

Culture Department Course Offerings

Winter Term 2020/21

Due to the measures taken by Freie Universität to contain the spread of COVID-19, the start of classes for the winter term has been postponed to November 2. The JFK Institute will follow the general plan of Freie Universität, offering approximately a third of courses on campus and the remaining two thirds in various online formats. The Culture Department aims to provide students with a mix of in-person, hybrid, and digital courses that will provide as much flexibility and interactivity as possible during this challenging period.

The time slots for digital courses listed below will be used by instructors in individual fashion, depending on their teaching format. For courses taught on-site, the room assignments are based on the Institute's COVID-19 hygiene guidelines. All instructors will communicate further details about their teaching modes via Blackboard, where all courses will be set up to let students self-enroll (and self-unenroll) so that they can access course syllabi. As usual, students are also automatically added to Blackboard when they sign up for their courses on Campus Management. If you run into any problems using Blackboard or if you have other concerns regarding your participation, please contact your instructor individually (via email) as soon as possible. Please confirm the course times and room numbers in the official course catalog (Vorlesungsverzeichnis) and also check the JFKI website regularly for further updates.

TEACHING FORMATS: Each course bears a number designation from 1-4, corresponding to the Institute's teaching formats for the hybrid semester as follows:

- 1: asynchronous online teaching (e.g. recorded lecture)
- 2: synchronous online teaching (e.g. live seminar via WebEx at designated time)
- 3: synchronous online teaching with some on-campus sessions (optional)
- 4: seminars planned for on-campus teaching (**as of October 26, these courses also now have to be moved online – for details, see the respective syllabus on campus or contact your instructor**)

Bachelor

Grundlagenmodul

32001 Sebastian Jobs/Martin Lütke/Ulla Haselstein

Understanding North America A

Teaching Format: 2

Fri 10-12 and 14-16 h, room 340

"Understanding North America" (UNA) is one of the most challenging courses you will take here at the John F. Kennedy-Institute, it will reward you with insight into the

perspectives of multiple disciplines along with a solid foundation of knowledge and skills for your further studies. For UNA A, there are three things that you must do to succeed: **1)** attend and actively participate in all course components (both lectures on Friday and one tutorial session on Wednesday), **2)** prepare all readings and study questions, and, **3)** work through the arguments and materials of the course throughout the lecture (not just the week before the exam!). Lectures and tutorials complement each other in their format. The lectures offer an overview of developments, concepts, and questions of American culture, literature and history to puzzle over. The tutorials, in contrast, develop close-up views and introduce more “mechanical” issues (e.g. how to write an academic essay). You will have the chance to go over the lectures, but also dive into materials and issues in smaller group discussions.

COVID Contingencies: Tutorial sessions and lectures alternate between the disciplines. What does not alternate is your participation in a tutorial group. We are currently looking into how exactly we will facilitate UNA A, but it looks like it is unrealistic to conduct the class fully on campus. Rather, we aspire to provide a mixed bag of meetings in person and remote lectures/meetings. For now, it is crucial that you enroll for the class on Blackboard, as soon as it is possible. After all, the online learning platform contains all the organizational information and readings for this course. It is also the primary way in which the teaching teams communicate with course participants, before more infrastructure and tools are in place. Please make sure that you register for and regularly check Blackboard.

Orientierungsmodul Kultur - Proseminar

32100 Maxi Albrecht

Rhetorics of Continuity and Change: A Survey of American Cultural History (Proseminar)

Teaching Format: 3

Mon 10-12 h

This course provides an extended overview of US-American cultural history ranging from the period of British settlement in the 17th century to present issues in US society. We will read influential texts (speeches, legal documents, essays, etc.) by authors such as John Cotton, Thomas Jefferson, Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, Martin Luther King, Betty Friedan, and Ta-Nehisi Coates. This course will attempt to overview US-American history by way of key texts while also examining marginalized voices. Throughout our readings, we will explore public rhetoric as key factors shaping the cultural trajectory of the United States. After a brief introduction to basic methodologies of cultural analysis, students will investigate the rhetorical, structural, and discursive features of the primary texts through close readings. We will also explore select representations from the fields of visual culture, art, and film. In addition, students need to do independent research on a selection of key terms that are essential for understanding the evolution of American public discourse and intellectual history.

