

181:152
 "AMERICA IN OTHER WORDS"
 Draft #2: 1/17/2012

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 Office hours: Wed 11am-1pm and by appointment
 335-2089

Van Allen 172
 M/W3:30-4:45PM

The goal of this course is to sample a variety of representations and readings of the imaginary space of "America" at the present moment, from a variety of non-American perspectives.

Its working hypothesis is three-fold: a) that in the last twenty or so years, the image the US in the global landscape has undergone changes, first in the wake of the cold-war/bipolar era and then, more radically, in the post-9/11 period, b) that this emerging array of responses can be read off from a variety of discourses, non-fictional as well as fictional, which concern themselves with "America" (the quotation marks intend to distinguish between the political entity USA and the symbolic space it occupies in the imagination of the outside world); and c) that the linguistic, institutional and technological channels that mediate access to these discourses are themselves worth investigating.

You will be expected to (a) do all the assigned readings/viewings before class; (b) come to class with one question and one 'key point' about each of the assigned materials; these should be typed and dated, and will serve as attendance record as well; (c) participate actively in the class discussions, and (d) write a short (1-3 p) journal entry per week. In Unit 3 this will involve some annotated web surfing. Those taking the class for 3 s.h.r. will also be responsible for one presentation of a longer article to the class, and write two short (5-7 p) papers on a topic discussed with the instructor, presenting their drafts in class.

Updated versions of the syllabus and most readings will be posted on the class ICON site. Some of the required readings, and all the films will be on reserve in the Reserve Book Room. The novels will also be available at Prairie Lights Bookstore.

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The administrative home for this course is the International Writing Program; its academic administration is through the University College. The IWP Director is Christopher Merrill (christopher-merrill@uiowa.edu); the main office is in the Shambaugh House (SHSE), 430 N. Clinton (335-0128). Students requiring special accommodations on grounds of disability should contact the instructor for appropriate arrangement.

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WEEK 1:

- 1/18 Introduction to course
- Ina Grigorova, "American Mammals" and Kgebetli Moele, "9/11:10 Years Later" (handouts) . A clip from *11'09"01: September 11* (multiple directors, France, 2002).

I. Direct Address: addressing the US on its own terms.

WEEK 2:

- 1/23 "Americanism" and "anti-Americanism": terms of debate, methods, some pre-history.

Read (ICON)

--M. Cunliffe; "New World, Old World: the Historical Antithesis,"

--D. Farber, "Preface," and F. Romero, "Twilight of US Cultural Hegemony," in D. Farber, ed. *What They Think of Us: International Perception of the US Since 9/11* (e-book)

--S. Kinzer, "America Yawns at Foreign Fiction"

--A. Kaufman, "Is Foreign Film the New Endangered Species?"

Watch (YouTube): "Changing World Views of the US: an International Panel Discussion" (UCB) : < <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9nUCfXXYok> >

- 1/25 : GRANTA #77: "What We Think of America"

WEEK 3

- 1/30: The old empire speaks to the new empire.

Read: xxxx in

Mikhail Iossel and Jeff Parker, eds: *AMERIKA: Russian Writers View The United States*

Group 1: Aisenberg through Ilnytskaya

Group 2: Kostyukov though Zorin

- 2/1: Finish *AMERIKA* and TBD

WEEK 4

- 2/7 Breaking into the mall: foreign films reflect (on) the US
Dancer in the Dark (Denmark: L. von Trier, 2001)
Read: --Interview with Lars von Trier
- 2/9 Read: Toby Miller: "American Popular Culture Abroad"

WEEK 5 + 6

- 2/13: Intro to reading period 215 through 2/22.

FIRST SET OF JOURNALS DUE.

Read:

-Pakistan entry on Wikipedia.

-Anja Kampmann and Bina Shah on current literary scene in Pakistan (ICON)

Recommended: Kamila Shamsie "The Storytellers of Empire" (Guernica/ICON)

For weeks 5 + 6, read:

Group 1: Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007): Allison, Megan, Liene

Group 2: Kamila Shamsie, *Burnt Shadows* (2009): Hannah, Jose, Anna

II. Address in translation: what we are ready to hear

WEEK 7

2/27

The German perspective:

Read:

---G. Gemünden, *Framed Visions*, "Introduction"

---P.S. Jungk, *The Perfect American* (translated from the German by M. Hoffman).

- 2/16 Finish *The Perfect American* .

WEEK 8

- 3/ 5 The French perspective:

Read:

--Selections from de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1840) [on-line at
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/toc_indx.html>]

--Henri-Bernard Levy, " *American Vertigo*"

- 3/ 7 Jean Baudrillard, "Utopia Achieved." From *America* (translated from the French by Chris Turner). Make appointment to discuss paper #1

[3/9, 11AM-1PM: Special event: Bookwings: IWP and Moscow Art Theatre joint live performance in Theater Arts Bldg.]

[spring break]

WEEK 9

- 3/19 The Islamic perspective, mediated.

Read:

Slimane Benaïssa: *The Last Night of a Damned Soul* (translated from the French by Jan and Daniel Gross)

- 3/21 Finish Benaïssa. Discussion of Hamid and Shamsi as counter-Islamic novels.

WEEK 10

- 3/26 Bollywood: America and popular post-colonialism on film

View: New York (India: Kabir Khan, 2009)

- 3/28 Read: TBD. Short presentations on Indian cinemas.

WEEK 11

- 4/2 From *Macondo* to *McOndo*--South/North/America
Read:
--A. Valladao, "Conclusion: An Imperialism of Freedom," from *The 21st Century Will Be American*
- 4/4 - Alberto Fuguet, *The Movies of My Life* (Translated from the Spanish by Ezra E. Fitz)

WEEK 12

- 4/9 The East Asian perspective:
Read: Minae Mizumura on Japanese language
Hideo, Levy, *A Room Where the Star-Spangled Banner Cannot be Heard* (2011)
- 4/11 Finish Levy and TBD

III. Reading "America" in cyberspace.

WEEK 13

- 4/16 Issues in global media and Anglophony
Read: (on reserve):
- Turnstall, *Media Are American* (2nd edition)
- Kroes, "Citizenship and Cyberspace," from Kroes, *Them And Us: Questions of Citizenship in a Globalizing World*
Second set of journals due.
- 4/18 Websurfing the Chinese and/or Arabic www

WEEK 14

- 4/23 The www and the scrim of global English:
Read:
- -G. Nunberg on internet English
-<http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/8.05/tpintro.html>
(special issue of *Wired* on translation, May 2000)
-http://www.fpcj.jp/e/gyouji/asia/asia_6.html
-http://crofsblogs.typepad.com/ckbetas/2004/11/the_rise_of_glo.html
-<http://www.swissinfo.org/sfr/swissinfo.html?siteSect=2105&sid=4467958>
- 4/25 Student www projects.

WEEK 15

- 4/30 TBD and paper reports.
- 5/2 Wrap up. Third set of journals due. Second set of papers due 5/4, 4PM.