

M.A. in American Studies (MAS) Course Catalog Summer Semester 2025

Last Updated: 07.05.2025

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Updates

20.02.2025	The room for Hamid Alberto Abud Russell's course has been adjusted.
20.02.2025	Time, place and description for Manfred Berg's courses have been added.
20.02.2025	Descriptions/times/places for a number of courses have been added, primarily in history and geography.
20.02.2025	The description for Ryan Tobler's class on Mormonism has been added.
20.02.2025	Text and time for Ulrike Gerhard's class on "The Meaning of Home" have been added/adjusted.

Dear students of the M.A. in American Studies,

The Heidelberg Center for American Studies welcomes you to the summer term 2025!

In the MAS course catalog, you will find all lectures and courses that are relevant for the program and taught in English. You may also take classes held in German if you speak German on a university level. Please consult with the MAS coordinator prior to signing up for any German-taught courses. You may find further classes and lectures in the university's online catalog (HeiCO) or on the respective department's website.

The here listed classes are offered by the Heidelberg Center for American Studies, the English Department, the Institute for Geography, the History Department, the Institute for Political Science, and the Theological Seminary/Department of Church History.

Please note that registration for particular classes may differ due to the multidisciplinary set-up of our program. You will find directions on how to register in each course description. Please also pay attention to different registration deadlines.

Please be aware that one individual class may not count toward two different modules at the same time. E.g., if you choose a seminar for the main module Literature & Culture, the class cannot count toward the research module Literature & Culture as well, but you need to take a different class for the research module. The same applies for courses that are listed in different modules. If you take a class, you must choose toward which module the credit points will count.

If you have any questions, please contact our MAS Coordinator Jonas Faust (jfaust@hca.uni-heidelberg.de) or PD Dr. Philipp Löffler (philipp.loeffler@as.uni-heidelberg.de).

M.A. in American Studies

The Program

Students enroll in the program each winter semester. The standard duration of study, including the writing of the Master's thesis, is four semesters. The M.A. in American Studies (MAS) program (100%) includes the academic disciplines Geography, History, Literature and Cultural Studies, Political Science, and Religious History and Culture. At the start of the program, students will choose two of those as their core disciplines. One of these two core disciplines will receive further emphasis in the research module, which is meant to prepare students for the writing of their M.A. thesis. The flexibility module gives students the opportunity either to take American Studies courses outside their core disciplines in order to broaden their understanding of the comprehensive field of American Studies, or to attend additional classes in one of their two core disciplines for a deeper engagement with their primary fields of interest. The interdisciplinary module is designed to bring the perspectives and methods of the various disciplines into dialogue with one another.

These subject modules are supplemented by a methodology module meant to impart both theoretical proficiency and empirical methods, as well as practical skills; and a module on cross-cutting perspectives, which—in the spirit of a traditional *studium generale*—affords students an opportunity to venture outside of the field of American Studies. There will also be a chance during the “mobility window,” usually slated for the third semester, to study abroad on an exchange, accept an internship, etc. The MAS program concludes with an examination module.

Modules and courses

By dividing the program into various modules, the HCA has three goals for students:

1. To acquire and deepen the latest subject-specific knowledge and research methods of the individual disciplines.
2. To implement multi- and interdisciplinary approaches, and to demonstrate the synergistic potential of such approaches.
3. To practically apply methodological and research skills in order to make graduates competitive in both the academic and the non-academic international job market.

The M.A. program “American Studies” is comprised of:

- A study plan (Kernfach)
- An examination module

The study plan encompasses:

- A subject-specific component
- A section on building "comprehensive competencies"

The subject-specific component of the program is divided into four parts:

1. **Main modules:** Students choose two of the HCA's offered disciplines as core disciplines in which they will develop and deepen their subject-specific knowledge and skills. Main modules in the chosen disciplines come with a minimum of one seminar that will be exclusively available to M.A. students, as well as an additional course (in either lecture or seminar format). Students can select their core disciplines freely. They may combine two fields from the humanities or from the social sciences, or they may choose to traverse academic disciplines. All combinations are possible.
2. **Research module:** After finishing the main modules, students complete a research module in order to immerse themselves more fully in one of their two core disciplines. For the research module, students will participate in a seminar offered exclusively to M.A. students. In an "Independent Study" format, students will autonomously work through and discuss with their professor an assigned reading list. This will usually serve as preparation for writing the M.A. thesis.
3. **Flexibility module:** In the flexibility module, students may choose 12 credits worth of courses from any discipline offered in the program. For these elective credits, any combination of courses is allowed. Students can either choose to broaden their understanding of American Studies with classes outside of their core disciplines, or they can choose to focus more deeply on their primary areas of interest.
4. **Interdisciplinary module:** The interdisciplinary module serves to promote an interdisciplinary approach to scholarship and demonstrate the synergistic potential of such an approach. Students will take part in an interdisciplinary seminar offered by instructors from two different disciplines, as well as a two-semester interdisciplinary colloquium in which variegated topics and approaches from the field of American Studies will be discussed.

