Course Title

Europe’s Dream of America/ America’s Dream of Europe

Course Number

SOC-UA.9938D01, EURO-UA.9938D01, HIST-UA.9938D01

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Lecturer Contact Information

PD Dr. phil. habil. Reinhard Isensee
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Institute of English and American Studies,
American Studies Program
Unter den Linden 6, 10099 Berlin
ri16@nyu.edu

Course Details

Wednesday: 1:30pm - 4:15pm

Location

Rooms will be posted in Albert before your first class. Please double check whether your class takes place at the Academic Center (BLAC) or at St. Agnes (SNTA).

Prerequisites

n/a

Units earned

4 credits

Course Description

The course examines significant moments in the development of Europe’s and America’s notions and images of one another from the 18th century to the present as projected in (dominant) narratives of national identity. The in-depth discussion will be based upon historical documents and cultural texts with equal attention to sources from America/the US and Europe/Germany in an effort to explore and evaluate the major theoretical and rhetorical paradigms (and the shifts therein) informing the perceptions as well as cultural constructions
of the *Self* and *Other* past and present. Moreover, the course will investigate and evaluate recent manifestations of Anti-Americanism and analyse the ideological and cultural coordinates of current anti-American concepts in Europe/Germany as well as concepts of Europe as a socio-cultural model for the 21st century. In conclusion, the politics of the current US-Administration will be discussed in terms of their impact on transatlantic relations as well as the role of the West in dealing with global challenges, particularly in the Middle East.

**Course Objective**

- To provide a historical overview of key moments in the formation of American perceptions of Europe and vice versa;
- To acquaint students with major theoretical frameworks of constructing and explaining the political, social, and cultural *Other*;
- To recognize and understand manifestations of American and European images of the *Other* in the context of the respective historical contexts;
- To explain and critically evaluate current transatlantic perceptions and their function in the respective political, social and cultural discourses in the United States and Europe/Germany.

**Assessment Components**

Final grades will be based on a midterm (90 minutes), one term paper (8 pages), one presentation (15 minutes) and response (5 minutes) in class, and active participation in class. Regular class attendance is required.

Class Participation counting 20% of total marks.
One Midterm counting 20% of total marks.
One Final Term Paper of 8 pages counting 40% of total marks.
One Class Presentation and Response counting 20% of total marks.

Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

**Required Text(s)** (Provided in the Course Reader available at SprintOut copy store, Georgenstrasse 190, 10117 Berlin)

Fluck, Winfried, Pease, Donald, and John Carlos Rowe (eds.). *Re-Framing the Transnational Turn in American Studies*. Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2011.


Jefferson, Thomas. “Notes on Virginia, Query 19.” [Document I]


Jefferson, Thomas. “State of the Union Address.” [Document IV]

Jefferson, Thomas. “To the President of the United States (James Monroe).” [Document V]


Mark Twain. *A Tramp Abroad*. 1880. (Excerpt)


Supplemental Text(s) (not required to purchase)


[NYU Berlin Library Catalogue](#) or follow the link on NYU Berlin’s website (Academics/Facilities & Services).

**Internet Research Guidelines**

to be discussed in class

**Additional Required Equipment**
n/a

**Session 1 – 5 Sep 2018**
Introduction to the Course: Aims, Thematic Outline, and Requirements

**Session 2 – 12 Sep 2018**
Notions of America and Europe in the Political Discourse of the Early American Republic

**READING:**
- Brinkley: 147-162
- Jefferson: documents I, II, and III

**Contextual Reading:**
Brinkley: 55-84; 85-111

**Session 3 – 19 Sept 2018**
The Formation and Nature of Distinctive National Narratives in the United States

**READING:**
- Jefferson: documents IV and V;
- Robertson: 1263-1280;
- Twain: “Student Life” (Excerpt)

**Contextual Reading:**
Brinkley: 112-146; 171-192

**Session 4 – 26 Sept 2018**
European Perceptions of America: Theoretical Paradigms and Rhetoric of European Constructions of America