Since this course is aimed at students in their first semesters, we will try to incorporate on-campus teaching where possible in small groups. Please note, however, that presence on campus will not be required in case anyone has (health) concerns, since the course will also largely consist of online elements. The aim is for everyone to be able to safely complete this course, while allowing for real-life interaction where possible. Also note, that as we move into the winter, we may nonetheless move into digital teaching/learning completely.

Vertiefungsseminare Kultur

32101 David Getsy

Objects, Agents, and Audiences: Sculpture and its Expansions in the United States from the 1950s to 1990s (Vertiefung A & B)

Teaching Format: 3

Wed 10-12 h

The second half of the twentieth century saw a fundamental reorganization of the medium of sculpture, and this course will chart its major developments. From the 1950s onward, sculptors in the United States became preoccupied with their work's relationship to everyday objects, industrial products, mass consumer goods, and the human body. Sculptural representation was left behind as abstraction, assemblage, objecthood, and dematerialization took hold, and we will examine sculptors' restless attempts at greater degrees of relation to everyday things, institutional contexts, and human bodies. Artists were energized by how sculpture could expansively incorporate architecture, performance, and the lived body; but they also prophesized its disintegration and obsolescence. Pushed to its limits, sculpture came to occupy a central role in American art theory, and it became an analogy for debates about gender, power, history, and commodification. This course will examine the ways in which these contestations of the sculptural object registered important cultural and intellectual shifts in American art and culture across these decades. **Please register at:** culture@ifki.fu-berlin.de with your name, matriculation number, study program, home university (if applicable), zedat email address or email address of home university, and type of exchange program (if applicable). Also register on Campus Management as soon as possible because there is only a limited number of places. This course will combine limited in-person instruction with synchronous online meetings. For details, please refer to the syllabus on Blackboard.

32102 Cameron Seglias

Innocents, Saints, and Apostates: Slavery and Antislavery in the Colonial Period (Vertiefung A)

Teaching Format: 4 (shifted to online teaching)

Fr 12-14 h, room 340

In this course, we will follow and critically examine shifting discourses and practices surrounding both New World racial slavery and antislavery. Although our focus throughout will be on the eighteenth-century Anglophone Atlantic, we will also delve further back into the early modern period to unpack the connections between the emergence of colonialism and capitalism. Moreover, emphasis will be given in particular to the diverse voices that opposed human commodification, from religious and political to enslaved and formerly enslaved writers. To ensure that the historical content remains manageable, the course will be divided into five chronological and thematic blocks: 1.) the origins of racial slavery; 2.) antislavery in Quaker Pennsylvania in the 1720s and 30s; 3.) antislavery and colonial war in the 1750s and 60s; 4.) antislavery in the period of the American Revolution; and 5.) the Haitian Revolution. Not only will we read eighteenth-century texts and secondary historical and theoretical material, but we will also consider contemporary literature that imaginatively explores the condition and legacies of slavery. Some of the authors we will read include Toni

Morrison, Marcus Rediker, John Woolman, Vincent Brown, Eric Williams, M. NourbeSe Philip, Honorée Fanonne Jeffers, Phillis Wheatley, Olaudah Equiano, C.L.R. James, and Michel-Rolph Trouillot. In addition to regular participation and a final paper, students will also be asked to write two short responses to two sessions of their choice. **Please be sure to purchase a copy of Toni Morrison's novel *A Mercy* (2008) before November 13th. We will read this short novel in its entirety (ca. 160 pages) for our session on November 20th.**

N.B.: Since this course will meet on-campus, enrollment is limited to 28 students. As with everything in these uncertain times, however, this format might be subject to change. If you would like to join the class, but have concerns about in-person attendance, please contact Cameron Seglias at Seglias@gsnas.fu-berlin.de.

