**INTRODUCTION TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Lecture course

Code: BBNAN10400

Lecturer: Karáth Tamás PhD

Time: Friday 8.30-10.00 am

Place: Tárogató, Színházterem (Theatre Hall)

Office hours: Friday 11.45-12.30, Tárogató 040

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Link to course materials

https://btk.ppke.hu/karunkrol/intezetek-tanszekek/angol-amerikai-intezet /oktatok/karath-tamas

Please download the course and exam info, the obligatory textbook, the outline map and suggested readings from here.

Purpose

To present a comprehensive survey of the contemporary social, political, and cultural reality of the USA, 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 chapters have been converted to pdf files that can be downloaded from my profile here:

Recommended readings

There are a number of books available on American life and culture, most of them published by Longman or Oxford University Press. The reason we do not use any of them as a single compulsory textbook is partly their high price, partly their differing emphasis on various aspects. I would like to recommend, however, two volumes that are especially useful in preparing for the classes:

*Oxford Guide to British and American Culture*. OUP, 2005.

A recent and excellent reference volume on both Britain and America, which contains definitions of cultural concepts, identifies various famous personalities, and offers brief and very clear descriptions of many of the topics listed on the reverse side (e.g. elections in the US, education in the US, legal system in the US, etc.). An indispensable reference book which will be useful for you all long after the exam!

Jancsó – Pintér – Suba – Szántó – Surányi, *Cultural Relations*. Akadémiai Kiadó, 2nd edition, 2010.

A cultural textbook discussing the four largest and most populous English-speaking countries: Britain, the USA, Australia and Canada. 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.

Course calendar

Feb 17: Introduction American civilization: Topography and regions of the USA (distinctive features, major states, important cities, ethnic groups)

Feb 24: American values

March 3: The origins of American society; History of Immigration

March 10: Contemporary American society: Ethnic diversity

March 17: **Class cancelled**

March 24: System of government: The Constitution, the three branches of government, separation of powers, checks and balances

March 31: Practical politics: The President’s powers and the elections

Apr 7: Party politics: the major US political parties

Apr 14: **Easter holidays**

Apr 21: **Easter holidays**

Apr 28: The US legal system and legal issues: The Supreme Court and the application of the Bill of Rights

May 5: American public education (elementary and high schools), colleges and universities

May 12: Religion in the US

May 19: From the Melting Pot to the Salad Bowl and contemporary challenges

Attendance

Attendance at the lectures is not checked, but it is highly recommended, since the examination is based partly on the compulsory texts, partly on the material of the lectures.

Exam info

The exam is based on the compulsory textbook and the outline map task. Reading of the recommended readings helps you a lot to prepare for, and successfully pass, the exam.

The lecture will be concluded by a written exam, for which you will have to sign up on Neptun. The exam will consist of three parts:

(1) An outline map exercise (see the requirements below)

(2) Fact questions about the topics covered by the lectures

(3) A comprehension exercise, in which you will have to answer questions on the basis of a short piece of original English text (usually a newspaper or magazine article excerpt). The comprehension exercise workbook uploaded on my profile is a useful collection of exercises for the exam.

Outline map exercise

You are required to be able:

- To outline the 6 main cultural regions of the US (New England, Mid-Atlantic, South, Midwest, Southwest, West)

- To identify all 50 states by region (which region does it belong to?)

- To identify all 50 states of the USA on the basis of their official two-letter abbreviations

- To identify the following states on the map:

♣ Massachusetts

♣ New York

♣ Pennsylvania

♣ Ohio

♣ Michigan

♣ Illinois

♣ Missouri

♣ Virginia

♣ Georgia

♣ Florida

♣ Louisiana

♣ Tennessee

♣ Texas

♣ Arizona

♣ Utah

♣ California

♣ Washington

- To identify the following cities on the map (together with the state/district they belong to)

♣ Boston, MA

♣ New York City, NY

♣ Philadelphia, PA

♣ Washington, DC

♣ Cleveland, OH

♣ Detroit, MI

♣ Chicago, IL

♣ St. Louis, MO

♣ Kansas City, MO

♣ Atlanta, GA

♣ Miami, FL

♣ New Orleans, MS

♣ Memphis, TN

♣ Dallas, TX

♣ Houston, TX

♣ Phoenix, AZ

♣ Salt Lake City, UT

♣ Denver, CO

♣ Los Angeles, CA

♣ San Francisco, CA

♣ Seattle, WA

- To identify the Great Lakes (Lake Ontario, Eire, Huron, Michigan and Superior) and the Great Salt Lake