

Subject card

Subject name and code	US Society in the 20th and 21st Century, PG_00144754						
Field of study	American Studies						
Date of commencement of studies	October 2025		Academic year of realisation of subject			2025/2026	
Education level	Master's studies		Subject group			Obligatory subject group in the field of study Humanistic-social subject group	
Mode of study	full-time studies		Mode of delivery			at the university	
Year of study	1		Language of instruction			English	
Semester of study	2		ECTS credits			3.0	
Learning profile	academic		Assessment form			credit	
Conducting unit	Division of American Studies -> Institute of English and American Studies -> Faculty of Languages -> Rector						
Name and surname of lecturer (lecturers)	Subject supervisor		dr hab. Arkadiusz Misztal				
	Teachers		dr Grzegorz Piotrowski				
			dr Łukasz Remisiewicz				
			dr hab. Michał Kaczmarczyk				
Lesson types	Lesson type	Lecture	Tutorial	Laboratory	Project	Seminar	SUM
	Number of study hours	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30
	E-learning hours included: 0.0						
Learning activity and number of study hours	Learning activity	Participation in didactic classes included in study plan		Participation in consultation hours		Self-study	SUM
	Number of study hours	30		2.0		43.0	75
Subject objectives	The aim of this course is to deepen the study of American society through a sociological perspective. Students will explore a wide range of processes and phenomena that have shaped North American society in the 20th and 21st centuries, such as individualism and individualization, social control, religiosity, meritocracy, racism, and urbanization. Students will become familiar with sociological concepts like social inequality, social roles, racial prejudice, models of masculinity and femininity, and cultural gender.						

Learning outcomes	Course outcome	Subject outcome	Method of verification
	[AMERMU2_U04] Student is able to use and present subject knowledge of history, society, politics and the arts, providing the necessary context for the study of literary and cultural phenomena and processes in North America.	The student formulates, in speech and writing, interpretative theses and complex theoretical problems concerning contemporary U.S. societal phenomena using specialized terminology appropriate for American studies.	[SU1] oral statement/conversation/discussion [SU2] presentation/project/paper/report
	[AMERMU2_K05] Student is ready to inspire and organize activities for the dissemination of knowledge of American literature and culture and to popularize attitudes of tolerance and openness towards other cultures.	The student demonstrates openness and tolerance towards the multifaceted and heterogeneous nature of 21st-century U.S. society.	[SK1] oral statement/conversation/discussion [SK2] presentation/project/paper/report
	[AMERMU2_K01] Student is ready to critically assess the extent of her/his knowledge and skills, especially in the fields of American literature and cultural studies, contextual knowledge of American studies and the English language.	The student is aware of and critically evaluates their knowledge and skills regarding 21st-century U.S. society, and understands the need for continuous learning and development.	[SK1] oral statement/conversation/discussion [SK2] presentation/project/paper/report
	[AMERMU2_W15] Student knows and understands selected issues of the auxiliary sciences of American literary and cultural studies, including history, society, politics and art, providing the contextual knowledge necessary for the study of literary and cultural phenomena and processes in North America.	The student has an in-depth knowledge of selected significant social issues in 21st-century North America.	[SW1] oral statement/conversation/discussion [SW2] presentation/project/paper/report
	[AMERMU2_W17] Student knows and understands fundamental dilemmas of modern civilization in the context of issues related to the development of North American literature, culture, art and society.	The student understands the ethical and economic conditions of 21st-century U.S. society and recognizes its multiculturalism and complexity.	[SW1] oral statement/conversation/discussion [SW2] presentation/project/paper/report

Subject contents	Theoretical perspectives and their empirical influence (14 h) The variety of religious experience and American individualism: (William James and John Dewey, Robert Bellah, Ann Swidler) American meritocracy and its dark sides (Michael Young, Michael J. Sandel) The American culture of control (Clarence Darrow, Michel Foucault, David Garland) Social inequalities from various theoretical perspectives (Robert K. Merton. Charles W. Mills, Reinhard Bendix) Sociological interpretations of race-prejudice (William I. Thomas, Jeffrey C. Alexander). The empirical approaches of American sociology (James Coleman, Anselm Strauss) The Chicago School of sociology. Field research in urban environment (Jane Addams, Paul Cressey, Nels Anderson, Lyn Lofland, Howard Becker, Thomas, Znaniecki) Chosen social problems (16 h) Critical Race Theory and contemporary perception of race and racism in the US Early inspirations and racial justice movements (W.E.B. Du Bois, Martin Luther King Jr) Systemic racism, evolving changes in social policies, and contemporary social movements (Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Joe Feagin, Melissa Weiner, Charles Wade Mills, Tanya Golash-Boza, Crystal Fleming) From structural functionalism and its essentialist perception of gender roles to social constructionism and queer theory Structural functionalism and an essentialist perception of gender roles (Talcott Parsons) Gender inequalities and evolving changes in social policies (Betty Friedan) Social constructionism and queer theory (Judith Butler, Suzan Stryker) Evolving masculinity and femininity models in the contemporary US society (Tristan Bridges, Michael Kimmel) Urban sociology: from mapping social problems in industrial Chicago to a new interactional order in postmodern cities Urbanism as a way of life Behavior in public places (Erving Goffman)		
Prerequisites and co-requisites	General knowledge of American culture and society, and proficiency in English at the B2 level.		
Assessment methods and criteria	Subject passing criteria	Passing threshold	Percentage of the final grade
	final project presentation	60.0%	70.0%
	participation in class discussion	60.0%	30.0%
Recommended reading	Basic literature Bellah, Robert and Tipton, Steven M. (2006), The Robert Bellah Reader, Durham: Duke University Press (s. 319-332). Goffman, Erving (1966). Behavior in public places: Notes on the social organization of gatherings. New York: The Free Press. Golash-Boza, Tanya Maria (2015). Race and Racism. A Critical Approach. Oxford University Press, pp. 177-204 (Understanding Racial Inequality Today: Sociological Theories of Racism). Kimmel, Michael (2013). The Gendered Society. Oxford University Press, pp. 112-140 (The Social Construction of Gender Relations). Sandel Michael J. (2020) The Tyranny of Merit: Whats Become of the Common Good? New York: Macmillan. Sztompka Piotr (1986) Robert K. Merton: An Intellectual Profile, London: Macmillan.		