32103 Ali Yasar Tuzcu

Gender and American War Film from the 1990s to Present

(Vertiefung A)

Teaching Format: 4 (shifted to online teaching)

Mon 12-14 h, room 340

War film has always been one of the most gendered genres. From *Paths of Glory* (1957) to *Apocalypse Now* (1979), male characters have been at the center of war film narratives, while female characters have been subordinated to such supporting roles as lover, mother, wife, daughter, nurse, and sex worker. From the 1990s onward, however, this representation strategy started changing significantly and has diversified even further with the War on Terror. After a theoretical discussion of genre as a dialogue between filmmakers and audience, we will analyze the tropes, patterns, and motifs used in American war films. Looking at the political significance of gender representation in American war films will enable us to discuss the genre along the lines of gender, media, and cultural studies. While examining the ways in which pre- and post-9/11 war films such as *G.I. Jane* (1997) by Ridley Scott and *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012) by Kathryn Bigelow introduce new gender dynamics to the genre, we will discuss how gender representation changes after this historical turning point. Locating the films to be discussed between the intersection of politics, genre, and history, this course aims to offer formal and contextual analysis methods, through which we will approach these films within the broader frame of the military-entertainment complex.

Note: The films to be watched and discussed for this class feature graphic violence and revolve around disturbing topics such as torture, rape, and detention. Please study the guidance in the course syllabus carefully before attending the first session.

This course will meet on campus, enrollment is limited to 28 students. Depending on the pandemic situation, this format might be subject to change.

32104 Jenna Krumminga

Riot or Revolt? News Coverage of Black Uprising, 1965 to 2020

(Vertiefung B)

Teaching Format: 3

Tue 16-18h

What language do we use when masses of people take to the streets? What words do we use to describe their behaviors? When is public assembly a protest, when is it a riot? Is looting a form of political speech? How do we define violence? Based on what

sources and according to what criteria do we make these determinations? And how does race factor into the way these questions are answered?

In this class, we'll explore how one powerful US-American institution has answered -- or struggled to answer -- these questions: the news media. How have news organizations and journalists mediated Black public assembly, and how has that changed over time? Our focus will be both on the news media as an institutional site of hegemonic meaning-making and as a for-profit industry situated in a specific economic, political, and regulatory context. When considering texts, we will thus pay attention to both representation and production: what stories are being told, but also what structural conditions shaped their telling?

The bulk of our intellectual labor will consist of close readings of print and broadcast journalism, with a particular focus on the 1960s, but also extending into the present day. To help us better understand these texts, we'll read secondary material from scholars across disciplines, including Saidiya Hartman, Stuart Hall, Sarah Ahmed, Michel Foucault, Nancy Fraser, bell hooks, Patricia Hill Collins, Judith Butler, and Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw. A strong emphasis will be placed on writing and revision, meaning students should be prepared to read and write throughout the semester. We will be workshopping each other's texts, so please also be prepared to receive and offer constructive feedback to and from your peers.

Students must register for this course via Campus Management and Blackboard by the first session. This will be a hybrid in-person/online class. The hope is that we can meet on campus for a few sessions at the beginning of the semester (November, and maybe December), before switching to online in January and February. If you are not able or simply don't want to meet in person for the first sessions, please contact me via email (jenna.krumminga@fu-berlin.de) or Blackboard – it will be no problem to attend virtually, and no explanations are necessary. On the other hand, if remote learning is not ideal for your circumstances, please also reach out; there's a lot less wiggle room here, but perhaps we can figure something out. Please note that it is **essential** to attend the first session on **November 3** when we will finalize the syllabus – together, and in cooperation.

