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Curricular Unit

North American Culture (5,5 ECTS) - 45 hours

Study cycle to which the curricular unit belongs (with academic semester and scholar year)

BA in Foreign Applied Languages / 1st Semester / 2014-2015

Responsible academic staff member and lecturing load in the curricular unit

Diana Isabel Adriano Gonçalves

Learning outcomes of the curricular unit

Departing from the study of the relationship between culture and conflict, the North American Culture course aims at reflecting on representative moments of the US culture and history, from the discovery of the “New World” to the War on Terror. It hence intends to analyze significant events for the US that featured a confrontation between ideas, ideologies and values and that eventually helped shape the way the contemporary American society both perceives/represents itself and is perceived/represented by others.

This course aims at fostering a critical spirit about American culture and to endow students with the necessary knowledge to better understand the American way of thinking and America’s place in the world.

Syllabus

America: a Culture of Conflict

- I. First contact and the discovery of the new world
 - Columbus and the European exploration;
 - Conquest and colonization of the “empty” land.
- II. The birth of a Nation
 - The American Revolution;
 - Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution: the construction of a national identity.
- III. Redefining frontiers
 - The evolution of the frontier: expansion to the West and Manifest Destiny;
 - The industrial North and the Southern slavery;
 - The Civil War.
- IV. Fighting wars
 - Armed conflicts: World Wars, the Cold War, the Vietnam War;



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- Social tensions: Segregation and the Civil Rights Movement.
- V. Recent conflicts and the start of a new era
 - 9/11;
 - The War on Terror(ism).

Teaching methodologies (including evaluation)

The teaching methodology rests on the articulation between lectures on the topics listed in the course syllabus; the analysis and discussion of texts, films and other relevant instruments; as well as written assignments and oral presentations prepared by the students about specific themes.

The system of evaluation consists in the continuous assessment of students and attendance is mandatory. Evaluation takes into account the following criteria:

- Attendance and active participation – 10%
- Written assignments – 20%
- Oral presentation – 30%
- Test – 40%

Main bibliography

- ADAMS, James Truslow (2000), “The Epic of America”. In: Barbara Roche Rico and Sandra Mano, *American Mosaic: Multicultural Readings in Context*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, pp.13-19.
- BOYER, Paul S. (2012), *American History: A very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- BURGETT, Bruce; HENDLER, Glenn (eds.) (2007), *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, New York: New York University Press.
- CAMPBELL, Neil; KEAN, Alasdair (2005), *American Cultural Studies: An Introduction to American Culture*, London: Routledge.
- CHEW, Pat K. (2001), *The Conflict and Culture Reader*, New York: New York University Press.
- DOWER, John W. (2010), *Cultures of War: Pearl Harbor: Hiroshima: 9/11: Iraq*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- DURING, Simon (ed.) (2006), *The Cultural Studies Reader*, London and New York: Routledge.
- FOER, Jonathan Safran (2006), *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, London: Penguin.
- HORWITZ, Richard P. (2001), *The American Studies Anthology*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.



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- LEAVY, Patricia (2007), *Iconic Events: media, politics, and power in retelling history*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- O'SULLIVAN, John L. (1839), "The Great Nation of Futurity", *The United States Democratic Review*, vol. 6, no. 23, New York: J. & H.G. Langley, pp. 426-430.
- PIRES, Maria Laura Bettencourt (1996), *Sociedade e Cultura Norte-Americanas*, Lisboa: Universidade Aberta.
- QUAY, Sara E.; DAMICO, Amy M. (eds.) (2010), *September 11 in Popular Culture*, Santa Barbara: Greenwood.
- TURNER, Frederick Jackson (1999), "The Significance of the Frontier in American History". In: John Mack Faragher (ed.), *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" and Other Essays*, London: Yale University, pp. 31-60.