Course Title
Europe’s Dream of America/America’s Dream of Europe

Course Number
SOC-UA.9938001, EURO-UA.9938001, HIST-UA.9938001

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Instructor 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
reinhard.isensee@rz.hu-berlin.de/ri16@nyu.edu

Course Details

Fall Semester 2017
Wednesday: 1:30pm - 4:15pm
Location: NYU Berlin Academic Center; Room: tba

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 The in-depth discussion will be based upon historical documents and cultural texts with equal attention to sources from America/the US and Europe/Germany in an effort to explore and evaluate the major theoretical and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.

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

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.

**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:

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Alternatively:

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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. Furthermore, your professor is entitled to deduct points for frequent late arrival or late arrival back from in-class breaks. Being more than 15 minutes late counts as an unexcused absence. 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.

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 [http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html](http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html)

**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 ([https://www.nyu.edu/students/communities-and-groups/students-with-disabilities.html](https://www.nyu.edu/students/communities-and-groups/students-with-disabilities.html)) 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: [http://nyu.libguides.com/citations](http://nyu.libguides.com/citations)).

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 please see: www.nyu.edu/global/academic-policies

Required Reading: (provided in the course reader available at the copy store SprintOut at 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)
Menotti, Roberto. "Democratize but Stabilize Democracy in the Middle East". Middle


Supplemental Text(s) (not required to purchase)


NYU Berlin Library Catalogue: [http://guides.nyu.edu/global/berlin](http://guides.nyu.edu/global/berlin) 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 – 30 Aug 2017
Introduction to the Course: Aims, Thematic Outline, and Requirements

Session 2 – 6 Sep 2017
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 – 13 Sep 2017
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 – 20 Sep 2017
European Perceptions of America: Theoretical Paradigms and Rhetoric of European Constructions of America

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

Session 5 – 27 Sep 2017
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 – 4 Oct 2017
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 – 11 Oct 2017
MIDTERM EXAM

18 October 2017 – Fall Break – No Class

Session 8 – 25 Oct 2017
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 – 1 Nov 2017
Independent Group Study Project (IGSP):
American Popular Culture and its European Readings: Emancipatory Promises versus Cultural Hegemony

READING: Ostendorf: 339-366; Wagnleitner: 443-469
Contextual Reading: Brinkley: 747-777

Session 10 – 8 Nov 2017
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 – 15 Nov 2017
Anti-Americanism in Political Context: Europe’s Love-Hate Relationship to the United States

Contextual Reading: Brands: 315-340; 346-366

Session 12 – 22 Nov 2017
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 – 29 Nov 2017
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 – 6 Dec 2017
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 – 13 Dec 2017
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.

Required Co-curricular Activities
Selected sessions will take place at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (dates to be announced in class).

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 Instructor
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 postdoctoral 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.