



COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
Cultural History of the United States / JAV kultūros istorija	

Academic staff	Core academic unit(s)
Coordinating: Assoc. Prof. Svetozar Postic Other: -	Vilnius University Faculty of Philology Institute of Foreign Languages

Study cycle	Type of the course unit
First cycle	Elective

Mode of delivery	Semester or period when it is delivered	Language of instruction
Interactive lectures, seminars	5 semester	English

Requisites	
Prerequisites: English B2	Co-requisites (if relevant): None

Number of ECTS credits allocated	Student's workload (total)	Contact hours	Individual work
5	133	32	101

Purpose of the course unit		
To develop: general competences: analytical critical thinking; independent work and time management; intercultural communication and team work; subject competences: The purpose of this course is to familiarise students with all aspects of the US culture: history, religion, american values, politics, culture of ethnic and racial minorities, popular culture, material culture. Through exposure to readings and multimedia presentations, students will acquire a general understanding of cultural specifics and knowledge of the culture of the United States of America.		
Learning outcomes of the course unit	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
Students will be able to orient themselves in all aspects of the US culture: historical, political, demographic, linguistic, religious. They will develop a critical approach toward the perception and evaluation of culture. A special emphasis will be placed on the application of american values on all areas of cultural development.	Reading, analysis and discussion of the text, research and presentation of the findings.	Presentations and a final test will be given.
Students will be able to define the distinctness of US culture, to relate and compare it to other cultures or one's own culture. They will analyse the interdisciplinary system of US cultural studies in light of historical and sociocultural indicators. They will apply contemporary studies of US culture from	Active learning methods (interactive lectures, discussion, learning through audio-visual materials, analysis and synthesis of relevant literature, project work).	Oral presentation (public speaking)

anthropological, sociological and humanistic perspectives. Students will also interpret major historical and contemporary trends in US culture. They will be able to present phenomena relevant to US culture, their range of problems, and will be introduced to an alternative perspectives on US civilisation.		
Students will be able to motivate colleagues to pursue the goals that have been identified, to organise tasks and responsibilities, to assume initiative and responsibility for the results of the tasks performed.	Active learning methods: work in groups, preparation for group/individual presentations.	Presentation of projects (individual presentation).

Content	Contact hours							Individual work: time and assignments	
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Workshops	Laboratory work	Internship	Contact hours, total	Individual work	Tasks for individual work
1. Introduction: Survey of American History	2						2	6	
2. Identity: Melting Pot vs. Salad Bowl; WASPs vs. New Immigrants; the Countercultural movement of the 1960s; cultural challenges during Trump's presidency; "American Nations"	1		1				2	6	
3. American Values and the American Dream: Six American values according to Datesman et al.; Definition and challenges to the concept of the American Dream	1		1				2	6	
4. Ethnicity and Immigration: The four major immigration waves; the interwar restrictions on immigration; the changing racial and ethnic picture in the 21st century	1		1				2	6	
5. Native Americans and the Frontier Spirit: the perception of Indians by the white newcomers; the gradual occupation of land; the changing view of Native Americans; the "rugged individualist" and the heritage of the frontier	1		1				2	6	
6. African-Americans and Racial Diversity: Finding "the voice"; the Civil Rights Movement; desegregation; Martin Luther King Jr.; the inner city and assimilation	1		1				2	6	
7. Religion in the United States: faith and mission of the first settlers; other Protestants; cults; faith in everyday life	1		1				2	6	
8. Government and Politics: the Founding Fathers and the Constitution; checks and	1		1				2	6	

balances; the three branches of the government; Democrats vs. Republicans; lobbyists and other interest groups; rights of US states								
9. The Land of Plenty: Material culture and the heritage of abundance; natural resources and industrialisation; consumerism; advertisement; lifestyle	1		1				2	6
10. Education: K-12; higher education; life on a university campus	1		1				2	6
11. Free Time and Family: Sports and recreation; Television; holidays; American family; average household in the US	1		1				2	6
12. Literature and Philosophy: beginnings; Emerson and Thoreau; the "Lost Generation" and Beatniks; Pulp Fiction; Hemingway and Minimalism; Drama; Analytical Philosophy	1		1				2	6
13. Hollywood: American Cinema; Classical vs. New Hollywood; Achievements of American cinematography	1		1				2	6
14. Pop Culture: reasons for the prevalence of pop culture in America; visual arts; TV and the Internet; Pop music	1		1				2	6
15. Conclusions. Discussion about the final exam	1		1				2	6
Final Exam			2				2	11
Total	16		16				32	101

Assessment strategy	Weight %	Deadline	Assessment criteria
Active participation in lectures/discussions	10%	Throughout semester	<p>2 points: 2 points – Performance of assignments, expression of one’s viewpoint while taking part in discussions; 1 point – participates in discussions, answers questions when asked; 0 points – hardly participates in any discussions or has missed more than 1/3 of lectures</p>
Presentation	40%	During the semester	<p>2 points: 2 points – the student’s presentation meets the topicality of the selected topic; the information is novel, creatively presented. The presentation meets the requirements of an academic presentation: main issue, major aspects, the relation of the topic to other US issues are explained 1 point – the presentation meets some of the requirements for an academic presentation; lack of analysis, some mistakes are made; the relation to other US aspects is partly presented; 0 points – no presentation is prepared or the presentation does not meet the minimum requirements for an academic</p>

			presentation; the topic is not developed, mistakes are made.
Examination (3 theoretical questions)	50%	Examination time	<p>6 points:</p> <p>Three open-type questions, max. 3 points; criteria: thoroughness of the answer, ability to provide examples and ground one's opinion:</p> <p>3 points – excellent knowledge, the topic is fully explored, the claims are justified, examples are presented;</p> <p>2 points – good knowledge, some minor mistakes are made; some claims are left unjustified, lack of argumentation;</p> <p>1 point – average knowledge which meets the minimum requirements; there are serious mistakes; the topic is not substantially explored, no examples are provided, the claims are left unjustified;</p> <p>0 points – the answers do not meet the minimum requirements.</p>
			Students are not allowed no more than 1/3 absences

Author (-s)	Publishing year	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing house or web link
Required reading				
Datesman, M. K. et al.	2014	American Ways: An Introduction to American Culture	4th ed.	NY: Pearson
Recommended reading				
Brown, Dee	2007	Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West		London: Picador
Crunder, Robert Morse	1996	A Brief History of American Culture	2nd ed.	NY: Routledge
Temperley, Howard and Christopher Bigsby	2005	A New Introduction to American Studies		NY: Routledge
Welch, Rosanne	2016	Why the Monkees Matter: Teenagers, Television and American Pop Culture		NY: McFarland and Company

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