

<b>Veranstalter:</b>	<b>Julia Lange</b>
<b>Modul:</b>	<b>Postwar Road Narratives</b> [ENG-7, ENG-7a, ENG-13, AA7, AA11, LAA10, LAA13, AA-MA3, AA-MA4]
<b>Art der Veranstaltung:</b>	<b>Seminar II</b>
<b>Veranstaltungsnummer:</b>	<b>53-565</b>
<b>Zeit:</b>	<b>2st. Blockseminar:</b> Fr., 10. Mai (Ü35-01054, 9:00 - 16:30 Uhr) Sa., 11. Mai (VMP, 10 - 16 Uhr) Fr., 24. Mai (Ü35-01054, 9:00 - 16:30 Uhr) Sa., 25. Mai (VMP, 10 - 16 Uhr)
<b>Raum:</b>	<b>Ü35-01054 und ein Raum in Campusnähe</b>
<b>Beginn:</b>	<b>10. Mai 2019</b>

**Course description:**  
**Abroad at Home: American Road Narratives**

The road trip looms large in the American national imaginary. Viewed as a quintessentially American and Americanizing experience, the road trip essentially signifies “personal progression through physical movement” (Capewell) as it links American subjectivity with (the promise of) mobility: the freedom to go anywhere (spatial mobility) and become anyone (social mobility). Differently put, the road narrative reasserts not only “mobility as an American subject” but also “the American as a mobile subject” (Brigham).

Conceptualized primarily as a space outside of social order, the “open road” is usually associated with freedom, rebellion, reinvention, and the promise of escape. Rather than simply reinforcing this dominant conceptualization of the “open road” as a mythic space of opportunity, however, road narratives have continuously (re-)imagined and interrogated the American mythology of mobility and its underlying simplistic binaries (i.e. home vs. away, domesticity vs. mobility, confinement vs. liberation, stasis vs. movement, conformity vs. rebellion). The focus of this seminar lies on road fiction and film’s capacity in constructing and renegotiating the shifting meanings and purposes of American (im)mobilities. Road narratives, so the underlying argument of this course, are sites of a dynamic and complex engagement with – rather than a flight from – identity, society, space, and social conflicts tied to the intersecting categories of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality.

The objective of this seminar is to explore the development of the American road narrative as a literary and filmic genre since the advent of automobile culture and transcontinental car travel in the United States in the early 20th century. Topics covered will include: the aspirations and anxieties of motor-based cross-country travel, the vital role of the car in counterculture, the therapeutic and/or drug-induced dimension of the road trip, the car as a vehicle for exploring social tensions and the interconnected realities of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

Succinctly put, our seminar’s itinerary will look as follows:

Beginning our trip with Sinclair Lewis’ popular serialized novel *Free Air* (1919) we will proceed with a foundational text of American highway literature, namely Jack Kerouac’s classic *On the Road* (1957), before moving on to Native American rereadings of the genre by Sherman Alexie and Louise Erdrich (short stories),

Ridley Scott's iconic genre- and gender-bending film *Thelma & Louise* (1991), Cormac McCarthy's dystopian novel *The Road* (2006), and two (post-9/11) road movies by Duncan Tucker (*Transamerica*, 2005) and Sam Mendes (*Away We Go*, 2009). The course will conclude with Gary Shteyngart's recently released road trip novel *Lake Success* (2018).

#### Important information:

Since this is a block seminar stretching over two weeks, you will need to prepare some of the assigned material in advance. I expect you to have read two novels, namely Sinclair Lewis' *Free Air* (1919) and Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957) by the beginning of our first seminar session on May 10 and 11. On May 24 and 25, two other novels will form the basis of our analysis, namely Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006) and Gary Shteyngart's *Lake Success* (2018). Please make sure that you get copies / access to these texts and have them prepared by the dates mentioned above.

In addition, a reader with supplementary texts, including a complete course syllabus, will be made available via AGORA. If accepted to the course, you will be sent an email with the relevant login information that will grant you access to the AGORA site. Please note that some of the texts in the reader are obligatory so it is of vital importance that you register on the AGORA site once you are notified of your acceptance to the course and receive an email with the relevant login information.

#### Course requirements:

1. Regular participation.
2. You will need to sign up for an expert group on the first day of the seminar. This means that you will commit yourself to thoroughly prepare one text from the syllabus (incl. secondary reading, familiarity with the historical and cultural context of the decade / era in which the text is set). In the group discussion, you will play an active role and enrich the conversation with your extra knowledge.
3. Depending on your module and the credit points you would like to gain for this course, you may also have to write a term paper (length depending on your module).

Sprechstunden im Semester:	<b>s. Sprechstundenliste</b>
Sprechstunden in der vorlesungsfreien Zeit:	<b>s. Sprechstundenliste</b>