**READING:**
- Taylor: 1-8
- Kroes: 1-21
• Cleary: 1-24

Contextual Reading:
• Fluck/Pease: 141-163
• Woolf: 57-64

PUBLIC HOLIDAY – No Class: 3 Oct 2018

***Session 5 – MAKE-UP DAY: Friday, 5 Oct 2018
Images of America, Political Myths and Historiography: International and European Imaginaries of (Post-) Revolutionary America

READING:
• Mauch: 411-423
• Fredrickson: iii-17

Contextual Reading:
• Davis: 81-118
• Wahrmann: 1236-1262;

Session 6 – 10 Oct 2018
Projections of the National Self: The Changing Notions of American Freedom

READING:
• Micklethwait/Wooldrigde: 291-333
• Foner: 1-15

Contextual Reading: Brinkley: 325-344

Session 7 – 17 Oct 2018
MIDTERM EXAM

24 Oct 2018 – Fall Break – No Class

Session 8 – 31 Oct 2018
European Misconceptions of America: Nazi Propaganda and the Role of the Public Intellectual

READING:
• Brinkley: 712-723
• Wilhelm: 55-83

Contextual Reading: Brinkley: 723-747

Session 9 – 7 Nov 2018
Independent Group Study Project (IGSP):
American Popular Culture and its European Readings: Emancipatory Promises versus Cultural Hegemony

READING:
• Ostendorf: 339-366
Session 10 – 14 Nov 2018
Presentation and Discussion of Independent Group Study Project Findings
Troubled Transatlantic Alliances: European and American Perceptions of Partnership

READING:
- Hitchcock: 53-81
- Fuchs/Klingemann: 249-262
Contextual Reading: Brinkley: 872-912

Session 11 – 21 Nov 2018
Anti-Americanism in Political Context: Europe’s Love-Hate Relationship to the United States

READING:
- Pew Research: 1-6
- Smith: 1-10
- Kroes: 1-13
Contextual Reading: Brands: 315-340; 346-366

Session 12 – 28 Nov 2018
American Imaginaries of Europe: The American versus the European Dream

READING:
- Archer: 7-21
- Rifkin: 11-57
Contextual Reading:
  - Fluck/Pease: 193-218
  - Rifkin: 119-160

Session 13 – 5 Dec 2018
American Imaginaries of Europe: The European versus the American Dream

READING:
- Rifkin: 161-178
- Friedman/Mandelbaum: 326-356
Contextual Reading: Brands: 367-386
Session 14 – 12 Dec 2018
American Democracy at Home and Abroad: The Future of Freedom and the West's/America's Role in the Middle East

READING: Zakaria: 119-159
Contextual Reading: Sarsar: 39-48; Menotti: 11-20; Mansur: 67-75

TERM PAPER DUE!

Session 15 – 19 Dec 2018
Concluding Discussion/Evaluation

Classroom Etiquette
The classroom atmosphere is designed to invite all students to actively participate in the academic conversation. Students are asked to foster this atmosphere by supporting the discussion through informed and thematically relevant contributions that endorse mutual respect for other views in a productive dialogue.

Suggested Co-Curricular Activities
Participation in course-related academic events at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin; participation in selected classes of the American Studies Program at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin offered by lecturer.

Your Lecturer
Reinhard Isensee teaches in the American Studies Program at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. After completing his Ph.D. in 19th century American literature he pursued a post-doctoral research project on 20th Century-American Adolescent Literature (Habilitation, 2002). With a particular interest in transatlantic and transnational topics, he has more recently focused in his research on (visual) media with a special emphasis on the cultural work of digital media. He has published extensively in the field of American literature on American naturalism and on 20th century young adult literature, as well as in cultural studies on multicultural education, cultural identity formation and digital media. His current research work encompasses the contemporary American adolescent novel, the cultural and social history and present models of transatlantic, transnational and global education as well as the impact of digital media on the production and distribution of knowledge in American culture. He has frequently held long-term as well as short-term guest professorships at universities and colleges in the United States and Europe.
Academic Policies

Assessment Expectations

**Grade A:** The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well-structured arguments in their work. The student writes comprehensive essays / answers to exam questions and their work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.

