

Philipp Kneis, Humboldt University, Berlin, Winter 2003/04

Tutorial

“Introduction to Cultural Studies”

The course provides an introduction to American History by reading and discussing critical source materials. The tutorial has been designed to accompany the seminar “Introduction to American Cultural Studies” by PD Dr. Reinhard Isensee at Humboldt University Berlin.

Assessment: participation is voluntary. You are asked to present a source text in class.

Seminar Details: 90 minute sessions, weekly, Wednesdays, 4-6PM

Seminar Plan:

- 1 11/19/03 Introduction**
Personal Introductions: Expectations regarding the field and the subject matter; general questions
Introduction to the Syllabus
- 2 11/26/03 Cultural Terms I**
▣ A.L. Kroeber/Clyde Kluckhohn, *Culture. A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (N.Y., 1952) (Excerpt).
▣ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (N.Y., 1973) (Excerpt).
▣ Stephen Greenblatt, “Culture”, in: Frank Lentricchia/Thomas McLaughlin, eds., *Critical Terms for Literary Studies* (Chicago 1990), 225-230 (Excerpts).
- 3 12/03/03 Cultural Terms II**
▣ John Dean, *American Popular Culture* (Nancy, 1992) pp. 24-25.
▣ Williams/Scruton, “Culture”, pp.24-25.
- 4 12/10/03 Cultural Terms III**
▣ Walt Disney: “culture isn’t that kind of snooty word at all”, p.25.
▣ “What is culture? Intercultural Studies Project”, Univ. of Minnesota, from: <http://carla.acad.umn.edu/culture.html> (diverse Definitions, pp.1-2).
- 5 12/17/03 American Politics**
Historical Overview, Constitution
- 6 01/07/04 National Character**
▣ J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, “What is an American?” (Letter III, Excerpt), in: *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782)
▣ David M. Potter, “The Quest for the National Character”, (1962), in: *History and Society: Essays of David M Potter*, ed. Don E. Fehrenbacher (N.Y., 1973), pp. 228-255.
- 7 01/14/04 Regionalism**
▣ Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in *American History*” (1893), in: C. Merton Babcock, *The American Frontier. A Social and Literary Record* (N.Y., 1965), pp. 29-42 (Excerpts).
▣ Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*, Cambridge, MA, 1970 (1950), pp. 123-126, 186-188, 250-251, 257-260.
▣ William Lloyd Garrison, “Preface: The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass,” in: *A Nineteenth-Century American Reader*, Washington, D.C., 1991, pp. 303-308.
▣ George Fitzhugh, “Sociology for the South. Negro Slavery”, in: *ibid.*, pp.309-314.
- 8 01/21/04 Melting Pot/Ethnicity/Black Culture/Multiculturalism**
▣ Milton M. Gordon, “Assimilation in America. Theory and Reality”, in: *Daedalus*, 90 (Spring 1961), pp. 266-284.
▣ David A. Hollinger, *Postethnic America. Beyond Multiculturalism*, (N.Y., 1995), pp. 1-17 (chap. I: Introduction).

- 9 01/28/04 Popular Culture / Mass Culture**
- ▣ Herbert J. Gans, "Mass Culture, Popular Culture, and Taste Culture", in: *Popular Culture and High Culture. An Analysis and valuation of Taste* (N.Y., 1974), 3-15.
 - ▣ John Storey, "What is popular culture?" in: *An Introductory Guide to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture* (Athens, 1993), pp.1-18.
- Puritan Errand**
- ▣ Samuel Danforth, "A Brief Recognition of New England's Errand into the Wilderness" (Election Sermon, 1670) (Excerpt).
 - ▣ Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge MA, 1956) pp. 1-15.
 - ▣ Sacvan Bercovitch, "Rhetoric and History in Early New England: The Puritan Errand Reassessed", in: R.J. Budd/E.M. Cady/C.L. Anderson, eds., *Toward a New American Literary History* (Durham, N.C., 1980), pp.54-68.
- 10 02/04/04 American Liberalism**
- ▣ Louis Hartz, "The Concept of a Liberal Society", in: *The Liberal Tradition in America* (N.Y., 1955), pp. 3-23
 - ▣ Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America", *Daedalus* 96 (Winter 1967), pp.2-15.
American Dream
 - ▣ Peter Freese, "The 'American Dream' and the 'American Nightmare': A Survey", in: *"America", Dream or Nightmare* (Essen, 1994), pp. 67-95.
 - ▣ "What is the Promise of American Life" (1909), in: *The Promise of American Life*, (Minneapolis, 1965), pp. 1-26
- 11 02/11/04 American Studies/American Culture Studies**
- ▣ Henry Nash Smith, "Can American Studies Develop a Method?", *American Quarterly*,9 (1957), pp. 197-208.
 - ▣ Günter H. Lenz, "'Ethnographies': American Culture Studies and Postmodern Anthropology", *Prospects* 16 (1991). pp. 1-14.
- 12 02/18/04 American Studies/American Culture Studies**
- ▣ Alice Kessler-Harris, "Women's History, Women's Studies, American Studies: The Cultural Connection", *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 31 (1986), pp. 215-227.
 - ▣ Renate Hof, "Die Entwicklung der Gender Studies", in: H. Bußmann/R. Hof (Ed.), *Genus. Zur Geschlechterdifferenz in den Kulturwissenschaften* (Stuttgart, 1995), pp. 3-25.