

# Health Care and Beyond: America's Social Safety Net

**Hybrid Master Class for Students**  
**Tuesday, October 10, 2023, 4:00-5:30 p.m.**  
**Speaker: Dr. Markus Hünemörder LMU Munich**

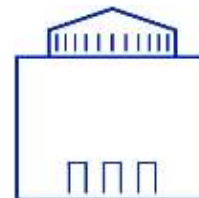
Organizer: Research Center, Programs for Teachers and Students  
Stiftung Bayerisches Amerikahaus GmbH - Bavarian Center for Transatlantic Relations  
Free Admission

From a Western European perspective, the **social safety net in the United States** seems woefully inadequate: no universal health care, no universal paid sick leave, no direct federal financial assistance for poor Americans, etc. At the same time, **federal expenditures on health care and other social programs** make up well over half the US budget, easily dwarfing military spending. Tens of millions of Americans depend on food stamps, disability payments, and a host of other assistance programs; most Americans over 65 rely on Medicare for their health needs. So a social safety net does indeed exist in the US; the question is **how it works** and **whether it addresses the needs of American society**.

This class will explain the major aspects of the American social safety net, focusing on **health care, aid for low-income Americans, and pensions**. We will examine the origins of the federal system (New Deal, Great Society, “Obamacare”), the role of the states, and also why the **political debate** about social spending is so much more controversial in the US than in Western Europe. What are the chances for reform ideas such as “Medicare for All” and universal basic income? As usual, political cartoons and satirical videos will provide comic relief from these serious and sometimes abstract topics.

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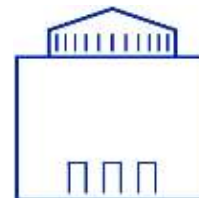


## **USA Update 2023 – A Nation Divided**

**Hybrid Master Class for Students**  
**Monday, November 13, 2023, 4:00-5:30 p.m.**  
**Speaker: Dr. Markus Hünemörder, LMU Munich**

Organizer: Recherchezentrum, Programme Schüler\*innen und Lehrkräfte  
Stiftung Bayerisches Amerikahaus gGmbH – Bavarian Center for Transatlantic Relations  
Free Admission

Less than a year before the next presidential election, where does the United States stand? What successes and failures did the Biden administration have and how has it handled foreign policy? What are the issues that divide American politics and society on the national and local level? And are we in for a rematch between 81-year old Joe Biden and 78-year old Donald Trump in November 2024? As usual, satirical cartoons and videos will provide comic relief on these often dark and serious issues.



# Reading Contemporary Black Activism

## Master Class for Students

**Tuesday, December 05, 2023, 4:00-5:30 p.m.**

**Speaker: Dr. Nicole Schneider, KU Eichstätt**

Organizer: Recherchezentrum, Programme Schüler\*innen und Lehrkräfte  
Stiftung Bayerisches Amerikahaus gGmbH – Bavarian Center for Transatlantic Relations  
Free Admission

Reading literature as a form of activism, this lecture will look at a variety of texts by Black writers in the US to consider what racism is and how racialized assumptions, structures, and practices affect Black communities. We will examine how these structures simultaneously shape our own relations and understandings of society. We will read contemporary Black activism in terms of its literary renditions, its protests and activist projects, as well as the community engagement improving the lives lived, for example, in poor urban neighborhoods.

In his essay *Between the World and Me* (2015), for example, Ta-Nehisi Coates writes that “race is the child of racism, not the father” (7). In this letter to his son, he examines what it means – for him – to be Black in the contemporary United States of America, how he navigates the racialized structures he encounters, and how he sees possibilities for change in his communities and their resilience. Bleak, yet hopeful, his writing echoes James Baldwin’s *The Fire Next Time* (1963) and anticipates publications by Jesmyn Ward, Clint Smith, Jenna Wortham, Nikole Hannah-Jones, Baratunde Thurston and others. As they connect sociopolitical considerations to the efforts and demands of contemporary Black activism, these texts can themselves be understood as a form of literary activism that raises awareness and analyzes racialized practices in America.