

Masterstudiengang JFKI,

Kultur-Modul C

(*Kulturgeschichte einzelner Medien und ästhetischer Darstellungsformen*):

Vorlesung

Lecture Course C2: American Culture after World War II

Prof. Dr. F. Kelleter

Tuesday, 16.00 – 18.00 (JFKI 340)
(Summer Term 2019)

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, poems, films, and TV shows often defined the global state of art in their respective fields. We will concentrate on literary sources (especially poetry and fiction), 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:** April 9.

9 April 2019

Cold War Culture

Assigned Reading/Viewing: none.

Suggested Background Reading: from *The Enduring Vision*, ed. Paul Boyer et al., “America at Midcentury, 1952-1960” (*), “A Time of Upheaval, 1968-1974” (*); David Riesman, “The Suburban Sadness.”

Suggested Viewing: *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (dir. Don Siegel) (*); *The Manchurian Candidate* (dir. John Frankenheimer) (*).

16 April 2019

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 (*).

23 April 2019

Confessional Poetry and the Politics of Identity

Assigned Reading: Robert Lowell, “Inauguration Day: January 1953,” “Memories of West Street and Lepke,” “Skunk Hour”; Sylvia Plath, “Lady Lazarus”; Adrienne Rich, “Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law” and from *Of Woman Born*: section 2 (selections).

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.”

30 April 2019

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.”

7 May 2019

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) (*).

Suggested Viewing: *Easy Rider* (dir. Dennis Hopper) (*); *Wanda* (dir. Barbara Loden) (*); *Sweet Sweetback’s Baadasssss Song* (dir. Melvin Van Peebles) (*); *The Godfather* (dir. Francis Ford Coppola) (*); *The Godfather Part II* (dir. Francis Ford Coppola) (*); *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (dir. Miloš Forman); *Three Days of the Condor* (dir. Sydney Pollack) (*); *Network* (dir. Sidney Lumet) (*); *Star Wars* (dir. George Lucas) (*); *The Deer Hunter* (dir. Michael Cimino) (*); *First Blood* (dir. Ted Kotcheff) (*).

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

14 May 2019

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”; Eldridge Cleaver, “Open Letter to Stokely Carmichael”; The Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement.”

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.”

21 May 2019

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

Assigned Reading: Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*: “Prologue,” “Chapter I. [Battle Royal],” “Epilogue”; Gwendolyn Brooks, “We Real Cool”; Amiri Baraka, *Slave Ship*; Ron Karenga, “Black Cultural Nationalism.”

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

28 May 2019

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) (*).

4 June 2019

Postmodernism

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

Suggested Reading: Thomas Pynchon, “Entropy”; Jacques Derrida, “Signature Event Context.”

11 June 2019

Beyond Postmodernism

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

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

18 June 2019

– [No Session!] –

25 June 2019

Conservatism? (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 Freedom*: “Introduction,” “Conclusion”; Ronald Reagan, “Speech on Behalf of Barry Goldwater”; Lewis F. Powell, Jr., “Confidential Memorandum: Attack of American Free Enterprise System”; Charles Krauthammer, “In Defense of Democratic Realism”; Ron Paul, “The Neoconservative Empire”; Dick Arney & Matt Kibbe, “A Tea Party Manifesto”; Sarah Palin, from *Going Rogue*: “Epilogue.”

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

Note: This session may have to take place in a different room. Please watch for announcements.

2 July 2019

To Be Continued: Trumpism | #BlackLivesMatter

Assigned Reading: Publius Decius Mus [Michael Anton], “The Flight 93 Election,” “Restatement on Flight 93”; Michael Wolff, “Ringside With Steve Bannon at Trump Tower”; “Stephen Bannon: Core Of Trump’s Platform Is ‘Deconstruction Of The Administrative State’” (transcript and video); May 2017 White House Memo [Richard Higgins], “POTUS & Political Warfare”; Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The First White President”; Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, from *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*: “Introduction: Black Awakening in Obama’s America,” “The Political Economy of Racism,” “White Supremacy for Some, Not Others.”

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).

9 July 2019

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*.

Suggested Reading: Frank Kelleter, *Serial Agencies: “The Wire” and Its Readers* (*); “Five Ways of Looking at Popular Seriality.”

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 Linh Müller (linhmueller@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 stream, 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 9 July 2019.

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 go offline. 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.