The section of the program on "comprehensive competencies" is divided into the following three parts:

1. **Methodology module:** In this module, students will deepen their understanding of the theoretical and empirical methods of American Studies, as well as develop their academic writing skills.
2. **Cross-cutting perspectives:** In this module, students will take courses outside of the area of American Studies. These courses may either be related to or independent from the disciplines of American Studies. Language course credits also count toward this module.
3. **Mobility window:** The mobility window provides students with the opportunity for intensive and practical engagement with their degree in American Studies. Students can complete an internship in a relevant field, or can choose to study abroad in order to foster cultural

understanding and strengthen intercultural competencies. For students interested in pursuing an academic career, completion of a teaching assignment can also be counted toward this module, provided the assignment does not concern a constituent curricular component of the HCA's B.A. or M.A. programs.

The program concludes with the examination module:

Examination module: With the completion of a Master's thesis in the same area as their research module, students will have acquired specialized knowledge in a particular area of American Studies and will have demonstrated the ability to use academic methods to work on and research a topic independently. The particulars of the M.A. thesis are described in section 7.11 of the *Modulhandbuch*. Completion of the thesis takes four months during which students will present an outline of the thesis to their peers at a research colloquium. After completing the thesis, students will take a 60-minute oral final exam. Additional details about the exam are covered in the exam regulations.

Sample Course of Study

<p>First Semester (28 credits)</p> <p>Methodology module Course: Theory & Methods (4 credits) Course: Academic Writing (4 credits)</p> <p>Main module I M.A. seminar: Core discipline I (10 credits) Lecture: Core discipline I (4 credits)</p> <p>Main module II Lecture: Core discipline II (4 credits)</p> <p>Interdisciplinary module MAS Colloquium I (2 credits)</p>	<p>Second Semester (30 credits)</p> <p>Main module II M.A. seminar: Core discipline II (10 credits)</p> <p>Research module M.A. seminar: Core discipline I (10 credits)</p> <p>Flexibility module Discussion group: Discipline III (4 credits) Lecture: Discipline IV (4 credits)</p> <p>Interdisciplinary module MAS Colloquium II (2 credits)</p>
<p>Third Semester (28 credits)</p> <p>Research module Independent study: Core discipline I (4 credits)</p> <p>Interdisciplinary module Interdisciplinary seminar (6 credits)</p> <p>Flexibility module Lecture: Core discipline I</p> <p>Cross-cutting perspectives 2 courses outside of American Studies (8 credits)</p> <p>Mobility window Internship (four weeks) (6 credits)</p>	<p>Fourth Semester (34 credits)</p> <p>Examination module Research colloquium (2 credits) M.A. thesis (24 credits) Oral final exam (8 credits)</p>

Sem	Modules			
4	Cross-Cutting Perspectives (\sum 8 CP) 2 courses outside of the area of American Studies	Examination Module (\sum 34 CP) Research colloquium (2 CP) M.A. thesis (24 CP) Oral final exam (8 CP)		
3		Mobility Window (\sum 6 CP) Study abroad, internship or teaching assignment		
2		Subject-Specific Classes (\sum 54 CP)		Interdisciplinary Module (\sum 10 CP) 1 Interdisciplinary seminar (6 CP) 2 MAS Colloquium (2 x 2CP)
1	Methodology Module (\sum 8 CP) Theory & Methods (4 CP) Academic Writing (4 CP)	Research Module (14 CP) Core discipline I or II 1 M.A. seminar 1 Independent Study	Flexibility Module (12 CP) 12 CP worth of classes from any discipline in the program	
		Main Module I (14 CP) Core discipline I 1 M.A. seminar 1 lecture	Main Module II (14 CP) Core discipline II 1 M.A. seminar 1 lecture	

Mandatory Classes

MAS Interdisciplinary Colloquium

Eligibility: Interdisciplinary Module

Lecturer: Wilfried Mausbach; Welf Werner

Time: Thursdays; 18-20

Location: HCA Oculus

Registration: via HeiCO

Course Description: The Interdisciplinary Colloquium provides a venue for MAS students to meet with renowned experts from various fields, such as politics, economics, journalism, or academia. Most of them will be Americans who will share with us their current interests or most recent scholarship. The Interdisciplinary Colloquium will also serve as a forum for the presentation and discussion of state-of-the-art research in academic disciplines that are not otherwise represented in this year's curriculum. Participation in the Interdisciplinary Colloquium is mandatory for MAS students.

