

USA Update 2021

Teacher Seminar, 26 February 2021 Speaker: Dr. Markus Hünemörder, LMU

Organizer: Information & Recherche, Bibliothek
Stiftung Bayerisches Amerikahaus gGmbH - Bavarian Center for Transatlantic Relations
Registration fee: € 10

In November 2020, Joe Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris won the US presidency in a surprisingly narrow and highly contested election that revealed deep rifts in American society and politics. What challenges await the new administration and what are its priorities in foreign and domestic policy? Will the defeated Donald Trump continue to play a central role in American politics and will the Republican Party continue to follow him? What can the Biden administration do to overcome the division in American society? This talk will address these and other important issues. As usual, political humor and satirical videos will provide some comic relief.

9.00 The presidential election of 2020 and its lessons

10.00 The priorities of the Biden administration

10.30 Coffee Break

11.00 Challenges and problems for the Biden administration

11.30 Trumpism with no end? The continuing role of right-wing populism in US politics

12.00 Back and ready to lead? The changing US role in world politics

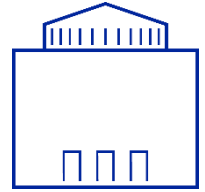
12.30 Conclusion

13.00 Open discussion

14.00 End

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The United States and the Environment: A History of Exploitation, Conservation and Protection

Teacher Seminar, 5 March 2021

Speaker: Dr. Uwe Lübken, LMU Amerika-Institut

Organizer: Information & Recherche, Bibliothek
Stiftung Bayerisches Amerikahaus gGmbH - Bavarian Center for Transatlantic Relations
Registration fee: € 10

When we think of North America's natural environment, world-famous national parks, gigantic redwood trees and the beautiful scenery of the American West come to mind. However, we might also think of the careless and unrestrained exploitation of natural resources, the environmental damage done by the world's biggest consumer society, and a never ending series of natural (or human made?) catastrophes.

This teacher seminar will trace the main themes in United States environmental history from pre-colonial times to the present. We will briefly look at indigenous environmental histories and the importance of the distorted image of the "Ecological Indian." We will scrutinize the colonial society's relationship with the environment – between a perceived abundance of resources and sometimes deadly misinterpretations of the American climate. In the 19th century, urbanization and industrialization posed a heavy burden on the environment and led to early attempts at conservation – a development that has been picked up in the 20th century by the new environmental movement and, more recently, by activists focusing on environmental justice. The seminar will make heavy use of a wide array of primary sources and documents that can be accessed easily and used in a school environment.

09:00 Introduction: What is Environmental History?

09:30 The Land of Plenty or the Land of Disaster? New World Environments

10:30 Coffee Break

11:00 Conservation and Preservation

11:45 New Environmental Movements

12:30 Environmental History in the Anthropocene

13:00 Open Discussion

14:00 End

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To Keep and Bear Arms? Guns, Gun Control, and Mass Shootings in the US

Teacher Seminar, 12 March 2021
Speaker: Dr. Markus Hünemörder, LMU

Organizer: Information & Recherche, Bibliothek
Stiftung Bayerisches Amerikahaus gGmbH - Bavarian Center for Transatlantic Relations
Registration fee: € 10

The role of guns is maybe the strangest aspect of US society from a German point of view. For many Americans, possessing a firearm is nothing less than a fundamental civil right. Many others point to the disturbingly high number of gun related deaths through accident, suicide, crime, and mass shootings and call for much stricter gun control legislation. The fronts are hardened, the debates bitter, and no consensus or compromise is in sight. The „Never Again“ movement started by survivors of the 2018 Parkland school shooting is just the latest chapter in a decades-old struggle.

This talk will examine the debates on gun ownership, gun control, and gun violence in the US with a special focus on the mass shootings in schools and public places that have plagued American society for years. Why is opposition to gun control so adamant? What solutions and measures have been proposed and would any of them actually work? What is the role of federal and state governments in all of this? As usual, satirical cartoons and videos will add some dark humor to these grim topics.

09:00 Firearms in the US

09:45 Gun Control Laws in the US

10:30 Coffee Break

11:00 Firearm Deaths and Mass Shootings

11:45 The Politics of Gun Control Legislation

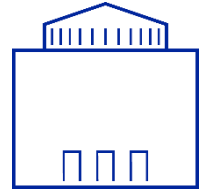
12:30 Conclusion: What Would Really Make a Difference

13:00 Open discussion

14:00 End

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Immigrants, Refugees and Racism in the U.S.

