <i>The General</i> ; <i>Sherlock, Jr.</i>) Mary Pickford (e.g. <i>Pollyanna</i> , | Randolph Bourne, "Trans-National America" Horace Kallen, <i>Democracy versus the Melting Pot</i> Frederick W. Taylor, <i>The Principles of Scientific Management</i> Hugo Münsterberg, <i>The Photoplay</i> Reviews of / Reactions to the Armory Show |

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| <p>Individual Talent” Poetry by H.D. Poetry by Marianne Moore A Poetry Magazine Issue Blast Magazine (Wyndham Lewis) T.S. Eliot, <i>The Waste Land</i> Anzia Yezeriska, <i>Hungry Hearts</i> Hart Crane, <i>The Bridge</i> F. Scott Fitzgerald (e.g. <i>This Side of Paradise</i> or <i>The Great Gatsby</i> or “Babylon Revisited”) Anita Loos, <i>Gentlemen Prefer Blondes</i> Other selections from Alain Locke, <i>The New Negro</i>, and other Harlem Renaissance documents Willa Cather (e.g. <i>O Pioneers</i> or <i>My Antonia</i>) Thornton Wilder, <i>Our Town</i> William Faulkner (e.g. <i>The Sound and the Fury</i> or <i>Absalom, Absalom!</i>) James T. Farrell, <i>Studs Lonigan</i> Clifford Odets, <i>Waiting for Lefty</i> John Steinbeck (e.g. <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>) John Dos Passos (<i>Manhattan Transfer</i> or <i>U.S.A.</i>) Richard Wright, <i>Native Son</i> Henry Roth, <i>Call It Sleep</i> Nathaniel West, <i>The Day of the Locust</i> or <i>Miss Lonelyhearts</i> Dashiell Hammett, <i>The Maltese Falcon</i> Raymond Chandler, <i>The Big Sleep</i> Budd Schulberg, <i>What Makes Sammy Run</i> Evelyn Waugh, <i>The Loved One</i></p> | <p><i>Rosita, Sparrows, Coquette</i> F.W. Murnau in Hollywood (e.g. <i>Sunrise, Tabu</i>) <i>The Crowd</i> (MGM, dir. King Vidor) <i>The Singing Fool</i> (Warner Bros.) with Al Jolson as sequel/remake of <i>The Jazz Singer</i> <i>Steamboat Willie</i> (Disney short) <i>Dynamite</i> (MGM, dir. Cecil B. De Mille) Anzia Yeziarska in Hollywood Anita Loos in Hollywood <i>Little Caesar</i> (Warner Bros.) <i>The Public Enemy</i> (Warner Bros.) <i>Son of Kong</i> (RKO) <i>The Phantom Empire</i> (Mascot, serial) <i>It Happened One Night</i> (Columbia, dir. Frank Capra) Fritz Lang in Hollywood (e.g. <i>Fury, You Only Live Once, Ministry of Fear</i>) <i>Mr. Deeds Goes to Town</i> (Columbia, dir. Frank Capra) <i>Algiers</i> (UA) as a forerunner of <i>Casablanca</i> <i>The Women</i> (MGM) Alfred Hitchcock in Hollywood (e.g. <i>Rebecca, Under Capricorn, Lifeboat, Suspicion, Notorious</i>) <i>Meet John Doe</i> (Warner Bros, dir. Frank Capra) <i>The Lady Eve</i> (Paramount, dir. Preston Sturges) <i>Amos ‘n’ Andy</i> (radio) <i>Stella Dallas</i> (radio) Orson Welles’s <i>The Mercury Theater on Air</i> and/or <i>The Campbell Playhouse</i> (radio) <i>Captain Midnight</i> (radio) Orson Welles, <i>War of the Worlds</i> (radio) Duke Ellington / Cotton Club <i>Krazy Kat</i> cartoons <i>Little Nemo</i> comics <i>Superman</i> or <i>Batman</i> comics Tin Pan Alley songs George Gershwin (<i>Rhapsody in Blue</i>)</p> | <p>Duchamps’ <i>Nude Descending a Staircase</i> in the American Press American Ethnology (Margaret Mead, George Herbert Mead, Ruth Benedict) Du Bois in the 1920s/30s Marcus Garvey (UNIA documents) The New KKK Cubism’s and/or Picasso’s American Reception An Issue of <i>Photoplay</i> An Issue of <i>Modern Screen</i> Tijuana Bibles <i>Life Magazine</i> (Henry Luce) Fashion discourses Car crashes in newspapers and magazines Sigmund Freud in America Journalism by H.L. Mencken (e.g., “The Sahara of the Bozart”) Van Wyck Brooks, <i>America’s Coming of Age</i> William Carlos Williams, <i>In the American Grain</i> A WPA State Guide Celebrity Journalism by Hedda Hopper Celebrity Journalism by Louella Parsons James Agee and Walker Evans, <i>Let Us Now Praise Famous Men</i> Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer in America (e.g., <i>Dialectics of Enlightenment</i>, “The Stars Down to Earth”) W. J. Cash, <i>The Mind of the South</i> Frank Owsley’s Southern historiography (e.g., <i>States Rights in the Confederacy, King Cotton Diplomacy</i>) John Crowe Ransom, <i>The New Criticism</i> (or <i>Understanding Poetry</i> by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren) <i>I’ll Take My Stand</i> by Twelve Southerners (especially contributions by John Crowe Ransom and Donald Davidson)</p> |
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And many other options!