Courses by Discipline

1. Religious History

Advanced Seminar: Religion and Politics in Modern American History

Eligibility: Main Module Religion and Culture; Main Module History; Main Module Politics; Research Module Religion and Culture; Research Module History; Research Module Politics; Interdisciplinary Module; Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Jan Stievermann; Lerone Martin

Time: Block: June 13 & 14; June 20 & 21; 10:00-17:00

Location: HCA Stucco

Registration: Please pre-register via e-mail to jstievermann@hca.uni-heidelberg.de; HeiCO

Course Description: This compact seminar offers a broad overview of the complex intersections between religion and politics, both domestic and foreign, in the US since World War II. While moving sequentially through modern American history, each unit of this course will examine particularly important episodes and key themes. In this way, students will be encouraged to think more deeply about the ways religious ideas, institutions, and movements weave through political and social developments like the rise and decline of New Deal liberalism, war and American empire building, the Civil Rights movement, the battles over abortion and feminism, immigration policies, and the rise of MAGA Republicanism. The overarching goal of this course is to place religion at the center of American politics since World War II and at the center of our understanding of major social transformations, including race relations. Here religion will not (as is often done by political historians) be cordoned off as an agent of change worthy of consideration only under exceptional circumstances and in rare moments, but rather be considered as a consistent, powerful player that always brings competing passions and interests, drama and controversy to the political realm

Lecture: "The Second Great Awakening: Protestant Revivalism and the Making of the American Republic"

Eligibility: Main Module Religion and Culture; Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Jan Stievermann

Time: Tuesdays, 11:15-12:45

Location: Grabengasse 3-5; HS03

Registration: HeiCO

Course Description: In the decades after the American Revolution the newly founded United States experienced a series of Protestant revivals, commonly referred to as the Second Great Awakening. These revivals not only dramatically changed the religious landscape of the US but also deeply influenced American culture and society in ways that can still be felt today. Led by Methodists and Baptists, the Second Great Awakening established an "evangelical" type of Protestantism as America's dominant religion, which found expression in missionary activities but also innovative practices such as the camp meeting. At the same time, the spiritual fervor on the western frontier generated a host of new religious groups, including Mormonism or Adventism. Exhibiting a profoundly anti-establishment and often populist character, the revivals leveled church hierarchies, offered new participatory possibilities to marginalized groups and worked to democratize the early republic. They provided African American slaves with a theology of liberation, created public space for women to act and lead, and spurred a host of reform movements into action, notably abolitionism. This lecture offers an accessible survey of the origins, key events, figures and movements, as well as the main consequences of the Second Great Awakening. The lecture will be of interest to students of American history, culture, and literature as much as to students of church history and religious studies.

Applied Skills Class: "Introduction to Mormonism: Latter-day Saint History, Theology, and Practice"

Eligibility: Main Module Religion; Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Ryan Tobler

Time: Tuesdays, 14-16

Location: HCA Oculus

Registration: HeiCO

Course Description: This course offers a broad but textured introduction to the "Mormon" or Latter-day Saint movement—one of the most creative, controversial, and successful—religious traditions to emerge

from the context of the United States. Born in the “spiritual hothouse” environment of the early American Republic, Mormonism is an unconventional form of Christianity that has grown into a global faith with millions of adherents worldwide. Still, it remains headquartered in the American West and the shape and character of the movement continue to reflect its long entanglement with American history. In this Übung, we will explore that entanglement, tracing the extended history of the movement from its origins through its globalization in the 20th Century. We will also consider the development and structure of LDS theology—the movement’s distinctive constellation of religious ideas—as well as particular forms of religious practice that both connect it with and set it apart from other varieties of Christianity. Themes and discussion will include prominent figures such as Joseph Smith (the movement’s founding “prophet”); the Book of Mormon and other LDS scripture; Mormon settlement and persecution in the US; Mormon temples and temple liturgy; controversial social practices like collective property and polygamy; the movement’s long and complex relationship to American government; mission activism, global growth and expansion, and modern engagement on matters related to gender, race, and sexual orientation.

2. Political Science

Seminar: "More than Advice & Consent? Legislatures in Foreign and Security Policy"

Eligibility: Flexibility Module; Main Module Political Science; Research Module Political Science

Lecturer: Florian Böller

Time: Tuesdays; 14-16

Location: HCA Oculus

Registration: online via HeiCO

Course Description: Traditional approaches to international relations typically argue that governments and executives dominate foreign policy decision-making and that they pursue an invariable national interest. However, more recently, this traditional notion has been challenged by scholars who focus on the role of non-executive players, in particular parliaments. This seminar therefore takes a closer look at legislatures and their role in performing oversight, contesting executive foreign policies, and influencing vital areas of international politics. While special emphasis is given to the case of the US Congress, the seminar invites a comparative perspective, highlighting commonalities and differences between policy areas and countries, and thereby offers a closer analysis how parliaments monitor, contest and influence foreign and security policies, but also discusses obstacles and limits to parliamentary involvement. Seminar language is English.

Introductory literature:

Mello Patrick A./Peters, Dirk 2018: Parliaments in Security Policy: Involvement, Politicisation, and Influence. British Journal of Politics and International Relations 20(1): 3–18.

