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: March 17, March 31, and May 19 (Fridays) 14.15-18.15

Venue: TBA

**Availability**: by appointment or via email: trixiebalogh@yahoo.com

**Homepage for course material** (containing a lot of helpful downloadable material):

https://btk.ppke.hu/karunkrol/intezetek-tanszekek/angol-amerikai-intezet/oktatok/pinter-karoly/pinter-karoly/kurzusok-courses

**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); since the program no longer runs under Windows 7 or more recent operating systems, the readings have been converted into .pdf files downloadable from the department’s homepage (as well as from Pintér Károly’s homepage, see above): Angol Tanszék🡪Anglisztika BA🡪Nappali képzés 🡪Tematikák, segédanyagok 🡪BBNAN10400. Feel free to print them in any format you prefer.

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

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| class | date | 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) Contemporary **US Society: Demographics, Race and Ethnicity** and **Religion**.  Reading: "Geography of the US” text (with special emphasis on Key Concepts) + Study the  compulsory geography listed below with a good map of the USA!; “Society of the US” and “Religion in the US” texts |
| 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;** Reflections on the Presidential Election.  Reading: Articles I and II of the Constitution; “The Constitution” and “The Congress of the  US” parts of the “Government and Politics in the US”;  Article III of the Constitution; *Land Rover*, USA section, “The President” and “Federal Elections in the US” parts of the “Government and Politics in the US” text; 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; Review and Conclusions  Reading: “The Supreme Court” section of Government and Politics. The Bill of Rights (First Ten Amendment to the US Constitution) |
| Home Study Session: | | Review lecture notes and set texts. Master key concepts and facts. Locate topographic elements, regions, states, cities, educational institutions on a good map. Use the workbook to practice reading-comprehension. Read a short article (online) of your choice about any of the above topics on your own.  Whilst the following topics will also be partially discussed during the lectures “History of **Immigration** into the US” and “**Education** in the US” chapters should be studied by students on their own for the exam |

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 whilst not compulsory, 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.
2. Compulsory texts should be reviewed preferably before the class sessions so that students can make a full advantage of the otherwise limited contact hours.
3. The exam questions will be based partly on the compulsory texts, partly on the material covered by the lectures.
4. Credits for the course can be earned by successfully completing a written test in the exam period. The test will most likely consist of an outline map (see requirements on homepage); factual questions about the topics covered by lectures; 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.