

**Veranstaltungsnummer: 53-567 Kurstitel: Germans in North America**

**Mi. 14-16 in Phil 1269, Beginn: 12.04.2017**

**Seminar II [ENG-7/a, AA-V4a/b, ENG-13, AA-MA3, AA-MA4, AA7, AA11, LAA10, LAA13, AA-W, AA-WB]**

**Dozentin: Julia Lange**

In this seminar, we will explore the German presence in North America. The focus will be threefold: We will first examine the historical evolution of German migration to North America. Starting with German physician Dr. Johannes Fleischer, who arrived in Jamestown with the English settlers in 1607, to the most recent German expats to Silicon Valley, we will look at the historically changing push-and-pull factors that drove migration from German-speaking lands to North America. Special attention will be paid to the aspect of Jewish-German emigration (Hannah Arendt, Billy Wilder, etc.) after the NSDAP came to power in Germany in 1933.

Shifting our attention from migration processes to the German immigrants' and their descendants' acculturation to their new homeland, we will, secondly, look at the symbolic politics German Americans employed to stake their claim in the United States. Which symbols did German American ethnic leaders draw on to foster a sense of a common German American identity? How did German Americans as an ethnic group lobby for their political interests? And how did the experience of two world wars and the changing relations between the United States and West Germany affect German American identity politics ever after 1945? More precisely, how did the dynamics of Holocaust memory in the United States shape German American identity politics during the cold war and after the fall of the Berlin Wall? And what is the status of the so-called "German vote" in the United States as of today, i.e. which role did it play in the US elections 2016? Throughout the course we will critically examine the historiography concerning German America, i.e. the narrative "emplotment" of German American history. Who has said and written what and when about the German experience in North America and to what ends?

In a third and final step, we will explore the cultural productions of German Americans and their reception on the part of American society at large. Guided by the notion that ethnic identity is an invention that is constantly renegotiated and endlessly in flux, our scope of analysis will range from German American ethnic festivals (like "Oktoberfest") and parades (such as the yearly held Steuben Parade on Fifth Avenue in New York City) to recently opened German American ethnic museums. Moreover, we will delve into the fascinating topic of German-language literature published in the United States from the colonial period to the twenty-first century. Selected excerpts from German-language texts of various genres (immigrant letters, poetry, novels) will provide an entry point to a broader discussion on the effects of the multilingual turn in American Studies.

**Course requirements:**

Regular attendance, short oral presentation, term paper.