Seminar: "Honeymoon or Missed Opportunity: Presidential Power in the First 100 Days"

Eligibility: Flexibility Module, Main Module Political Science; Research Module Political Science

Lecturer: Florian Böller

Time: Wednesdays 10-12

Location: HCA Oculus

Registration: via HeiCO

Course Description: Ever since Franklin D. Roosevelt's swift legislative initiative to tackle the Great Depression in 1933, the US president's first 100 days in office receive outsized attention – from the public and media, as well as within the body politics writ large.

This seminar will take a comparative look at the "scorecard" of presidents after 100 days since FDR. How to define presidential success in this context is, of course, up for debate. The seminar will also discuss the sources of varied presidential success after 100 days, including the interplay between Congress and the executive branch, public opinion, as well as economic and international conditions.

Introductory reading:

Neustadt, Richard 2001: The Contemporary Presidency: The Presidential "Hundred Days": An Overview, *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 31(1): 121-125.

Course Information: This course will be held in English

Seminar: "U.S. International Economic Policy Issues Since 1945"

Eligibility: Main Module Political Science; Main Module History; Research Module History; Research Module Political Science; Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Welf Werner

Time: Thursdays; 11-13

Location: HCA Stucco

Registration: HeiCO

Course Description: Based on the knowledge acquired in the lecture The U.S. in the World Economy Since 1945, this seminar offers opportunities for a more in-depth look at U.S. international economic policy issues as they have emerged in the current globalization era – with an emphasis on the world economy, the United States, Europe, and China. In the summer semester 2025, we focus primarily on the economic policies of the incoming Trump administration, economic developments globally, as well as the impact of global geopolitical challenges. The relationship between the two superpowers of the 21st century, the U.S. and China, will be of special concern.

Course information: Taking the lecture The U.S. in the World Economy in the same semester is a prerequisite for this seminar. For seminar participants it will be mandatory to complete the graded exam at the end of the semester, that is, to fulfill all assignments in the lecture.

This course starts in the second week of the term on April 24.

Lecture: "The U.S. in the World Economy since 1945"

Eligibility: Main Module Political Science; Main Module History; Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Welf Werner

Time: Thursdays; 9-11

Location Neue Uni; Hörsaal 05

Registration: HeiCO

Course Description: The U.S. has had a decisive influence on international economic policy issues for more than seventy years. U.S. governments were influential in opening borders to free international trade in international organizations such as the GATT in the post-war era. After the collapse of the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates in the early 1970s, the U.S. opened a new chapter in the international globalization process by encouraging the liberalization of financial flows and markets. In recent years, the North American hegemon has entered yet another stage of global involvement. In times of rising international competition from emerging economies and developing countries, trans-border economic activities and international institutions of the liberal world order are viewed more critically by U.S. citizens and governments. In the presidential elections 2016, all three major contenders had a protectionist agenda. The Biden administration (2021-2025) kept the increased tariffs of the first Trump administration (2017-2021) but made efforts at revitalizing multilateral coalition building and Transatlantic relations. The second Trump administration is expected to fuel global economic tensions and deepen the conflict with China. But threats to international economic cooperation have not only come from a turn-around in U.S. trade policies but also from the Covid-19 pandemic, Russia's war in Ukraine, intensifying conflicts in the Middle East, and a general trend towards self-sufficiency as a result of growing nationalism in many parts of the world. This lecture provides a historical basis for understanding current U.S. international economic policies from three academic perspectives: economic history, international economics, and international political economy.

This Course starts in the second week of the term on April 24.

Seminar: Technology and the World We Inherit

Eligibility: Main Module History, Research Module History, Main Module Political Science, Interdisciplinary Modul (History/Political Science)

Lecturer: Ted Beatty, Professor of History and Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame

Time: June 9 – July 25, Mondays & Tuesdays; 14:15-15:45

Location: Stucco

Registration: HeiCO

Course Description: This seminar examines topics in the history of technology over the last 250 years. in a global context. Technology has gifted many of us with long lives, an abundance of tools and toys, and immense information and power at our fingertips. It also means that we live in a fully engineered world: from the food we eat to the ways we move through space, the places we live and work, and many of the ways we interact and communicate with our fellow humans. It has left us with competing visions of technological utopia (a world without work? a colonized Mars?) or of technological apocalypse (climate change, invasive surveillance, and AI). The course focuses on the interaction between technological innovation and social, economic, and political contexts over the last two centuries or so. We will consider the implications of technological leadership in the United States and Europe for other parts of the world, with particular attention to Latin America. Each week, we consider the relevance of history for understanding technological change in today's world.

Requirements: Students are expected to produce a research paper related to one of the weekly topics.

