Introduction to the United States of America

Lecture Course for Part Time Students, *Course Code: BBLAN00400*

**Lecturer**: Balogh Beatrix

**Time and place**: Three longer class sessions: February 12 Saturday 13.15-17.15 TEAMS,

May 6 and 20 Friday 14.15-18.15. DAN F07 (BTK bldg. Z)

**Availability**: via email: balogh.beatrix@btk.ppke.hu

**Homepage for course material** (downloadable coursebook, maps, comprehension exercise workbook):

<https://btk.ppke.hu/karunkrol/intezetek-tanszekek/angol-amerikai-intezet/oktatok/pinter-karoly/pinter-karoly/compulsory-lecture-courses-english-majors>

**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

**Compulsory Textbook:** The USA section of the electronic study material Júlia Fodor–Károly Pintér: *Land Rover: A Survey Course about the British Isles and the USA* (2006) in six pdf files downloadable from the ppke website (url above). Scroll down to Introduction to the US BBNAN10400 “readings for the course”. You may download and print the six sections.

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

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| class |  | Lecture Topics |
| 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). Reading: "Geography of the US” text (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 applicationsThe 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. **The Electoral College and Blue v Red states.** Reading: Articles I and II of the Constitution; *Land Rover*, “The Constitution” and “The Congress of the US”, “The President” and “Federal Elections in the US” parts of the “Government and Politics in the US”; The “Political Parties in the US”  |
| Session 3 | The US **legal system** and legal issues: the **Supreme Court** and the application of the **Bill of** **Right**s; Contemporary **US Society: Demographics, Race and Ethnicity** and **Religion.** **Education** in the US. Reading: “The Supreme Court” section of Government and Politics. Article III of the Constitution; The Bill of Rights (First Ten Amendment to the US Constitution); “Society of the US” and “Religion in the US” texts |

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 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 an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the issues at hand. Compulsory texts should be reviewed preferably before the “class sessions”. The first lecture will be delivered in a remote-online format via Teams. Parts of the course material pertaining to this first session will be posted to the course’s Teams page for async processing.
2. The exam questions will be based partly on the compulsory texts, partly on the material covered by the lectures.
3. 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 (see requirements on homepage); 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. The course homepage (see on top) features a workbook with comprehension exercises that students should use to prepare for this part of the exam.