

Masterstudiengang JFKI:

Kultur-Modul B

(Kultur der Nationalität und Diversität):

Vorlesung mit integriertem Tutorium

**Lecture Course B2:
Capitalism, Sectionalism, and American Nationhood**

Prof. Dr. F. Kelleter

Monday, 18.15 – potentially 20.45 (JFKI 340)
(Winter Semester 2021/22)

This lecture course deals with American culture in the four decades following the Civil War. Topics include: the failure of Reconstruction; Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; the interlocking of progressivism and imperialism; African American activism; anarchism (Lucy Parsons, Emma Goldman); the emergence of a capitalist-nationalist imaginary; realism and naturalism as literary modes; the "New Woman"; urbanization and media transformations.

The lecture course serves as "**Vorlesung**" of Culture-**Module B** (*Kultur der Nationalität und Diversität*) in the **Master's degree program**. **Registration:** All participants need to be registered on Campus Management by the first session. Because of the pandemic, attendance is limited to 35 students. Students registered on Campus Management will be automatically transferred to Blackboard. For further information on the registration process and participation restrictions during the pandemic, see https://www.jfki.fu-berlin.de/media/JFKI-Teaching_Winter21-22_GER-ENG.pdf **Requirements and Organization:** Note that this course is listed as a three-hour "Vorlesung mit integriertem Tutorium." The idea is to give us a more flexible time-slot in case of mandatory "Hygienemaßnahmen" (such as checking Corona tests / vaccination status or airing the room midway through a session), but also to provide additional time for Q&A. However, participants will gain credit on the basis of the regular (two-hour) lecture slot (6-8); attendance of the additional academic hour ("tutorial": 8-9) is optional. **First session:** October 25 (note: this is the second week of the semester).

25 October 2021

U.S. Culture in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era

Suggested Preparatory Reading: Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America* (**); Steve Fraser, *The Age of Acquiescence: “Part 1. Class Warfare in America: The Long Nineteenth Century”* (**); Winfried Fluck, “Realismus, Naturalismus, Vormoderne,” *Amerikanische Literaturgeschichte*, ed. Hubert Zapf (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2004), 154-217 (**).

Note: These are a lot of readings. I don’t expect you to have read any of them prior to class. They are “suggested” in the sense that these titles provide good introductions to three very different aspects of the period we are going to study this semester. None of the titles listed is mandatory reading.

1 November 2021

After Reconstruction: Mark Twain’s South in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884/85)

Reading: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, chapters 1-16 (*).

8 November 2021

Before the Gilded Age: Mark Twain’s America in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (continued)

Reading: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, chapters 17-43 (*).

15 November 2021

Northern Realism, Southern Romance

Reading: John W. De Forest, from *Miss Ravenel’s Conversion from Secession to Loyalty*: chapters 1-7, 14, 16, 18-21, 23, 24, 29, 32, 34, 35, 37; Thomas Nelson Page, from *In Ole Virginia*: “Marse Chan.”

Suggested: Booker T. Washington, from *Up from Slavery*: “The Atlanta Exposition Address” (collected in the readings for November 29).

22 November 2021

National Horrors (Ida B. Wells, Lucy Parsons)

Reading: Ida B. Wells, from *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*: “Preface,” chapters 1-4, chapter 6; Ida B. Wells, from *A Red Record: Lynchings in the United States, 1892-1893-1894*: chapters 1-2, “Lynched for an Attempted Assault” (from Chapter 5), “Lynched as a Warning” (from Chapter 6), chapter 8; Ida B. Wells, from *Crusade for Justice*: chapters 11, 14-15; Lucy Parsons, “The Negro: Let Him Leave Politics to the Politician and Prayers to the Preacher,” “Southern Lynchings.”

Suggested Reading: Lucy Parsons, “The ‘Scab’,” “Salutation to the Friends of Liberty,” “Wage Slaves vs. Corporations”; W.E.B. Du Bois, from *Black Reconstruction in America*: “Back towards Slavery” (selections).

Suggested Viewing: David W. Griffith, *The Birth of a Nation* (**).