Master

Modul A

32110 Alexander Starre

Discourses and Practices of Colonization and Settlement in North America (Grundlagenvorlesung)

Teaching Format: 1

Wed 16-18 h

“In the beginning, all the world was America,” John Locke proclaimed in his *Second Treatise on Government* (1689-90). But when and where does “America” begin? This lecture course deals with colonial societies and intercultural contact zones in North America between the 15th and 18th centuries. We will look at competing European settler cultures, practices of intercultural conflict and intermixture, as well as interdependent socio-economic, aesthetic, and ecological transformations in early modern times (shifting perspective from a Europe-centered narrative of “discovery” to a postcolonial account of conflictive hybridity). Topics include: Early European New

World writings (Bacon, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Las Casas, De Vaca, etc.), the first British descriptions of Virginia and New England (John Smith, Thomas Harriot, William Bradford, Thomas Morton), Puritan writings both orthodox and heterodox (John Winthrop, Anne Hutchinson, Edward Taylor, Anne Bradstreet, and others), Indian captivity narratives and missionary tracts (Mary Rowlandson, John Eliot), ideas and institutions of slavery and freedom (John Woolman, Phyllis Wheatley, Olaudah Equiano), intellectual shifts in the late 17th century and in the context of the Great Awakening (Cotton Mather, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Chauncy, Benjamin Franklin). Due to the Coronavirus situation, lectures will be pre-recorded and made available on the date of each class as indicated in the syllabus.

32111 Dustin Breitenwischer

Poet and Prophet: Reading Frederick Douglass (HS)

Teaching Format: 4 (shifted to online teaching)

Thu 16-18 h, room 203

In this seminar, students will be introduced to the extensive body of work of Frederick Douglass, one of the most important and influential figures in the nineteenth-century United States. In close readings, the seminar will explore Douglass's multitudinous social, political, and cultural roles—from being a formerly enslaved, self-liberated man to becoming critic and advisor of the president—and unfold the many-faceted cultural history of the antebellum era and the Reconstruction period. Accordingly, the reading material will range from Douglass's first autobiography, his famous Fourth of July speech and his involvement in William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist movement to his lectures on human picture-making and on the civilizational force of the Haitian Revolution. As the title of the seminar suggests, it seeks to present and discuss Frederick Douglass not only as one of the most dominant voices in U.S. American and Black diasporic reform history, but as a self-made virtuoso in poetry and prophecy who shaped the cultural and literary history of the United States and beyond.

Recommended: Douglass, Frederick. *Autobiographies*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. New York: Library of America, 1994.

Until further notice, students should expect an in-person seminar that is held at the JFK Institute. Enrollment is limited to 16 students.

32114 Winfried Fluck

Changing Narratives About American Popular Culture and the Popular Media (HS)

Teaching Format: 2

Wed 12-14 h

How can the claim be justified that such popular genres as film noir, the detective novel, the women's melodrama, comics or rap videos can provide important insights into American culture? When the field of American studies was established, its main reference was high culture, defined as a culture of critical negation. Popular culture, especially in such manifestations as Hollywood movies or commercial television, was dismissed as a form of commodified mass culture, an argument for which Frankfurt School critical theory had provided the blueprint. This course will trace the gradually changing views of American popular culture in American studies, starting with the mass culture debate of the 1950s and bringing the story up to the digital present. As a part

of this history, key terms of cultural analysis such as myth, symbol, ideology, formula, stereotype, camp, interpellation and seriality will be compared in their explanatory range. Topics that will be highlighted include the long-lasting Americanization debate, depictions of violence and the question of media effects, changing perspectives on the representation of class, race, and gender, the transformation of American culture by black culture, the relation of popular culture and populism, and the strongly divergent views of American society on which different approaches to the study of American popular culture are based. The course will be taught online, student participation is encouraged. All of the reading material will be available on Blackboard.

Registration: all participants must be registered via Blackboard and Campus Management before the first session. If you cannot register online, please contact Regina Wenzel (culture@jfki.fu-berlin.de) before the beginning of the term; or if you would like to participate, but cannot attend the first session, please contact me (winfried.fluck@fu-berlin.de).