Supplementary literature	Anderson, Nels (1923). <i>The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Bellah, Robert and Tipton, Steven M. (2006), <i>The Robert Bellah Reader</i>, Durham: Duke University Press. Bonilla-Silva, E. The Structure of Racism in Color-Blind, Post-Racial America. <i>American Behavioral Scientist</i>, vol. 59, no. 11, Jan. 2015, pp. 135876. Bonilla-Silva, E. What We Were, What We Are, and What We Should Be: The Racial Problem of American Sociology. <i>Social Problems</i>, vol. 64, no. 2, Jan. 2017, pp. 17987. Bradley, Harriet (1996). Bridges, T., Pascoe CJ (2014) Hybrid masculinities new directions in the sociology of men and masculinities. <i>Sociology Compass</i> 8/3: 246258. Butler, Judith (1990) <i>Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity</i>. Routledge. Cressey, Paul Goalby. (1932). <i>The Taxi-Dance Hall: A Sociological Study in Commercialized Recreation and City Life</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Dewey, John (1999) <i>Individualism Old and New</i>, New York: Prometheus Books. Du Bois, W. E. Burghardt (1898) [reprint] <i>The Study of the Negro Problems</i>. <i>The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</i>, Vol. 11, pp. 1-23. Fleming, Crystal Marie (2018) <i>How to Be Less Stupid about Race: On Racism, White Supremacy, and the Racial Divide</i>. Beacon Press. Friedan, Betty (1963) <i>The Feminine Mystique</i>. W. W. Norton. Garland David (2001) <i>The Culture of Control. Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society</i>, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Goffman, Erving (1966). <i>Behavior in public places: Notes on the social organization of gatherings</i>. New York: The Free Press. Golash-Boza, Tanya Maria (2015) <i>Race and Racism. A Critical Approach</i>. Oxford University Press. Kimmel, Michael (2013) <i>Angry White Men. American Masculinity at the End of an Era</i>. Nation Books. Kimmel, Michael (2013). <i>The Gendered Society</i>. Oxford University Press. King Jr., Martin Luther (2010) <i>Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?</i> Beacon Press. Lofland, Lyn (1998). <i>The Public Realm</i>. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
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		Downs, Stuart (1995) <i>The New York Times</i> (eds.) Nonviolence in America. A Documentary History, New York: Basic Books. Mills, Charles Wright (2000) <i>The Power Elite</i> with a new Afterword by Alan Wolfe, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Parsons, Talcott (1955) <i>Family Structure and the Socialization of the Child</i>. In: <i>Family Socialization and Interaction Process</i>, edited by Talcott Parsons and R.F. Bales. Glencoe, IL: Free Press. Parsons, Talcott (1959) <i>The social structure of the family</i>. In: Anshen R N (ed.), <i>The Family: its Functions and Destiny</i>, New York, Harper and Row. Sandel Michael J. (2020) <i>The Tyranny of Merit: Whats Become of the Common Good?</i> New York: Macmillan. Santayana George (2009) <i>The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy and Chracter and Opinion in the United States</i>, New Haven: Yale University Press. Stryker, Suzan (2006) <i>(De)Subjugated Knowledges. An Introduction to Transgender Studies</i>. In: S. Stryker, S. Whittle (eds.) <i>The Transgender Studies Reader</i>. Routledge. Sztompka Piotr (1986) <i>Robert K. Merton: An Intellectual Profile</i>, London: Macmillan. Taylor, Charles (2007) <i>A Secular Age</i>, Cambridge: The Belknap Press. Young, Michael (1958) <i>The Rise of the Meritocracy</i>. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
	eResources addresses	
Example issues/ example questions/ tasks being completed	1. America as social utopia - 2. The varieties of American pragmatism - 3. The changes in American penal culture -	
Work placement	Not applicable	

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