



Conspiracy Theories and the Coronavirus Pandemic (DIGITAL SEMINAR)

**(DIGITAL) Teacher Seminar, Friday, 01 October 2021, 9-14 Uhr
Speaker: Prof. Dr. Michael Butter, Universität Tübingen**

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

(DIGITAL SEMINAR) Conspiracy theories appear to have been steadily gaining in popularity in past years, fueled by the rise of populism, the Internet and, most recently, the coronavirus pandemic. But what exactly is a conspiracy theory, and are such ideas really more prominent now than in the past? How exactly do the Internet and populism contribute to the spread of conspiracy theories? What conspiracy theories are there about the coronavirus, and how do they argue? When are they dangerous? How can conspiracy theories be debunked? And how should one react when students articulate conspiracy theories in the classroom? The seminar will address these and related questions in order to equip teachers with the knowledge and tools to analyze and discuss conspiracy theories with their students. This seminar will take place via Zoom, and we will take short breaks totaling about 25-30 minutes throughout the seminar schedule.

09:00 The Basics: Definitions, History, Psychology

09:30 The Rhetoric of Conspiracy Theories

10:00 The Impact of the Internet and the Link to Populism

11:00 Coronavirus Conspiracy Theories

12:00 Addressing Conspiracy Theories in the Classroom (and beyond)

13:00 Open Discussion

14:00 End

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American Exceptionalism: History of a Concept

**Teacher Seminar, Friday, 15 October 2021, 9-14 Uhr
Speaker: Prof. Dr. Volker Depkat, Universität Regensburg**

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

American Exceptionalism, as Byron Shafer argued in his 1991 collected volume *Is America Different?*, is the "notion that the United States was created differently, developed differently, and thus has to be understood differently – essentially on its own terms and within its own contexts." Instead of pursuing the rather sterile question of whether the U.S. indeed is, was, or has been exceptional, the seminar will approach American Exceptionalism as a "metaconcept" (Don E. Pease), asking why, how, when, by whom, and to what effects the U.S. was imagined as exceptional in the course of its history. As such, the class will outline the major trajectories of the conceptual history of American Exceptionalism from its colonial and revolutionary beginnings to the present.

09:00 The Colonial and Revolutionary Origins of American Exceptionalism

10:30 Coffee Break

11:00 People of Plenty: American Exceptionalism and Affluence

12:30 Coffee Break

13:00 Contested Exceptionalisms in Contemporary America

14:00 End

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USA Update 2021: A House Divided

Teacher Seminar, Friday, 22 October 2021, 9-14 Uhr
Speaker: Dr. Markus Hünemörder, LMU

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

In November 2020, Donald Trump, the most controversial president in decades, narrowly lost his bid for reelection to the moderate centrist Democrat Joe Biden. Months of bitter conflict and baseless claims of elections fraud ensued, culminating in pro-Trump protesters storming the Capitol in January in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent the final certification of Biden's victory. One thing is clear: Joe Biden will lead a United States that is deeply divided and polarized without the mandate of an overwhelming election victory and with only a minimal congressional majority to back him up. What are the priorities challenges for his and vice president Kamala Harris' administration in terms of domestic and foreign policy? What challenges will they face? Will the American political system become even more dysfunctional or will the US be able to overcome its deep and bitter rifts? As usual, satirical cartoons and videos will provide comic relief on these often dark and serious issues.

09:00 The election of 2020 and its implications

09:45 The end and legacy of the Trump presidency

10:30 Coffee Break

11:00 Domestic Priorities and Challenges for the Biden Administration

12:00 Foreign Policy Priorities and Challenges for the Biden Administration

13:00 Open Discussion

14:00 End

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Key Issues in American Foreign Policy - From George Washington to "America First" and Beyond

Teacher Seminar, Friday, 19 November 2021, 9-14 Uhr
Speaker: Dr. Markus Hünemörder, LMU

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

This talk examines America's evolving role in the world from its early days to the present: George Washington's Farewell Address and the Monroe Doctrine, US involvement in the World Wars, the Cold War, and the Vietnam War. Finally, we will take a look at the present era starting with the 1990s "New World Order" and the post-9/11 "War on Terror" all the way to Trump's "America First" slogan. Given the relative decline of American wealth, power, and respect in recent decades, the question today is: What lies beyond American global hegemony and what does it mean for the transatlantic relationship? As usual, political cartoons and satirical videos will help liven up the serious issues at hand.

