Having emerged from World War II as a world power, the United States faced numerous problems of cultural self-definition in the second half of the 20th century. The Cold War produced not only an ideology of international leadership but also new anxieties about America’s social identity and the nation’s changed position in the world. Topics discussed in this lecture course include the advent of a postindustrial economic order, the decline of New Deal liberalism, postmodernist aesthetics, the New Hollywood, and the entangled emergence of the New Left and the New Right. In the early 21st century, many of these developments have been radicalized under conditions of military hegemony, globalized capitalism, corporate anti-statism, neoliberal governance, and catastrophic ecological transformations. Altogether, the lecture course focuses on select phases and moments of cultural production between 1945 and 2018, when American novels and films, TV shows and songs often defined the global state of art in their respective fields. We will concentrate on literary sources, sociological writings, political documents, cinema, television, and other cultural fields.

The lecture course serves as “Vorlesung” of Culture-Module C (Kulturgeschichte einzelner Medien und ästhetischer Darstellungsformen) 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 16.

16 October 2017

Cold War Culture

Assigned Reading/Viewing: none.
Suggested Viewing: Invasion of the Body Snatchers (dir. Don Siegel) (*); The Manchurian Candidate (dir. John Frankenheimer) (*).
23 October 2017

**In the Post-Industrial Bathroom**

**Assigned Reading:** David Riesman, from *The Lonely Crowd*: "Changes in the Role of the Parents"; J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*: chapters 1-4, 6-9, 12, 16, 18, 21-23, 25, 26; John Updike, "Separating."

**Suggested Reading:** J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*, entire novel (*).

30 October 2017

**Confessional Poetry and the Politics of Identity**


**Suggested Reading:** Robert Lowell, "Sailing Home from Rapallo," "Man and Wife," "To Speak of Woe That Is in Marriage," "For the Union Dead"; Betty Friedan, from *The Feminine Mystique* (selections); Sylvia Plath, "Daddy"; Anne Sexton, "Sylvia’s Death"; Adrienne Rich, "Diving into the Wreck."

6 November 2017

**From Beat to Pop**

**Assigned Reading:** Allen Ginsberg, "A Supermarket in California," "Howl," "Footnote to 'Howl'"; Norman Mailer, from "The White Negro": sections I, II, V, VI; Joan Didion, "Slouching towards Bethlehem"; Andy Warhol, from *THE Philosophy of Andy Warhol* (from *A to B and Back Again*): chapter 6 "Work" (selections), chapter 15 "Underwear Power."

13 November 2017

**From the “New Hollywood” to the Blockbuster Era**

**Assigned Viewing:** *Bonnie and Clyde* (dir. Arthur Penn) (*); *The Exorcist* (dir. William Friedkin) (*); *Jaws* (dir. Steven Spielberg); *Taxi Driver* (dir. Martin Scorsese) (*).


**Note:** Please see paragraph on the Selection of Course Material (below).

20 November 2017

**Lecture by Dr. Kathleen Loock on the Rise of the Hollywood Franchise Era**

**Assigned Viewing:** to be announced.

27 November 2017

**The “Liberal” Non-Consensus: Civil Rights, Cultural Radicalism, Lifestyle Politics**

**Assigned Reading:** *Brown v. Board of Education at Topeka*; Martin Luther King, "Address to the March on Washington"; Malcolm X, "Message to the Grass Roots," "The Ballot or the Bullet"; Black Panther Party, "The Ten-Point Program"; Stokely Carmichael, "What We Want"; Chicago Office of SNCC, "We Must Fill Ourselves with Hate for All White Things";

Suggested Reading: Tom Wolfe, from *Radical Chic and Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers*: "Radical Chic" (selections); Winfried Fluck, "The Humanities in the Age of Expressive Individualism and Cultural Radicalism."

4 December 2017

**Identity Aesthetics (1): African American Culture and Literature, 1950s-1960s**


Suggested Reading: Langston Hughes, "Harlem"; Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*, entire novel (*).

11 December 2017

**Identity Aesthetics (2): Jewish American Culture and Literature, 1950s-1970s**

Assigned Reading: Saul Bellow, "Looking for Mr. Green"; Cynthia Ozick, "The Shawl"; Philip Roth, from *Portnoy’s Complaint*: chapters "The Most Unforgettable Character I’ve Met," "Whacking Off," "The Jewish Blues" (selections), "In Exile," "Punchline."

Suggested Reading: Philip Roth, *Portnoy’s Complaint*, entire novel (*).

Suggested Viewing: *Annie Hall* (dir. Woody Allen) (*).

18 December 2017

**Postmodernism**

Assigned Reading: Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49* (*); Leslie Fiedler, "Cross the Border–Close the Gap."


8 January 2018

– [No Session!] –

15 January 2018 –

– [No Session!] –

22 January 2018

**Beyond Postmodernism**

Assigned Reading: Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (*), especially Chapter One.

Suggested Reading: Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark* (*).

29 January 2018

**Conservatisms? (Neoliberalism, Anticommunism, Movement Conservatism, Neo-Conservatism, Tea Party Populism)**

Assigned Reading: Friedrich Hayek, from *The Road to Serfdom*: "Introduction"; Ayn Rand, from *The Virtue of Selfishness*: "Introduction"; Milton Friedman, from *Capitalism and*

Suggested Reading: Thomas Frank, from What’s the Matter with Kansas?: "The Two Nations" (selections).

5 February 2018

To Be Continued: Trumpism | #BlackLivesMatter


Suggested Listening/Reading/Viewing: Merle Haggard, "Okie from Muskogee" (song, 1969 version); Michelle Alexander, from The New Jim Crow: "Introduction"; Ava DuVernay, 13th (* (Netflix documentary).

12 February 2018

Television in the Digital Age

Assigned Viewing: The Sopranos (*): I/5 ("College"), VI/2.9 ("Made in America").

Suggested Viewing: selections from (*) Twin Peaks, Seinfeld, Lost, The Wire, and/or Orange Is the New Black.


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 (*) are not included in the course reader; they will be made available on the reserve shelf in the JFKI library. Films/audiovisual material will be made available if a DVD or Blu-ray disc exists; if not, please rent or watch online. Two longer texts (novels) should be bought in authoritative editions: Thomas Pynchon’s The Crying of Lot 49 (e.g., Harper Perennial edition) and Toni Morrison’s Beloved (e.g., Vintage Classics edition).

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 (in case of films: a piece of dialogue or a short description of a scene in no more than two sentences). 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 10 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 12 February 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 suggest that you 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 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.