US Cultural History (Bachelor Year 2 / Spring)

Bachelor in English and American Language, Literature and History / Faculty of Liberal Arts

Introduction

This course aims to provide students with a more precise knowledge of the history of “American culture” in order to better understand the contemporary U.S. We will consider the term “culture” in its multiple meanings: “high culture,” “cultural productions” in general; and the
“imaginary ties between individuals creating a group.” Crucially, we will examine the multiple cultures that characterize U.S. history, and how they overlap in a complex and fractured cultural landscape. This means understanding divisions between “high” and “low” culture, “popular” vs. “mass” culture, the cultures of different groups defined by race, ethnicity, gender, etc., as well as how culture evolved as it mediated changing economic, technological, and social conditions. We will examine what a “national” culture has meant in a geographically vast and sociologically diverse nation, from frontier society to world power. American culture will be presented through both its singularity and its apparent paradoxes: segregation and multiculturalism, urbanism and open spaces, commercial dynamism and institutional inertia, isolationism and global power.

Objectives

*Analyze US cultural history in its multiple dimensions
*Critically examine historical documents (primary sources) concerning key elements of US cultural history

Admission

Prerequisite

Prerequisites training

Minimum B2 English, preferably C1.

Program

Methods of Instruction

Duration

1 semester

Teaching languages

- English

Conditions of submission

If you need more information about this course, kindly send an email to: incomingdri@icp.fr

-Lecture, discussion, primary source analysis, writing practice.

Assessment and Final Grade

CM : CT de 2h
CT = Written exam, responding to 3 out of 10 possible essay questions.

Course Requirements

Plagiarism is not acceptable at the Institut Catholique de Paris, nor at any other institution of higher learning. Plagiarism means taking the intellectual work of others and claiming it as your own, either inadvertently or on purpose. If you are using the words or ideas of another
person, you need to cite them. Plagiarism also includes the use of Large Language Models such as ChatGPT. If I detect plagiarism on your exam, you will receive a zero in the course.
In addition to these assignments, it is a requirement that you attend all course sessions unless excused. All sessions begin on time—do not arrive after class begins. There is minimal assigned reading for the course, but I expect you to read it. That means that you are able to identify and critically assess its argument and the way that it marshals evidence to support that argument.