Modul B

32111 Dustin Breitenwischer

Poet and Prophet: Reading Frederick Douglass (HS)

Teaching Format: 4

Thu 16-18 h, room 203

see description above

Modul C

32112 Frank Kelleter

American Culture after World War II (Grundlagenvorlesung)

Teaching Format: 1

Tue 16-18 h

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 interrelated 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. Our lecture course focuses on select phases and moments of cultural production between 1945 and 2020, when American novels, poems, films, and TV shows often defined the state of the 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 need to be registered via Blackboard *and* Campus

Management by 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 and Online Organization:** See **Syllabus and Course Description in the “Teaching” section of my JFKI website or on Blackboard** (go to “Kursmaterial”; you may have to click on “open Syllabus here” to download it; if this doesn’t work, try a different browser: students have reported problems with the Chrome browser). All communication about and within this class will be channeled through the course’s Blackboard site; please make sure you’re registered there. **First session:** November 3.

(Asynchronous Online Course – Lecture Uploads: Tuesdays)

32113 Frank Kelleter

Black Theory, Theories of Blackness: American Political Rhetoric and Aesthetics, 1895-2020 (HS)

Teaching Format: 2

Tue 18-20 h

This seminar deals with select examples of African American political rhetoric and aesthetics between 1895 and 2020. Three initial sessions will be dedicated to key historical moments of Black protest rhetoric in the U.S. (Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey; Civil Rights Movement and Black Power movements; Black feminism). Additional sessions, to be prepared and organized by students, will cover the following theorists and theoretical paradigms: James Baldwin, the Combahee River Collective, Audre Lorde, Afropessimism, Black Marxism, Claudia Rankine, Hortense Spillers and Saidiya Hartman. All participants are expected to have read the Course Description before the start of the term so that they can sign up for a session in our first meeting—or propose an alternative topic by advance e-mail.

This seminar serves as “**Hauptseminar**” within Culture-**Module C** in the JFKI’s Master’s program. **It is strongly recommended that you take this seminar together with the lecture course “American Culture after World War II”!** If you cannot do so, you might want to choose a different seminar offered in Module C. **Registration:** All participants need to be registered via Blackboard *and* Campus Management by the first session. If you cannot register online or cannot attend the first session, please contact Prof. Kelleter before the beginning of the term. All communication about and within this class will be channeled through the course’s Blackboard site, so make sure you are registered there. **Online Organization:** Please download the **Syllabus and Course Description** (with a description of all requirements) from the “Teaching” section of Prof. Kelleter’s JFKI website or from Blackboard (go to “Kursmaterial”; you may have to click on “open Syllabus here” to download it; if this doesn’t work, try a different browser: students have reported problems with the Chrome browser). **Please read the Syllabus/Course Description carefully:** It contains detailed information about the seminar’s structure, its online organization, and suggestions for preparing “your” session. Note that we will finalize our class schedule in the first two meetings. This means that everyone who wants to attend this course needs to **be present in the first online session** (November 3) in order to sign up for a topic (student-run session) *or* have contacted Prof. Kelleter beforehand by e-mail (no later than November 2). **First session:** November 3.

(Synchronous Online-Course – Tuesday, 6.15-7.45 p.m., Webex)

32115 David Getsy

Street Actions: Public Performance Art and the City of New York in the 1970s and 1980s (HS)

Teaching Format: 3

Wed 14-16 h

This seminar will examine how New York City's urban spaces enabled the proliferation of performance art in the 1970s and 1980s. The tumultuous shifts in the economic landscape of New York City facilitated new modes of non-commercial artistic practices that turned away from the commodified object and toward performance, event, and action. We will study the ways in which artists created disruptive public tactics, urban interventions, infiltrations of institutions, and public protests. Emphasis will be placed on performance art at public sites, often unauthorized and unsanctioned. A central question will be how artists actively sought unexpected audiences and new locations for performance in order to contest mainstream narratives of race, sexuality, and/or gender. Case studies will include Adrian Piper, Scott Burton, Betsy Damon, Tehching Hsieh, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Stephen Varble, Pope.L, Papo Colo, Tseng Kwong Chi, Lorraine O'Grady, and ACT UP. From eroticism to activism, performance art interacted with the city's urban geography, contested zones, and infrastructure. We will examine how performance artists in these decades made the street the stage and confronted new audiences. **Please register at:** culture@jfki.fu-berlin.de with your name, matriculation number, study program, home university (if applicable), zedat email address or email address of home university, and type of exchange program (if applicable). Self-enrollment on Campus Management is not possible for this course, thus, please register here. There will only be a limited number of students accepted in this course, thus, please register early.

