



UNIVERSITY
OF WARSAW



American
Studies
Center

Course Catalogue Master's Program

Spring 2020

MA I

Senior Research Lectures

"Voyages of the Self": Parallels in American Painting and Literature (4219-AW212)

prof. dr hab. Marek Wilczyński

The subject matter of this series of talks is presentation and analysis of relations between American painting from the late 18th till the mid-20th century and the selected works, poetics, and ideas of American thinkers and writers, from Jonathan Edwards through Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Stephen Crane, etc., and three twentieth-century poets: Charles Reznikoff, Frank O'Hara, and Charles Olson. The main inspiration has been Barbara Novak's book "Voyages of the Self. Pairs, Parallels, and Patterns in American Art and Literature," but both the list of paintings and texts, and the repertory of reading methods have been considerably expanded. The result is a comprehensive panorama of connections - those available to today's spectators and readers as well as those documented by direct personal relations between painters and twentieth-century poets. Each talk will be illustrated with ample visual material.

Clips, Shorts, Videos: Short Form in Audiovisual Culture (4219-AW213)

prof. dr hab. Paweł Frelik

The lecture provides a systemic overview of short forms in contemporary American audiovisual culture. Historically, the mainstream systems of circulation, such as film industry, television, and media, privileged longer forms (which were considered more complex and more worthy of attention), the last few decades and the rise of digital technologies of production and distribution have witnessed an explosion in the number of short forms and texts. Some of these predate the digital turn and are currently going through a renaissance (short film, trailer, music video) while others are entirely new (machinima, YouTube genres). Many of such short forms are ephemeral, but they are also far from being disposable, demonstrating fascinating degrees and types of sophistication.

Power and Its Discontents in the Contemporary United States (4219-AW214)

dr Elżbieta Bekiesza-Korolczuk

This monographic lecture series is an introduction to history of citizen's disobedience and social movements in American society after II WW. The students will get acquainted with key concepts and theories concerning power and social movements research. During the course we will examine the civil rights movement, women's movement, gay and lesbian/LGBTQ movement, racist movements, Occupy, Black Lives Matter and online phenomena such as alt-right milieu.

Research proseminars

Haunted America: Horror and Politics (4219-RS228)

dr Agnieszka Kotwasińska

We will be looking at how metaphors of haunting and possession, monstrous attack and loss of control, prevalent in contemporary American horror cinema, speak to the nation's fears of the unruly past erupting violently in the present. The potential destabilization that the ghost, the demon and the monster engender will be read in terms of political concerns such as immigration, economic crisis, genocide, eugenics, ecological crisis, institutional racism, rape culture, social exclusion etc.

Transatlantic Modernisms (4219-RS229)

dr Matthew Chambers

This course will review the major concerns in transatlantic literary modernism, with a special emphasis on textual production, circulation, and networks. Students will be asked to consider multiple forms of publication from journals to books, and to familiarize themselves with the available digital archives housing relevant materials. The course will ask the students to think of modernism as a literary and cultural event, and to approach literary analysis in a multiform manner.

American Outsider Art (4219-RS230)

dr Anna Malinowska

This course will offer a theoretical analysis of American Outsider Art to help students explore the notion of a cultural aesthetic periphery in an American context. It will focus on the analysis of a number of critical texts related to American art brut, Lowbrow, pop-surrealism and other art movements associated with counter culture that emerged from defiance of artistic nobility and aesthetic appreciation, and from an awry approach to mass taste and Americana.

Dystopia and Its Uses in the United States (4219-RS231)

dr Karolina Lebek

The course focuses on the concept of dystopia (and its fluid relationship with utopia) as a mode of imagining the functioning and organization of societies (often through following individuals) for the purposes of cultural and political critique in the USA. The course engages texts of culture (from the late 19th century to the 21st century) that have been labelled dystopic at the moment of their inception, or that have gradually become perceived as dystopic in the course of their reception. The aim of this engagement is: 1) to examine the very notion of dystopia; 2) to identify dystopic trends in American culture in historical perspective; 3) to look at the cultural and political effects of the speculative energies of these trends in their respective social contexts.

Race and Gender in American Literature and Film (4219-RS232)

prof. dr hab. Agnieszka Graff-Osser

This research proseminar explores the intersection of race and gender in US cultural history, looking at images, narratives, myths and obsessions resulting from the uniquely American definition of race – the so called ‘one drop rule’ (hypodescent). Hence the recurrent themes of interracial sex and racial passing, hence the Black Brute and the white girl pursued by him, the lurid tales of lynching, interracial love, passing. We will examine this mythology in selected works of literature and film from various periods: Griffith’s *The Birth of the Nation* (1915), Larsen’s *Passing* (1929), Mailer’s *The White Negro* (1955), Sirk’s *Imitation of Life* (1959), Kramer’s *Guess Who is Coming to Dinner* (1967), Cleaver’s *Soul On Ice* (1968), Lee’s *Jungle Fever* (1991), as well as the recent Netflix series *Dear White People* (2017). We will read cultural criticism by authors such as James Baldwin, Donald Bogle, Angela Davis, Susan Gubar and bell hooks, developing a theoretical toolbox for students’ own research. The final are devoted to presentations of students’ projects.

