

INTRODUCTION TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
LECTURE COURSE FOR PART TIME STUDENTS, Course Code: BBLAN00400

Lecturer: Balogh Beatrix
Time and place: Three longer sessions: **April 18** Saturday 13.15-17.15 and Fridays **May 5 and 15** 14.30-18.45, D317
Availability: via email: balogh.beatrix@btk.ppke.hu

Purpose: To present a comprehensive survey of the contemporary social, political, and cultural reality of the USA, to familiarize students with the key concepts of the US Constitution and political life, and to teach the special expressions and vocabulary necessary for a fluent discourse on such topics

Coursebook: Károly Pintér: Introduction to the US, A Textbook for Students of English, PPKE 2022
<https://btk.ppke.hu/storage/tinymce/uploads/old/uploads/articles/2446835/file/pinterkaroly-introus.pdf>

Requirements: kolokvium (see *at attendance and evaluation*)

| CLASS | LECTURE TOPICS |
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| Session 1 | Introduction , study goals, useful tips. Geography of the US and its impact. Regions of the US. (distinctive features, major states, important cities, traditions, distinctive institutions). <u>Reading</u> : Chapters 1 and 3 (with special emphasis on Key Concepts) + Study the compulsory geography listed on the homepage with a good map of the USA. |
| Session 2 | System of Government : Constitution, Basic Principles and their practical applications The three branches of Government: Congress (Functions, Elections); The Presidency (Functions and Powers); Practical politics: Practical politics II. Parties, campaigns, elections ; Voting Blocks; How to become a US President : system, principles, stages, practical mechanics of Presidential Elections. (+2024 Elections special) The Electoral College and Blue v Red states . <u>Reading</u> : Articles I and II of the Constitution; <i>Chapters 7-10 of the textbook, plus Chapter 2</i> |
| Session 3 | The US legal system and legal issues: the Supreme Court and the application of the Bill of Rights ; Landmark decisions from <i>Marbury</i> to <i>Dobbs</i> . Contemporary US Society : Demographics, Race and Ethnicity and Religion . Education in the US. <u>Reading</u> : Chapter 11 and Article III of the Constitution; The Bill of Rights (First Ten Amendment to the US Constitution); Chapters 4-6 and 12-14 of the textbook. |

Compulsory Readings (again) Pintér Károly Introduction to the US A Textbook for Students of English egyetemi jegyzet ISBN 978-963-308-424-3.

And the US Constitution (it is very short, only a few pages. You can read it online, or access an annotated Hungarian copy at

https://btk.ppke.hu/uploads/articles/463213/file/USA%20alkotma%CC%81ny_magyar_javi%CC%81tott.pdf

Recommended Readings:

Jancsó-Pintér-Suba-Surányi-Szántó: *Cultural Relations*, Akadémiai, 2010; with succinct introductory texts on the four largest English-speaking countries: Britain, the USA, Canada and Australia. The special advantage of the book is that it consists of short introductory texts followed by a number of comprehension and vocabulary exercises, all of them designed specifically for Hungarian students of English. It is of course less comprehensive on the US than the textbook, but it gives students a great opportunity to practice the relevant vocabulary and concepts.

Attendance and evaluation:

1. It is a survey course advertised to Part Time (correspondence) students. Attending the in-person lectures is highly recommended. Not only do the lectures provide comprehensive overviews highlighting the key facts and their relevance to contemporary USA but also offer specific contemporary examples and an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the issues at hand. Compulsory texts should be reviewed preferably before the “class sessions”. The exam questions will be based partly on the compulsory texts, partly on the material covered by the lectures. Notetaking is strongly encouraged. Lectures are typically not offered in online formats.
2. Credits for the course can be earned by successfully completing a written test in the exam period. The test will feature multiple-choice questions, an outline map; gapfills that require the understanding and skilful application of key concepts; and a comprehension exercise followed by a short essay question related to the excerpt.