29 November 2021

African American Activisms after Reconstruction (Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey)

Reading: Booker T. Washington, from *Up from Slavery*: “14. The Atlanta Exposition Address”; Booker T. Washington, from *The Future of the American Negro*: “Plan to Achieve the Rights of Citizenship”; W.E.B. Du Bois, from *The Souls of Black Folk*: “The

Forethought,” “1. Of Our Spiritual Strivings,” “3. Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others”; W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Talented Tenth.”

Suggested: Marcus Garvey, “The Challenge of Black Nationalism (1922/1923),” “W.E. Burghardt Du Bois as a Hater of Dark People (1923).”

6 December 2021

Economic Progressivisms and American Imperialism

Reading: Andrew Carnegie, “Wealth”; Herbert Croly, selections from *The Promise of American Life*; Albert J. Beveridge, “The Philippines Are Ours Forever.”

Suggested: Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” (selections).

13 December 2021

Anarchism, Marxism, and Corporate Colonialism (Lucy Parsons, Emma Goldman)

Reading: Lucy Parsons, “The Principles of Anarchism,” “A Word to Tramps,” “Our Civilization: Is It Worth Saving?,” “The Haymarket Meeting: A Graphic Description,” “Foreword to *The Life of Albert R. Parsons*,” “Speech[es] at the Founding Convention of the Industrial Workers of the World (Afternoon Session, June 29, [1905]),” “Are Class Interests Identical?,” “The Ballot Humbug,” “The Eight-Hour Strike of 1886”; Emma Goldman, from *Living My Life*: chapters 1 & 4 (selections).

Suggested: Emma Goldman, “Psychology of Political Violence”; Lucy Parsons, “New York Letter”; Chauncey Yellow Robe, “On the Wild West Shows.”

3 January 2022

— no session —

10 January 2022

The Capitalist-Nationalist Imaginary (1)

Reading: William Dean Howells, from *The Rise of Silas Lapham*: chapters 1-3, 5-9, 13-14.

Suggested: Howells, *The Rise of Silas Lapham*: complete novel (**); Horatio Alger, *Struggling Upward, or Luke Larkin's Luck* (**).

17 January 2022

The Capitalist-Nationalist Imaginary (2)

Reading: William Dean Howells, from *The Rise of Silas Lapham*: chapters 15-20, 24-27.

24 January 2022

The Capitalist-Nationalist Imaginary (3)

Reading: Theodore Dreiser, from *Sister Carrie* (Doubleday/Page edition): chapters 1-8, 10, 13, 16, 19-20, 26-29.

Suggested: Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*: complete novel (**); Georg Simmel, “Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben.”

31 January 2022

Conspicuous Consumption and the Culture of Display

Reading: Dreiser, from *Sister Carrie* (Doubleday/Page): chapters 30-33, 35, 38-39, 42-44, 46-47; Thorstein Veblen, from *Theory of the Leisure Class*: “Conspicuous Consumption.”

7 February 2022

The “New Woman” and the Culture of Decadence

Reading: Kate Chopin, from *The Awakening*: chapters 1-12, 16-17, 19, 21-24, 26-28, 30, 32, 36-39; Lucy Parsons, “The Woman Question Again?”; Emma Goldman, “The Tragedy of Woman’s Emancipation.”

Suggested: Chopin, *The Awakening*: complete novel (**); Emma Goldman, from *Living My Life*: chapter 33 (selections).

14 February 2022

Progressive Utopia and Feminist Social Critique

Reading: Edward Bellamy, from *Looking Backward*: chapters 1-3, 5, 6, 10, 11, 13, 19, 22, 24-26, 28; Charlotte Perkins Gilman, from *Herland*: chapters 1, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12.

Suggested: Bellamy and/or Gilman: complete novels (**); Lucy Parsons, “A Christmas Story”; William James, “The Moral Equivalent of War.”

Course Reader (Assigned Readings): All unmarked texts are included in a Course Reader. The **Course Reader** will be made available before the beginning of the semester as a PDF file on **Blackboard** (go to “Kursmaterial”; you may have to click on “open Course Reader here” to download it; if this doesn’t work, try a different browser: students have reported problems with the Chrome browser). Mark Twain’s novel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (marked * above) should be bought in an authoritative edition. Texts marked with two asterisks (**) are not included in the Course Reader; they will be made available on the reserve shelf in the JFKI library (which may or may not be accessible during the winter term, depending on the further development of the pandemic). Since these readings are “suggested,” I will not expect that students have accessed or read them; it is fully possible to follow the lectures without them.