09:00 Before Superpower: American Foreign Policy from Independence to the World Wars

09:45 From Berlin to Saigon and Back Again: The Cold War and Decolonization

10:30 Coffee Break

11:00 The "Indispensable Nation": From the Cold War to Obama

11:45 America First? Foreign Policy under Trump

12:30 Quo Vadis America: Beyond American Hegemony

13:00 Open Discussion

14:00 End

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The Civil Rights Movement and #BlackLivesMatter

Teacher Seminar, Friday, 26 November 2021, 9-14 Uhr
Speakers: Ernest Butler, M.A., Dr. Bärbel Harju, LMU

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

This teacher seminar compares the Civil Rights Movement of the long 1960s with today's Black Lives Matter movement. We will highlight continuities and discontinuities between the 1960s and today's protest movements by analyzing a variety of cultural expressions, for example music, comedy, poetry, and television. Together we will explore the goals and shifting tactics of protest; media representations and communication strategies; the role of celebrities (especially athletes and artists); different leadership models; issues of gender and identity; and the role of popular culture. We aim to situate actors, events, and modes of resistance within a long history of African American protest to show that the fight for equality has been a continuous struggle, driven by multiple protagonists, and in a variety of settings.

09:00 Black Protest in US History – Terms and Concepts

09:30 The Long Civil Rights Movement

10:00 #BlackLivesMatter

10:30 Coffee Break

11:00 Shifting Goals and Tactics

11:30 Women, Intersectionality and #SayHerName

12:00 The Role of the Media and Celebrities' Activism

12:30 Protest Culture and/as Popular Culture

13.00 Open Discussion

14:00 End

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First Ladies of the United States

Teacher Seminar, Friday, 03 December 2021, 9-14 Uhr

Speaker: Dr. Andreas Etges, LMU

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

“First ladies have acted. They have baked cookies and had teas. They have given commencement speeches and radio addresses. They have written articles and books. They have rallied women to causes, testified before Congress, and led major policy reforms. They have renovated the White House and set fashion trends. They have modeled consumer behavior and responded to cries for material assistance. They have traveled by air as diplomats and by train as campaigners. They have hugged babies, read to children, and comforted adults. (...) As Pat Nixon said, it is the hardest unpaid job in the world.“ (Jill Hummer).

The “job” of the First Lady has been defined, shaped and changed by the more than 50 women, who were not always the wives of the presidents, who have held this “position” that is not mentioned in the Constitution. They have often been close advisors of their husbands, using “pillow talk,” and many First Ladies have championed their own social, education, health and political projects and initiatives. The main focus will be on the “modern First Ladies“ like Eleanor Roosevelt, Jackie Kennedy, Betty Ford, Hillary Clinton, and Michelle Obama who in different ways tried balance their own views of the role of women in society and public expectations.

09:00 The “office” of the First Lady

09:30 First Ladies from Martha Washington to Edith Wilson

10:15 Eleanor Roosevelt

10:45 Coffee Break

11:15 From Jacqueline Kennedy to Rosalynn Carter

12:00 From Nancy Reagan to Jill Biden

13:00 Open Discussion

14:00 End

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Hollywood Melodrama in the Classroom

Teacher Seminar, Friday, 21 January 2022, 9-14 Uhr
Speaker: Prof. Dr. Heike Paul, FAU Nürnberg/Erlangen

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

“Hollywood melodrama” usually refers to a set of iconic films and their characteristic style. The label evokes powerfully sentimental plots of suffering and sacrifice along with scenes of romantic bliss and estrangement, familial tragedy, fateful coincidences, and happy (or not-so-happy) endings. Ever since the emergence of the filmic formula in the first half of the 20th century, melodramas ‘made in Hollywood’ have been shown, on the one hand, to address and critique social injustices reflected in hierarchies of race, class, and gender in American society. Think, for instance, of Douglas Sirk’s *All That Heaven Allows* (1955; starring Jane Wyman and Rock Hudson) and its critique of snobbish hypocrisy and class-based prejudice.

On the other hand, it has also been pointed out that Hollywood melodramas have nostalgically affirmed systems of inequality and have even condoned slavery. Thus, a film such as *Gone with the Wind* (1939) has been repeatedly at the center of harsh controversy. The sentimental politics of the melodrama are ambivalent to this day and can also be traced in remakes, sequels, and other cultural forms. In this seminar, we will discuss selected melodramas and examine the cultural work they have performed. We will also widen our perspective to look beyond Hollywood and at least briefly acknowledge more recent appropriations of the genre of the melodrama in a postcolonial world.

9:00 An Introduction to Hollywood Melodrama, Past and Present

9:30 Case Studies from the 1930s to 50s

10:30 Coffee break

11:00 Case Studies from the 1960s to 90s

12:00 After 2000: From Hollywood to Bollywood, Nollywood and beyond

13:00 Open Discussion

14:00 End

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