

Introduction to American Literature and Culture

In this seminar we will discuss the question of how to deal with literature from a scholarly perspective. Our guiding question will be: What are the tools necessary for a professional analysis of literature? The seminar will thus provide an introduction to the methodological and theoretical fundamentals of textual analysis. In dialogue with the accompanying lecture course on “History of American Literature,” this semester also taught by myself, that is part of the module, the specific interpretation of texts from different eras of American literary history will be practiced. In our discussion of the three traditional genres, prose, poetry and drama, we will focus on basic textual structures, such as the narrative perspective, character development, spacio-temporal setting etc. The basic premises of literary research and documentation (“wissenschaftliches Arbeiten”) will also be introduced. The seminar is accompanied by two mandatory tutorials, taught by advanced students, Lucina Fischer and Pia Gilbers. Thus, the entire module consists of three parts: this seminar, the tutorial, and the lecture course, all of which are obligatory.