General Course Information: This course will **not be graded**. The grade of your Module will be identical with the grade received in Module B’s seminar. However, to **gain credit** for this course within Module B, you need to document both your **regular attendance** and your **active attendance** (“regelmäßige und aktive Teilnahme” according to Campus Management). How this can be done is explained below.

Documentation of Regular and Active Attendance: To **gain credit** for this course (“aktive und regelmäßige Teilnahme”), you should have been **active in the online discussions of at least six different sessions, either by opening a new thread on our Blackboard “Discussion Board” (“Diskussionsforum”) or by posting a response** in another student’s thread. Threads can be dedicated to your observations on the course material, or they can address ideas and questions that came up during the lectures, or both. You don’t have to compose mini-essays; posts and responses can be tweet-length, if you wish. They need not be longer than a sentence or two.

Alternatively, if you do not want—or cannot—use the “Discussion Board,” you may submit **two one-page informal reflection papers** on two sessions of your choice: one in the first half of the semester (by December 6, 2021), the other before the end of the semester (by February 14, 2022).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, either by e-mail or directly on Blackboard.

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 that analyzes powerful American self-descriptions and self-performances from a non-U.S. 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). We will read them—and their canonization—critically. Doing so, we will find that 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. In fact, engaging with (political or aesthetic) discomfort is a significant part of an American Studies education and an opportunity for research 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 text would create a significant issue for you—we can then work out alternative arrangements. Among others, the following sessions deal with material that contains depictions of violence, including sexual violence; racist and racist attitudes; suicide; and other potentially sensitive issues: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1/8 November), Northern Realism, Southern Romance (15 November), National Horrors (22 November), Economic Progressivisms and American Imperialism (6 December), The “New Woman” and the Culture of Decadence (7 February).

A Note on Language: I will not voice the N-word (or other racial slurs) in this course, also not when I'm quoting the word visually—on a powerpoint slide—from a primary source (e.g., *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*) or even when this source text uses the word not as a slur, but as an in-group expression. I would like to ask all non-Black students to follow the same practice. By contrast, the word “negro” has a different semantic history. In many texts in American cultural history up until the 1970s, it is used by US writers of different ethnicities as an accepted term of ethnic identification without overt motivations to voice an insult. As a self-attribution in the writings of authors such as Booker T. Washington, W.E.B Du Bois, Marcus Garvey (or, later, in the poetry of Langston Hughes and the self-naming of the Harlem Renaissance as the “New Negro Movement,” which will be discussed in the “Modernities” lecture course), the word “negro” is not used as an exclusive in-group marker, but as an unmarked expression in accordance with the political parlance of the day. Therefore, I will quote the word whenever it occurs but will not use it as a descriptive term myself (outside of quotations). To the extent that we're students of communicative history, it is important to understand that the English word “negro” is not completely identical with its German dictionary translation. Both terms, however, and also their French and Spanish equivalents, are ultimately rooted in colonialist discourse. Therefore, if anyone in this course feels personally offended by these quotations, please do not hesitate to let me know and I will try to find individual ways of historicizing our texts without de-historicizing their language. Regarding the term “Indian,” I will largely follow the example of Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, who suggests that we “use ‘Indigenous,’ ‘Indian,’ and ‘Native’ interchangeably Indigenous individuals and peoples in North America on the whole do not consider ‘Indian’ a slur” (*An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, 2014). However, since the term “Indian” originates as a colonialist appellation, I will not use it as a descriptive term myself, but put it in quotation marks or paraphrase it whenever the context requires.

Electronic Etiquette Policy (for live teaching): You will not be able to follow an on-campus lecture with undivided attention when you're simultaneously surfing the Web. Laptop, tablet, or mobile phone 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 go offline. In addition, please turn off all cell phones in the beginning of class. Thank you! *Exception:* students with special needs

that can be accommodated by using a laptop or tablet may use all the required devices (offline).

Online organization (if this course can no longer be taught on campus): to be announced in case this becomes necessary.