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

24 April 2017

Organizational Matters and Semester Schedule

Assignments: Please have read this syllabus carefully. You need to have submitted two Topic Proposals as specified in the syllabus by April 19.

1 May 2017

– **[no session (May Day)]** –

STUDENT-ORGANIZED SESSIONS

8 May 2017

Topic:

Session Organizer(s):

Assignment:

15 May 2017

Topic:

Session Organizer(s):

Assignment:

22 May 2017

Topic:

Session Organizer(s):

Assignment:

29 May 2017

– **[no session (Kennedy Day)]** –

5 June 2017

– **[no session (Pentecost)]** –

12 June 2017

Topic:

Session Organizer(s):

Assignment:

19 June 2017

Topic:

Session Organizer(s):

Assignment:

26 June 2017

Topic:

Session Organizer(s):

Assignment:

3 July 2017

Topic:

Session Organizer(s):

Assignment:

10 July 2017

Topic:

Session Organizer(s):

Assignment:

17 July 2017

Topic:

Session Organizer(s):

Assignment:

Appendix: Syllabus of the Lecture Course “American Modernities”:

Monday, 14.15 – 16.00 (JFK 319)

This lecture course deals with American culture between World War I and World War II: an era which saw the birth of new technologies of production, representation, and destruction as well as far-ranging revolutions in the organization of knowledge. Sociology, ethnology, psychoanalysis, and other disciplines emerged in the early 20th century as specific ways of theorizing modernity. Many of these transformations can be witnessed in a prototypical fashion in the United States. Our topics in this lecture course include: the Great War and modernist aesthetics; the “New Negro” movement and the Harlem Renaissance; New Deal culture; the Hollywood studio system.

The lecture course serves as “**Vorlesung**” of Culture-**Module C** (*Kulturgeschichte einzelner Medien und ästhetischer Darstellungsformen*) in the **Master’s degree program**. **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.

Students can take this lecture course in conjunction with the **seminar** “American Culture, 1900-1945: Modernities and Modernisms” (same room, immediately after the lecture). If you intend to attend the seminar as well, please study its syllabus carefully to understand all requirements (you need to hand in Topic Proposals for the seminar by April 19 and be present in the first session).

24 April 2017

Modernization, Modernity, Modernism

Suggested: Daniel J. Singal, “Modernist Culture” (*The Oxford Companion to United States History*. Ed. Paul Boyer. Oxford: Oxford UP: 2001, 510-11); *The Crowd* (*) [MGM, 1928] and/or *Modern Times* (*) [UA, 1936].