Christianity in the New World: Comparative Studies (4219-RS233)

dr Renata Siuda-Ambroziak

Classes focus on the presentation and comparative analysis of various religious phenomena within Christianity in the New World (such as, for example, popular (folk) religiosity, religious institutions and leadership, local, syncretic beliefs, the phenomenon of folk saints, etc.) and their place, importance and dialectic impact on the cultures and societies of both Americas. Students will get acquainted with the terminology necessary for Religious Studies and Cultural Studies on religion and acquire knowledge of methods of qualitative research and theories useful for the analysis of Christian components of Latin American and US culture.

Issues in American Political Thought (4219-RS234)

dr Clifford Bates, prof. ucz.

This course is a research seminar in American Political Thought. as well as the intellectual history of American political ideas. The course will vary on the various authors that are taken up for examination each time the course will be offered. The authors and the various texts chosen to be included for examination for this class were chosen for their key role in shaping American political thought and/or American political ideas. The course teaches students to tackle the key texts and address the scope of the secondary scholarship on those texts.

Immigrants and Cities (4219-RS235)

dr hab. Anna Sosnowska-Jordanovska

The class starts with an overview of how the US cities have become the immigration centers since the late 19th century, and focuses on the two largest US cities and traditional immigration centers. It provides in-depth discussion of 1. contemporary New York City as a city of immigrants as accounted by sociological and ethnographic studies, and public image shaped by movies and museums 2. Chicago as a city of ethnic groups and neighborhoods as accounted by the early 20th century urban studies conducted by Chicago school. The last classes discuss the public memory of immigration and ethnicity on the basis of analysis of immigration related museums and *The Irishman* (2019) movie. Immigrant enclaves, ethnic businesses, food and cultures, interaction among immigrant groups, relationship between immigrants and long term residents and city policies toward immigration and ethnicity are at the center of the in-class discussion and focus of the students’ research papers.

Urbanization and Mega-Cities (4219-RS236)

dr hab. Kacper Pobłocki

For a decade now, more than half of humanity dwells in cities. Homo sapiens has thus transformed from a rural to an urban species. This is the gist of a planetary urbanization. Its second feature lays in the fact that the epicentre of urban growth has inevitably moved from the West to the Global South. It is no longer Paris or New York, but Lagos, Sao Paulo or Dubai that have become "future cities". This momentous change means that right in front of our eyes the meanings of "city life" and "urbanization" is being fundamentally redefined. The aim of this course is to equip students with a conceptual toolbox that will allow them to understand the dynamics of this planetary urbanization. Thus we will look at the most current developments in North (and South) American cities through the lenses of planetary urbanisation.

Law and Society (4219-RS237)

prof. dr hab. David Jones,

"Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue"! Anglo-American laws are similar to weddings: updating tradition, borrowing and lending, honeymooning in commerce frequently occurring on oceans and rivers. This is a research course, encouraging students to study the legislative intent behind enactment of laws as well as methods for examining precedent known as stare decisis [old decisions]. Lawmakers and governmental bodies display various motives behind laws they create, enforce, modify, or repeal. Richard J. Quinney startled society in 1970 with publication of his provocative book, *The Social Reality of Crime*, followed in 1974 by *Critique of Legal Order*. Quinney's critical approach is not limited to crime control. It is applicable to the legal order in general, as the sub-discipline known as "Critical Legal Studies" pointed out during the 1980s before it disappeared, perhaps silenced by the institutions that it criticised: the U.S. Congress, Federal and state courts, "big business," both elite law schools and elite law firms that keep those institutions greased and rolling for the benefit of the few at the expense of the many: society's "deplorables" (ourselves).

Language courses

Advanced Practical English

(4219-FL205)

Coordinator: dr Agnieszka Kotwasińska

Basic Practical Spanish

(4219-FL206)

Coordinator: dr Luis Miletti Gaztambide

Advanced Practical Spanish

(4219-FL207)

Coordinator: dr Paulina Bojarska

MA II

Seminars

MA Seminar: Aspects of American Literary Culture (4219-ZS110-AM)

prof. dr hab. Tomasz Basiuk

The seminar proceeds by joint discussion of readings used by individual participants in their projects and joint discussion of participants' own work (plans, bibliographies, chapter drafts).

MA Seminar: American Social History (4219-ZS118-AM)

prof. dr William Glass

This seminar is for students who wish to write theses about the themes of race, class, and gender over the course of American history and about certain aspects of popular culture from a historical perspective.

MA Seminar: American Audiovisual Culture and Media (4219-ZS128-AM)

prof. dr hab. Paweł Frelík

The seminar will focus on broadly understood audiovisual texts, including such media as film, narrative television series, videogames, music video, digital works, and broadly understood trans- and intermedia texts. Using them as primary texts, possible MA projects will investigate a variety of their aspects: narrative, material, political, and aesthetic.

MA Seminar: American Social and Political Thought (4219-ZS131-AM)

dr Marcin Gajek

MA seminar for students interested in writing a thesis within the field of American social and political thought. Topics may include both past and contemporary thought. Attempts to demonstrate continuity of certain themes in American thought will be welcomed as well. Students may demonstrate relevance of certain ideas, political doctrines, or ideologies or American politics.

MA Seminar: Gender and Sexuality in American Popular Culture (4219-ZS132-AM)

dr Marta Usiekiewicz

The focus of this MA seminar is on the ways gender and sexuality are present and represented in US popular culture and society. It is suitable for students who want to critically examine the ways in which gender and sexuality affect various aspects of culture. Students who would like to analyze unusual aspects of culture, such as food, fashion, interior design or sports are also welcome. I encourage close reading of texts and intersectional readings.