3. Geography

Advanced Seminar: „The Meaning of Home in Times of Climate Change and Urban Transformations“

Eligibility: Main Module Geography, Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Ulrike Gerhard, Rosa Lehmann

Time: Tuesdays; 14:15-16:45

Location: Berliner Straße 48, Unterrichtsraum (1st Floor)

Registration: via HeiCO

Course Description: Climate change, urban transformations and growing socio-ecological inequalities are the mounting societal challenges of our times. In Human Geography these challenges have been studied from different approaches, either focusing on different urban development trends, ecological aspects or political entanglements. In this seminar we want to combine these different approaches by directing our focus on one socio-spatial dimension that is affected by these changes in a specific way: the home. What happens to home when climate change urges people to leave their house? How are people emotionally affected by wind parks installed close to their homes? How do energy transformations impact feelings of belonging to certain spaces or neighborhoods? By using an interdisciplinary concept of Heimat and the socio-spatial category of home, this seminar tries to better understand the effects of climate change and urban transformation in different regions of the world.

Research Seminar: North America

Eligibility: Research Module Geography; Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Ulrike Gerhard

Time: Mondays; biweekly; 14:15-15:45

Location: Berliner Straße 48; Unterrichtsraum (705001104)

Registration: via HeiCO

Course Description: Diese Veranstaltung ist dazu gedacht, Abschlussarbeiten der verschiedenen Studiengänge zu begleiten. Studierende, die eine solche Arbeit verfassen, können hier über den Verlauf

berichten, Fragen diskutieren und Arbeitsschritte bzw. Vorgehensweisen zur Diskussion stellen. Zudem sind sie angehalten, ihre Arbeit regelmäßig vorzustellen.

Seminar: Rethinking Geographies: A Subaltern Approach to the Critical Perspective

Eligibility: Main Module Geography; Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Hamid Alberto Abud Russell

Time: Wednesdays; 11-13

Location: INF 348, Übungsraum (6348EG013)

Registration: Via HeiCO

Course Description: The aim of this course is to critically examine the production and contestation of the geographies we inhabit. It emphasizes the interconnected roles of race, class, gender, and ethnicity in shaping spatial practices, while highlighting the structural inequalities embedded within global and local geographies.

The class will engage with foundational scholars, such as David Harvey, Milton Santos, Neil Smith, and Manuel Castells, yet seek to move beyond them, to prioritised critical contributions from female geographers, such as Doreen Massey's relational theories of space, Cindi Katz's critiques of global economic restructuring, and Gillian Rose's feminist geographies. Students will interrogate concepts such as the production of space, uneven development, and spatial justice, alongside exploring case studies of urban transformations and their implications for marginalized communities.

Through theoretical analysis of contemporary social issues, the course aims to cultivate a critical understanding of social hierarchies found in the current configuration of the geographies we produce and reproduce. We will collectively engage in discussions on topics such as the urbanization of capital, the politics of mobility, and the gendered and racialized dimensions of spatial exclusion, ultimately fostering the ability to envision more equitable spatial futures.

Seminar: Gender, Food, Migration: An intersectional approach

Eligibility: Main Module Geography; Research Module Geography; Interdisciplinary Module; Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Yaatsil Guevara Gonzalez, Renata Campos Motta

Time: Mondays; 11:00—12:30

Location: Triplex, 1st floor

Registration: via HeiCO

Course Description: The aim of this seminar would be to critically examine the interconnectedness of food, gender, and migration through an intersectional lens. This course aims to explore 1) how migration processes, shaped by various factors such as race, class, nationality, and gender, influence food practices, access, and identities. Additionally, we will explore 2) how food systems are shaped by geographical factors, such as location, climate, and resources, as well as cultural and economic forces. Finally, by incorporating an intersectional framework, we aim to discuss 3) how diverse social categories interact to affect experiences of food insecurity, food production, consumption, and its role in both local and global contexts, while highlighting the complex relationships between food, people, and places.

Through a mix of theoretical readings, case studies, and ethnographic work, students would critically engage with the role of food in migration and explore how gender and migration shape the politics of food access, nutrition, and cultural representation across different contexts and locations.

Lecture: Geoscripting with Python—Automation of Geographic Analyses

Eligibility: Main Module Geography; Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Bernhard Höfle

Time: Tuesdays; 09:15—10:45

Location: Neuenheimer Feld 348

Registration: via HeiCO

Course Description: GIS is widely used for the acquisition, editing, management, analysis and visualization of geospatial data. In practice many applications and use cases exist that require an adaption of existing GIS functions or the development of new tools and workflows. This allows working with increasing data volumes and to solve tasks that have to be performed many times (repeatedly) in an efficient manner.

GEOSCRIPTING means using a scripting and programming language (Python) to develop new GIS tools. Firstly, this lecture will give a brief introduction into the scripting language Python. Secondly, (geo)scripting

in common GIS software will be introduced and explained in order to be able to implement and automate geographic analyses in the lab course.

Basic knowledge about programming and Python are an asset because the general introduction will be limited. Focus of this course is geospatial scripting (and not a general intro into Python for beginners).

