

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)
(Winter Semester 2019/20)

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 appearance of political parties and a national political press, the Haitian Revolution, the South and slavery, the impact of the American Revolution on native cultures, early trans-Atlantic feminism, the advent of the novel and its early genres (sentimental, Gothic, historical) as well as other issues.

The lecture course serves as “**Vorlesung**” of Culture-**Module A** (*Amerikanische Ideengeschichte und Theorien amerikanischer Kultur*) in the M.A. 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. **Requirements:** See Syllabus and Course Description (on Blackboard). **First session:** October 15.

15 October 2019

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) (*).

22 October 2019

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.”

29 October 2019

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: Frank Kelleter, from *Amerikanische Aufklärung*: chapter 8.2 (474–500). (*)

5 November 2019

The Constitution

Reading: *Constitution of the United States of America*.

Suggested: Kelleter, from *Amerikanische Aufklärung*: chapters 8.3 (500–533) and 8.4 (533–546) (*).

12 November 2019

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).

19 November 2019

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.”

26 November 2019

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 Caribbean, 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 Caribbean (1635–1805)” [from Dubois, Garrius, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean*].

Note: These are a lot of texts but they are all very short. Please read all of them, because the documents elucidate each other. Together, they trace the most important stages of the revolution(s) in Saint-Domingue/Haiti.

3 December 2019

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.”

10 December 2019

Republican Poetry (1)

Reading: Joel Barlow, *The Hasty Pudding*.

17 December 2019

Republican Poetry (2)

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); Phillis Wheatley, “On the Death of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, 1770.”

7 January 2019

[NO SESSION]

14 January 2020

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.”

21 January 2020

Family Men, Republican Wives, and the Rights of Woman: Intersections of Enlightenment Thought and Early American Feminism

Reading: Mary Wollstonecraft, from *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*: “Author’s Introduction,” “The Prevailing Opinion of a Sexual Character Discussed,” “The Same Subject Continued,” “Modesty—Comprehensively Considered, and Not as a Sexual Virtue,” “Of the

Pernicious Effects which Arise from the Unnatural Distinctions Established in Society”; Judith Sargent Murray, “On the Equality of the Sexes”; Constantia [Judith Sargent Murray], from *The Gleaner*: “Dedication to John Adams,” “Preface to the Reader,” “The Gleaner No. 1,” “The Gleaner No. 17,” “The Gleaner No. 91,” “Conclusion: The Gleaner Unmasked.”

28 January 2020

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

4 February 2020

American Gothic

Required: Charles Brockden Brown, from *Wieland, or The Transformation*: chapters 1–3, 6, 9, 11, 13, 16–17, 19, 22, 27.

Suggested: Brown, *Wieland* (complete text) (*).

11 February 2020

The South and Slavery: From Jeffersonian Racism to Nineteenth-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*.

Unmarked texts are included in the course reader. The course reader can be found on the reserve shelf in the JFKI-library and will be made available via USB-stick in the first few sessions. Please bring your laptop/tablet for this reason. If this does not work for you, please contact Kristina Brüning (bruenink@zedat.fu-berlin.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 this 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 12 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 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: One-page informal reflection paper on a session of your choice, to be handed in (e-mail attachment) **by 11 February 2020.**

Electronic Etiquette Policy: You will not be able to follow a 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 (offline) should contact me in the beginning of the semester.

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). Studying cultural history, including the historical biases of the material and its canonization, can be intense and even 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 and discussing ahead of time, and let me know if you think that studying a particular text or issue would create a significant issue for you—we can then work out alternative arrangements.