1 May 2017

– [No session (May Day)] –

8 May 2017

Sound Technologies: Hollywood in the 1920s

Required Viewing: *The Jazz Singer* (*) [Warner Bros., 1927].

Suggested: *The Sheik* (*) [Paramount, 1921]; *Sherlock, Jr.* (*) [Metro, 1924].

15 May 2017

Modernist Prose (1)

Required Reading: Gertrude Stein, from *Three Lives*: “Melanctha.”

Suggested: Stein, from *Tender Buttons*: “Objects.”

22 May 2017

Modernist Prose (2)

Required Reading: Ernest Hemingway, “Indian Camp,” “In Another Country,” “Hills Like White Elephants,” from *A Farewell to Arms*: chapters 1, 6, 27, 41.

Suggested: Hemingway, “A Natural History of the Dead,” “Now I Lay Me,” “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place”; *The Sun Also Rises* (*) or *A Farewell to Arms* (*) completely.

29 May 2017

– [No session (Kennedy Day)] –

5 June 2017

– [No session (Pentecost)] –

12 June 2017

Modernist Poetry

Required Reading: Wallace Stevens, “Of Modern Poetry,” “Anecdote of the Jar”; W.C. Williams, “Portrait of a Lady,” “The Red Wheelbarrow,” “This Is Just to Say.”

Suggested: Ezra Pound, “Canto XLV: With Usura”; Stevens, “The Emperor of Ice-Cream,” “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird,” “The Idea of Order at Key West”; Williams, “The Young Housewife”; e.e. cummings, “l(a)”; H.D., “Evening”; Marianne Moore, “Poetry.”

19 June 2017

Modernist Drama

Required Reading: Susan Glaspell, *Trifles*; Eugene O’Neill, *The Emperor Jones*.

26 June 2017

The “New Negro” Movement and the Harlem Renaissance

Required Reading: Alain Locke, “The New Negro”; Claude McKay, “The Harlem Dancer,” “If We Must Die”; Countee Cullen, “Incident,” “Scottsboro, Too, Is Worth Its Song”; Langston Hughes, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers,” “The Weary Blues,” “I, Too,” “Note on Commercial Theater,” “Johannesburg Mines”; from Jean Toomer, *Cane*: “Fern”; from Nella Larsen, *Passing*: chapter 2.

Suggested: George Samuel Schuyler, “The Negro-Art Hokum”; Langston Hughes, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain”; from W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (selections); Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (*).

3 July 2017

Radio’s New Deal and the New Deal’s Radio

Required Reading/Listening: Franklin D. Roosevelt, “The Banking Crisis [First Fireside Chat, March 12, 1933].”

Suggested: Herbert Hoover, “On American Individualism”; Roosevelt, “Answering the Critics [Fifth Fireside Chat, June 28, 1934].”

10 July 2017

Classical Hollywood (1)

Required Viewing: *Scarface* (*) [UA, 1932]; *King Kong* (*) [RKO, 1933]; *Stagecoach* [UA, 1939]; *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (*) [UA, 1939].

Suggested: *Freaks* (*) [MGM, 1932].

Further Suggested: *She Done Him Wrong* (*) [Paramount, 1933]; *Three Little Pigs* (*) [MGM/Disney, 1933]; *Gone with the Wind* (*) [MGM/Selznick, 1939].

17 July 2017

Classical Hollywood (2)

Required Viewing: *The Philadelphia Story* (*) [MGM, 1940]; *The Maltese Falcon* (*) [Warner Bros., 1941]; *Casablanca* (*) [Warner Bros., 1942].

Suggested: *Citizen Kane* (*) [RKO, 1941]; *Spellbound* (*) [UA, 1945].

Further Suggested: *The Lady Eve* (*) [Paramount, 1941]; *Bambi* (*) [RKO/Disney, 1942]; *The Big Sleep* (*) [Warner Bros., 1946].

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 Uwe Oehm (uoehm@zedat.fu-berlin.de). Marked texts and

films (*) are not included in the course reader; they will be made available on the reserve shelf in the JFKI library.