Course language is English.

4. Literature and Culture

Advanced Seminar: After Postmodernism: David Foster Wallace and new Sincerity

Eligibility: Main Module Literature and Culture; Research Module Literature and Culture; Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Philipp Löffler

Time: Thursdays; 16:15-17:45

Location: tba

Registration: via HeiCO

Course Description: This seminar is centered around the works of US American author David Foster Wallace, including his maximalist novel *Infinite Jest*. Our primary goal will be to close-read his texts and to examine its most pertinent narrative, conceptual, and thematic features. Based on our analysis, we will discuss whether or to what extent Wallace can be understood as having moved beyond the various legacies of literary postmodernism. Academic literary criticism has customarily tried to capture this transition as one from irony to sincerity and authenticity, which Foster Wallace's seems to have evoke throughout his writings and interviews. In the context of this debate, we will read a selection of other literary texts 'after postmodernism' and we will touch upon more general theoretical questions relating to the problem of periodization and the idea of progress in literary history. How can we define a literary period? What are our instruments for defining the coherence of a period? How can we measure literary change? The reading load for this seminar will be comparatively high. Please plan your semester accordingly.

Texts: *David Foster Wallace Infinite Jest*

All remaining texts will be contained in a seminar reader on Moodle

Advanced Seminar: US-American Popular Poetry of the Nineteenth Century

Eligibility: Main Module Literature and Culture; Research Module Literature and Culture; Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Margit Peterfy

Time: Thursdays; 14:15-15:45

Location: tba

Registration: via HeiCO

Course Description: This seminar will introduce you to a number of once popular American poems, and to the historical circumstances of both their creation and reception. For a long time now, the cultural significance of these poems has been eclipsed by the achievements of Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson, but readers of the 19th century were more familiar with works by, for example, Lydia Sigourney, H. W. Longfellow, J.G. Whittier, or J. W. Riley. The dynamic relationship of Americans to these poets and their poems can be seen as pure entertainment, but also as a process of cultural emancipation and as a powerful tool of national self-invention. The lecture series will not just address the popular poems themselves, but also parodies, performances, advertisement, and other creative transformations based on once ubiquitous texts such as "Maud Muller," "Evangeline," "Excelsior," "Barefoot Boy," "Concord Hymn," and many others.

Texts: A Reader with the primary texts will be available on moodle by the beginning of the semester

Advanced Seminar: Language, Identity, and Democracy: Charles Taylor's Social Philosophy

Eligibility: Research Module Literature and Culture; Interdisciplinary Module

Lecturer: Günter Leypoldt, Daniel Malachuk, Magnus Schlette

Time: tba

Location: HCA Stucco

Registration: via HeiCO / leypoldt@as.uni-heidelberg.de.

Course Description: This course will engage with the important Canadian social philosopher Charles Taylor. As a philosopher with a strong interest in literary works, Taylor writes in a conversational and jargon-free style, which makes him accessible beyond philosophical specialists, and hence an ideal candidate for an interdisciplinary seminar aimed at students from both philosophy and literary/cultural studies. We will be looking at four main pillars of his work: (1) his philosophy of language (especially with regard to romantic period thought), (2) his value theory, and (3) his theory of personal identity, all of which

provide the basis for (4) his communitarian concept of republicanism as a model for contemporary democracy. We will spend some time with his classic *Sources of the Self* (1989), which combines a new value theory with a historical account of a rising “ethic of authenticity,” but also consider his more recent work on romantic-period literary theory (*Cosmic Connections: Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment*, 2024) as well as his work on multiculturalism and the “politics of recognition” (1994).

Texts: All the materials for this course, including Taylor’s works, will be provided by a reader on the Moodle platform before the beginning of the term.

Advanced Seminar: Unreliable Narration

Eligibility: Main Module Literature; Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Vera Nünning

Time: Wednesdays, 11:15-12:45

Location: tba

Registration: Via HeiCO / Brigitte.brune@as.uni-heidelberg.de

Course Description:

Unfortunately, unreliable narrators abound—in real life, in social media; just about anywhere. To encounter such narrators is usually rather unpleasant. In literature, however, in songs, and in films, this is different: finding out which narrators we cannot trust, and what exactly they are hiding, is fun. And more than that: by analysing such characters we can learn something about the signs of and reasons for unreliability. In this course, we will look at unreliable narrators in several genres, and ask a host of questions: What are the cues which allow us to decide whether a narrator is reliable or not? Why do we believe a narrator who tells a tale involving ghosts and fairies even though we know that these entities do not exist? And what about the many cases in which it is quite difficult to determine whether we can trust a narrator or not? What is more, does it still make sense to talk about ‘unreliable’ narrators when we know that nobody can tell ‘the truth’ in an objective way? In the seminar, we will ask what unreliable narration means and what the criteria for determining unreliability are. Moreover, we will ask what functions unreliable narrators can fulfil. And I hope, of course, that the seminar will provide some help with regard to the unreliable narrators you encounter in your real life!