**Grade B:** The candidate shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy.

**Grade C:** The work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and is in need of improvement.

**Grade D:** The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, poor research.

**Grade F:** The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness and the research is clearly negligible.

**Grade Conversion**
Your lecturer may use one of the following scales of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

- A = 94-100 or 4.0
- A- = 90-93 or 3.7
- B+ = 87-89 or 3.3
- B = 84-86 or 3.0
- B- = 80-83 or 2.7
- C+ = 77-79 or 2.3
- C = 74-76 or 2.0
- C- = 70-73 or 1.7
- D+ = 67-69 or 1.3
- D = 65-66 or 1.0
- F = below 65 or 0

**Attendance Policy**
Participation in all classes is essential for your academic success, especially in courses that meet only once per week. Your attendance in both content and language courses is required and will be checked at each class meeting. As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor by e-mail immediately (i.e. before the start of your class). Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, religious observance or emergencies. Your professor or NYU Berlin's administration may ask you to present a doctor's note or an exceptional permission from NYU Berlin's Director or Wellness Counselor as proof. Emergencies or other exceptional circumstances must be presented to the Director. Doctor's notes need to be submitted to the Academics Office, who will inform your professors. Doctor's notes need to be from a local doctor and carry a signature and a stamp. If you want the reasons for your absence to be treated confidentially, please approach NYU Berlin's Director or Wellness Counselor.
Unexcused absences affect students’ grades. In content courses each unexcused absence (equaling one week's worth of classes) leads to a deduction of 2% of the overall grade and may negatively affect your class participation grade. In German Language classes two or three (consecutive or non-consecutive) unexcused absences (equaling one week's worth of classes) lead to a 2% deduction of the overall grade. Three unexcused absences in one content course and five unexcused absences in your German language course may lead to a Fail in that course. Being more than 15 minutes late counts as an unexcused absence. Furthermore, your professor is entitled to deduct points for frequent late arrival or late arrival back from in-class breaks. Please note that for classes involving a field trip, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive in time at the announced meeting point.

Exams, tests and quizzes, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation. It is the student's responsibility to produce this doctor's note and submit it to the Academics Office; until this doctor's note is produced the missed assessment is graded with an F and no make-up assessment is scheduled. In content classes, an F in one assignment may lead to failure of the entire class.

Regardless of whether an absence is excused or not, it is the student's responsibility to catch up with the work that was missed.

**Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays**
Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer AND NYU Berlin's Academics Office in writing via e-mail one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics Office will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

**Late Submission of Work**
(1) Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.

(2) Late work should be submitted in person to the lecturer or to the Academics Office, who will write on the essay or other work the date and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative staff may also personally accept the work and will write the date and time of submission on the work, as above.

(3) Work submitted late receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100 point scale for each day it is late (excluding weekends and public or religious holidays), unless an extension has been approved (with a doctor's note or by approval of NYU Berlin's administration), in which case the 2 points per day deductions start counting from the day the extended deadline has passed.

(4) Without an approved extension, written work submitted more than 5 days (excluding weekends and public or religious holidays) following the submission date receives an F.

(5) End of semester essays must be submitted on time.
(6) Students who are late for a written exam have no automatic right to take extra time or to write the exam on another day.

(7) Please remember that university computers do not keep your essays - you must save them elsewhere. Having lost parts of your essay on the university computer is no excuse for a late submission.

Provisions for Students with Disabilities
Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see their website for further information.

Plagiarism Policy
The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. Proper referencing of your sources avoids plagiarism (see as one possible help the NYU library guide to referencing styles.

NYU Berlin takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form.

It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you MUST inform your professor.

For a summary of NYU Global’s academic policies.