Teacher Seminar, Thursday, 17 June 2021
Speaker: Prof. Dr. Ursula Prutsch, LMU

Organizer: Information & Recherche, Bibliothek
Stiftung Bayerisches Amerikahaus gGmbH - Bavarian Center for Transatlantic Relations
Registration fee: € 10

Immigration to and refuge in the United States is strongly connected to hope, success, failure and racism. In the first years of the 20th century, the United States stopped Japanese immigration, as it had become “too dominant” for local businesses and unions. Waves of Italian immigrants changed urban landscapes around 1900. Although most of them were hard-working craftsmen and laborers who helped shape the city skylines, the crime networks of a minority influenced imaginaries and stereotypes. German immigrants and their businesses had enriched and shaped the US east and middle west since the 19th century, but were considered “enemy aliens” in World War II. Around 11.000 Germans were transported into internment camps, as were 120.000 Japanese and several thousand Italians. At the same time Mexican farmhands replaced those who were enlisted for the global War theater. Hollywood was “mexicanized”, while Texan schools segregated Mexican children for decades. The current detention centers at the US border for undocumented Central American migrants are the latest manifestation of inhuman calculation, who are the desirables and who are to be “criminalized”.

The envisioned time period of the seminar covers the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. At the basis of Japanese, German, Italian, Mexican and Central American immigration, the seminar discusses the ambiguity between promoting “promised land” and criminalizing immigrants in times of war and crisis. The introductory part, however, illustrates briefly at the example of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy that most immigration statistics about the United States are problematic or false. Different types of primary sources (in German and English) will be discussed, including letters, cartoons, pamphlets, statistics, songs, and literary texts.

09:00 Intro

9:20 The Dangers of Statistics: immigrants, ethnic groups, emigration states

09:40: The United States: A Nation of Immigrants

10:00 Japanese immigrants

10:30 Coffee Break

11:00 German and Italian immigrants and internment camps in WW II

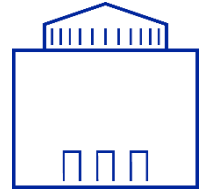
12:00 Mexican and Central American immigration

13.10 Open Discussion

14.00 End

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State and Religion in the US: A Nation with the Soul of a Church

Teacher Seminar, 25 June 2021
Speaker: Dr. Markus Hünemörder, LMU

Organizer: Information & Recherche, Bibliothek
Stiftung Bayerisches Amerikahaus gGmbH - Bavarian Center for Transatlantic Relations
Registration fee: € 10

It is one of the great American paradoxes: few countries have a stricter separation of church and state than the USA, yet religion pervades both public life and politics to a degree unknown in most other democracies. This seminar will examine the historical and political dimensions of church and state in the US, with a focus on the development and effects of religious diversity in America as well the political controversies driven by religious issues such as contraception, abortion, school prayer, teaching evolution, and same-sex marriage. Political satire will help bring a sense of humor to these otherwise serious topics.

09.00: The Founding Fathers, the First Amendment, and Jefferson's "Wall of Separation"

09.45: Religious Diversity in America

10.45: Coffee Break

11.15: The Supreme Court and Religious Issues

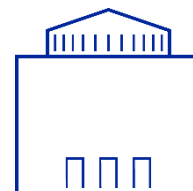
12.00: The Religious is Political - The Emergence of Religious Conservatism

13:00 Open Discussion

14:00 End

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Black Lives Matter in Transatlantic Perspective

Teacher Seminar, 02 July, 2021

Speaker: Dr. Silke Hackenesch, Universität zu Köln

Organizer: Information & Recherche, Bibliothek
Stiftung Bayerisches Amerikahaus gGmbH - Bavarian Center for Transatlantic Relations
Registration fee: € 10

After the hashtag emerged in 2013 in the United States in response to (police) violence targeted towards African Americans, Black Lives Matter movements have sprung up across the globe. Addressing institutionalized and everyday racism and its consequences for People of Color, the prison industry complex, and the contested legacies of slavery and colonialism, these social movements have become critical in fighting white supremacy as well as right-wing populism.

In this teacher seminar, we will consider the historical dimension of the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States by paying special attention to how slavery, the civil war, Reconstruction and racial segregation are discussed and remembered in contemporary US society and culture. We will also address the legacies of European colonialism and various forms of racial discrimination when discussing the global dimension of the BLM movement.

09:00 Introduction: The Black Lives Matter Movement in the U.S. and Beyond

09:45 The Contested Legacy of Slavery: Memory and Monuments

10:30 Coffee Break

11:00 Black Lives Matter and the Ongoing Struggle for Freedom

11:45 Black Lives Matter in Germany

12:30 Concluding Remarks

13:00 Open Discussion

14:00 End

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