Texts: Edgar Allan Poe, “The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843); Robert Browning, “My Last Duchess” (1842);

Kazuo Ishiguro, "The Remains of the Day" (1989); Zoë Heller, "Notes on a Scandal" (2003); Ian McEwan, "Enduring Love" (1997).

5. History

Lecture: "The African American Freedom Struggle from the Civil War to the Twenty-First Century"

Eligibility: Main Module History; Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Manfred Berg

Time: Mondays; 11:15-12:45

Location: Grabengasse 3-5, HS 14

Registration: in the first session

Course Description: Historians have called the black civil rights movement the most important social movement in American history. This movement is often confined to the activist era in the 1950s and 1960s but the African American struggle for freedom and equality has a much longer history and it has had a profound impact on American politics, society, and culture. In this lecture course, I will present its history from Emancipation during the Civil War to the early 21st century. In addition to tracing events, actors, developments, and structural issues, I will introduce students to the major historiographical trends that have shaped the field over the past decades.

Lecture: „Theorieprobleme der Geschichtswissenschaft: Eine Einführung“

Eligibility: Main Module History; Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Manfred Berg

Time: Tuesdays; 11:15-12:45

Location: Grabengasse 3-5, Hörsaal

Registration: via HeiCO

Course Information: This course will be held in German.

Course Description: Keine Angst! Geschichtstheorie ist keine höhere Mathematik, sondern befasst sich mit den Grundlagen der Geschichtswissenschaft, mit denen sich alle Historiker irgendwann einmal beschäftigen sollten. Im Mittelpunkt steht die Frage, ob und warum die Aussagen der Geschichtswissenschaft Geltung beanspruchen können. In dieser Vorlesung möchte ich problemorientiert, allgemeinverständlich und anschaulich in die Theorie der Geschichtswissenschaften einführen. Die Vorlesung wird „klassische“ Probleme (Objektivität, Wertfreiheit, Kausalität) ebenso behandeln wie die aus

der linguistischen und kulturalistischen Wende resultierenden Herausforderungen für die Theorie und Praxis der Geschichtswissenschaft.

Advanced Seminar: Die afroamerikanische Bürgerrechtsbewegung im 20. Jahrhundert

Eligibility: Main Module History; Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Manfred Berg

Time: Mondays; 16:15-17:45

Location: tba

Registration: registration by March 31, 2025 at michaela.neidig@zegk.uni-heidelberg.de

Course Information: This course will be held in German.

Course Description: Die afroamerikanische Bürgerrechtsbewegung ist die bedeutendste soziale Bewegung der amerikanischen Geschichte genannt worden. Das Hauptseminar beschränkt ihre Geschichte nicht auf die 1950er und 1960er Jahre, sondern wird das gesamte 20. Jahrhundert in den Blick nehmen. Neben politik-, sozial- und kulturgeschichtlichen Aspekten sollen auch historiographische Fragen behandelt werden. Die Bedingungen für den Erwerb von Leistungspunkten sind die Übernahme eines Referates, regelmäßige Teilnahme und Mitarbeit sowie eine schriftliche Hausarbeit, deren Inhalt und Länge von den angestrebten Leistungspunkten abhängen. Das Plenum trifft sich wöchentlich am Montag von 16-18 Uhr, der Termin am Dienstag von 10-11 Uhr dient der intensiven Vertiefung mit den jeweiligen Referenten. Der Besuch meiner Vorlesung ist eine sinnvolle Ergänzung des Seminars.

Applied Skills Class: "'We stand alone together': World War II in film. An analysis of 'Band of Brothers' and 'The Pacific'"

Eligibility: Main Module History; Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Takuma Melber

Time: Tuesdays; 14-16

Location: Voßstraße 2 (Karl-Jaspers-Center), Übungsraum

Registration: HeiCO

Course Description: Veterans of the Second World War praised Hollywood productions such as 'Saving Private Ryan', the HBO-series 'Band of Brothers', 'The Pacific' or the Apple TV-series 'Masters of the Air' - all produced by Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks. According to the veterans were these productions presenting war, military combat and the conditions on the battlefields in the European and Asia-Pacific war theatres authentically and in a rather realistic way. An analysis of such moving pictures reminds us that war movies are shaping the collective WWII-memory, the perception as well as the general understanding of the Second World War heavily.

This class aims for an in-depth analysis of the aforementioned Hanks and Spielberg productions 'Band of Brothers' and 'The Pacific', putting the visual/cinematic depictions under a transcultural lens? Students in this class will also work with the methodology of memory studies (Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora, Aleida Assmann et. al.)