This course will combine limited in-person instruction with synchronous online meetings. For details, please refer to the syllabus on Blackboard.

Note: This course is now fully booked. Further applications will not be considered!

32114 Winfried Fluck

Changing Narratives About American Popular Culture and the Popular Media (HS)

Teaching Format: 2

Wed 12-14 h

see description above

Interdisziplinäres Modul

32116 Alexander Starre / Florian Sedlmeier

American Institutions of Literature (HS)

Teaching Format: 1

Tue 16-18 h

This interdisciplinary seminar builds on and examines a recent trend in American studies: the turn to the institutional conditions of literary production and reception. For well more than a decade now, scholars of contemporary American literature in particular have explored the role of creative writing programs (Mark McGurl), shifting

publishing technologies and economics (Amy Hungerford), civic institutions (Merve Emre), literary prizes (James English), and other institutional parameters. To be sure, though, the power of institutions to shape notions of American literature reaches further back—at least to the infamous tribunal that probed the enslaved Black poet Phillis Wheatley’s literary credentials. With the expansion and professionalization of the literary marketplace in the nineteenth century, the domain of literature took on its modern contours as an autonomous field, as the sociological theorist Pierre Bourdieu has proposed. Under the conditions of modernity and an accelerated print capitalism, institutions are created in the name of literature that reinforce and renegotiate its social status and its shifting valences.

Focusing on case studies from the nineteenth through the twenty-first centuries, we trace the role and influence of several of these institutions, including lecture circuits, little magazines, libraries, professional reviews, and Oprah’s Book Club. Drawing on influential theoretical and methodological accounts, we ask how these institutions fix and destabilize competing notions of literature. But we also look at how both paratexts (prefaces, magazine editorials, interviews, and reviews) and literary texts (poems, short stories, and novels) address and dramatize their modes of production and reception. This last question may lead us to sketching the contours of a poetics of literary institutions. Covering critical materials from literary studies, cultural studies, literary sociology, as well as book history and material text studies, this course will challenge students to find new ways of reading beyond the text.

Until further notice and due to the unpredictable pandemic situation, students should expect an asynchronous online seminar with a few optional in-person meetings to be announced in the course of the semester. For each seminar session, we will provide input in video or audio form in addition to the week’s reading. We expect all students to participate actively and regularly on Blackboard. In order to obtain full, graded credit, students will have to master a take-home exam, in addition to the participation requirements.

Colloquium

32117 Martin Lütke

MA-Colloquium Culture/Literature

Teaching Format: 2

Thu 18-20 h

The colloquium is designed for students who are currently working on their master’s thesis. We will meet for an orientation session online on Thursday, November 5, at 6 pm. I will circulate a link to my WebEx room to registered students. We will discuss the format and number of sessions in our first meeting, as they depend on the number of participants.

Registration: all participants must be registered via Blackboard and Campus Management before the first session. If you cannot register online, please contact Regina Wenzel (culture@jfki.fu-berlin.de) before the beginning of the term; or if you would like to participate, but cannot attend the first session, please contact me (martin.luethe@fu-berlin.de).

Graduate School

32120 Frank Kelleter

Theory and Methods in the Study of Culture (Oberseminar)

Teaching Format: 4

Tue 14-16 h, 203 (JFKI)

This Ph.D.-course deals with theoretical and methodological issues in the study of American culture, focussing on current research projects (doctoral and post-doctoral level) at the John F. Kennedy Institute. Members of the Graduate School are invited to attend; please register prior to the first class with Prof. Kelleter (no later than October 12).