

Veranstalter:	<b>Dr. Grit Grigoleit</b>
Thema:	<b>Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Communities in the U.S. [AA-A3, ENG-7, AA-W]</b>
Art der Veranstaltung:	<b>Seminar Ib</b>
Veranstaltungsnummer:	<b>53-562</b>
Zeit:	<b>2st., Di 12-14</b>
Raum:	<b>Phil 1219</b>
Beginn:	<b>18. Oktober 2011</b>

**Course description:**

On October 17, 2006, the United States population hit the 300 million mark. The steady growth of population is thereby deeply intertwined with U.S. immigration history. Initially, immigrants from Europe settled in the U.S. By the end of World War II, however diversity among immigrants had significantly increased. The new Immigration Act of 1965 altered the ethnic profile of immigration to the U.S. again. In the time being, the U.S. evolved from a Eurocentric to a universal country of immigrants with a large proportion of both Hispanic and Asian immigrants and turned into a multiethnic and multicultural society. The increasing racial and ethnic diversity of immigrants and the rapidity of this change exacerbated the discussion about how to integrate the new immigrants. Discussion became even more heated when it became obvious that immigrants with an Asian or Hispanic descent did not follow the path of integration laid out by European settlers. For instance, Latinos and particularly Mexican-Americans have been portrayed as being dangerous to America's culture, society, and economy and became the principle targets of contemporary anti-immigration rhetoric. Conversely, Asian-Americans are being celebrated as the "model minority".

Thus, questions arise such as: How do Latinos, African-Americans, and Asian-Americans fare in U.S. multicultural society? Do the various ethnic groups follow the path of earlier generations who managed to become incorporated in mainstream society or do they maintain cultural and social elements of their ethnic origins? What does it mean for Asian-Americans to be considered a "model minority"? What does it mean to grow up being of Hispanic or Asian-American descent in as highly a racially and socially stratified society as the U.S.?

In class we will study and review immigration to the U.S. and the emergence of ethnic communities. In doing so we will analyze the diverse experiences of the major ethnic groups Europeans, African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asian-Americans. This will include a discussion of their present socioeconomic position in U.S. society and their political and cultural life. A special unit for analysis will be the movie *Gran Torino* (2008) by Clint Eastwood in exploring which particular stereotypes and (mis)representations are used in the portrayal of a very distinct Asian-American community: the Hmong.

**Workload:**

Regular attendance and active in-class participation, oral presentation, seminar paper

**Literature:**

Chapter 6, „Ideologien und Identitätskonstruktionen“ in: Hebel, U. (2008), *Einführung in die Amerikanistik/American Studies*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler.

Other selected texts will be made available in class.

**Sprechstunde während der Vorlesungszeit:** nach Vereinbarung [ggrigoleit@web.de](mailto:ggrigoleit@web.de)