Seminar: Technology and the World We Inherit

Eligibility: Main Module History, Research Module History, Main Module Political Science, Interdisciplinary Modul (History/Political Science)

Lecturer: Ted Beatty, Professor of History and Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame

Time: June 9 – July 25, Mondays & Tuesdays; 14:15-15:45

Location: Stucco

Registration: HeiCO

Course Description: This seminar examines topics in the history of technology over the last 250 years. in a global context. Technology has gifted many of us with long lives, an abundance of tools and toys, and immense information and power at our fingertips. It also means that we live in a fully engineered world: from the food we eat to the ways we move through space, the places we live and work, and many of the ways we interact and communicate with our fellow humans. It has left us with competing visions of technological utopia (a world without work? a colonized Mars?) or of technological apocalypse (climate change, invasive surveillance, and AI). The course focuses on the interaction between technological innovation and social, economic, and political contexts over the last two centuries or so. We will consider the implications of technological leadership in the United States and Europe for other

parts of the world, with particular attention to Latin America. Each week, we consider the relevance of history for understanding technological change in today's world.

Requirements: Students are expected to produce a research paper related to one of the weekly topics.

Other Events & Classes

Book Club: Hot off the Press

Eligibility: Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Heiko Jakubzik, Annika Elstermann

Time: Wednesdays; 16:15-17:45

Location: tba

Registration: in the first session

Course Description: What is new in the cultural sphere of the United States? We will sample new books, films, tv-series, music etc. to find out what stirs the American minds and hearts at the present moment. While there will be a focus on new publications in literature and the arts, new contributions in the fields of politics, history, religion, and popular science writing will also be assessed. We will discuss a different work every week and students will take part in the choice and presentation of topics. In order to keep the workload manageable, we will read most of the works in excerpts and students who have familiarized themselves with the entire work will guide us through the discussion.

Interdisciplinary Seminar: Home in Migration: An Interdisciplinary Perspective

Eligibility: Interdisciplinary Module; Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Valentina López Liendo, Shasha Lin

Time: Tuesdays; 16-18

Location: HCA Stucco

Registration: Via HeiCO

Course Description: How is home in migration defined and negotiated? How is a sense of belonging/unbelonging shaped by experiences of migration and homemaking practices? Through an interdisciplinary lens, this class will explore notions of home, space, and belonging in contemporary U.S. society, literature and popular culture. We will work with a diverse body of scholarship from Migration Studies as well as Literature and Cultural Studies to explore the meanings and experiences of home in migration. We will examine home as multi-dimensional and multi-scalar. Furthermore, we will discuss how home is negotiated, constructed, and experienced by migrants through case studies and in literature and

popular culture (for example, short stories, films, and graphic novels). The goal of this course is to equip students – through course readings, discussions, and writings – with the analytical tools and interdisciplinary approaches beneficial to their understanding, analysis, and active participation in discussions surrounding home in migration.

Film and Society: Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

Eligibility: Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Caroline Burlingame-Goff

Time: Wednesdays; 18:00-21:30

Location: Kettengasse 12; 108

Registration: no registration is required; . Details about how to receive ÜK points (NOT ECTS points) will be explained at the first session (April 16)

Course Description: “To everything there is a season,” including films. Seasonal changes and their conditions are often used by screenwriters and directors to explore isolation, death, rebirth, optimism, romance, hedonism, contemplation, contentment, and even homicide: “Did you know that more murders are committed at 92 degrees Fahrenheit than any other temperature? I read an article once. Lower temperatures, people are easy-going. Over 92, it’s too hot to move. But just 92, people get irritable” (*It Came from Outer Space*). This semester we will be watching films that use the seasons thematically in expected and unexpected ways. Movies may include *It Came from Outer Space*, *Do the Right Thing*, *1776*, *Hannah and Her Sisters*, *On Golden Pond*, *Car Wash*, *The Holdovers*, *Fargo*, *Dead Poet’s Society*, *Adventureland*, *Easter Parade*, *Bright Star*, *Under the Tuscan Sun*, *Marie Antoinette*, *Mean Girls*, *Big Fish*, and *I Like It Like That*.

Seminar: Introduction to Qualitative Analysis

Eligibility: Flexibility Module

Lecturer: Yaatsil Guevara Gonzalez

Time: Block; tba

Location: tba

Registration: via HeiCO

Course Description: This course is designed for students who are looking for a first approach to qualitative methods. The course aims to introduce students to some of the main methods for data collection and analysis in qualitative research. However, it is more focused on the preparation and collection of data than on the analysis.

In this course students will be able to reflect on the “classic” questions: What type of qualitative method is most appropriate for my research? How do I prepare for conducting an interview? How do I adjust my methods during fieldwork? How do I organize and systematize my data after fieldwork? What kind of analysis can be carried out based on the methods I used for my data collection? What are the main challenges I will face when using qualitative methods?

This is a theoretical-practical seminar that offers not only discussions around the main characteristics of qualitative research, but also a space for practical exercises -in situ-. In this seminar it will be mandatory to carry out practical sessions where students will implement some of the methods learned in the course. Examination format: Presentation, Active participation, Term Paper.