

Dr. Steffen Wöll  
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Office Hour: Tuesday, 4–5 pm

## **Syllabus**

ETHNICITY AND DIVERSITY IN US CULTURE (04-001-1018)  
Winter Semester 2020/21  
Seminar

Tuesday, 11:15–12:45 pm  
<https://moodle2.uni-leipzig.de/course/view.php?id=27629>

## **Reading the Transpacific: Asian American Cultures and Identities**

*From fifteenth-century maritime mobilities and archipelagic networks to nineteenth-century labor migration, the ‘Yellow Peril,’ Pacific imperialism, and current challenges: In this seminar we will explore the rich cultural and literary histories of Asian American identities as they developed and continue to surface alongside the vectors of race, class, gender, and space. In order to make visible key concepts of ethnic identities and intersecting human geographies across Asia and the Americas, we will engage with a diversity of historical and contemporary sources, including short stories, novels, newspaper articles, and archival materials.*

### **Course Materials**

All course materials can be accessed via the seminar’s Moodle page.

### **Course Requirements**

Participants of the seminar will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

#### *Prüfungsvorleistungen*

*Prüfungsvorleistungen* (PVLs) are essential to ensure quality standards in teaching and help students to develop their academic skills. Moreover, they are a central part of a student’s performance in class and a mandatory prerequisite for passing the seminar as well as the overall module.

Students must complete the following assignments:

**PVL 1: Response paper** (300–400 words) including your reaction to and thoughts about the readings and materials of our fifth session (Hawaii). Post your writings to the *Session 5 Forum* on Moodle (<https://moodle2.uni-leipzig.de/mod/forum/view.php?id=1137837>) on the day before class. The deadline is **November 23 by 6 pm**.

**PVL 2: Research proposal** (400–500 words) including your preliminary thesis statement and outline of your final presentation (i.e. *Prüfungsleistung*, see below), to be handed in via email to [steffen.woell@uni-leipzig.de](mailto:steffen.woell@uni-leipzig.de). The deadline is **January 11 by 6 pm**.

PVLs are graded on a pass/fail basis. **All PVLs must be passed.** Students who fail a PVL must appear in front of a panel of instructors and convince said panel that they are able to produce a successful result in an assignment of PVL-equivalence. If such a replacement is granted by the panel, students must immediately approach their instructors in order to arrange for an assignment of PVL-equivalence. Late submissions will not be accepted. Extensions will only be granted in cases of illness confirmed by a doctor's certificate.

### *Prüfungsleistung*

The final exam (*Prüfungsleistung*) evaluates your knowledge and skills gained throughout the seminar. It is mandatory for passing not only this course but the overall module. The *Prüfungsleistung* consists of an **oral presentation** based on one or more topic(s) covered in the seminar. Your presentation should have a clear thesis statement and be argumentative instead of merely descriptive. It must be based on your own research and analysis of one or more sources (e.g. text, film, etc.). **Presentations should be between 5 and 7 minutes long.**<sup>1</sup>

## **Code of Conduct**

### *Basic Courtesy*

The student-instructor relationship at the department of American Studies is based on mutual respect. This includes muting cell phones before entering the (virtual) classroom. You are welcome to take notes on your laptop, but please refrain from checking your emails, messaging, browsing the internet, or other non-curricular activities.

You are expected to be on time and not leave early as this will disturb the class session and is disrespectful to both the instructor and your peers. If you already know that you will have to

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<sup>1</sup> If you are looking for inspiration for your presentation beyond the readings discussed in the seminar, I have made additional sources available on Moodle.

leave early, please notify me beforehand. Regular attendance and active participation in discussions are crucial to the success of the seminar. Therefore, you are expected to come to class not only having read the assigned material but also prepared to fully engage in the topic, ask questions about it, offer interpretations, and argue for your particular understanding of the text at hand. Finally, I invite you to freely express and share your opinions, ideas, and questions in class. Academic discourse in the humanities thrives in a culture of open discourse among peers and a diversity of perspectives.

### *Digital Classroom*

During the ongoing health crisis, students and instructors face the challenges of working and learning together in digital spaces.<sup>2</sup> In the seminar, we will use Big Blue Button (BBB) for video conferencing. A unique link to each session will be posted on Moodle. To make these interaction as comfortable and productive as possible for everyone, be sure to treat instructors and fellow students with the same respect you would in a face-to-face teaching environment. Here is a list of basic requirements:

- Distraction-free environment
- Working computer; remember your power cable if you are using a laptop; use cell phones only if there is no other option available
- Web browser compatible with BBB (the URZ recommends Firefox or Chrome); please login to BBB using your real/full name
- Microphone or headset (keep muted if you are not addressing the room)
- Webcam; in order to communicate successfully, you are expected to have your camera turned on<sup>3</sup>
- Water, coffee, tea etc. to keep you hydrated and focused

### *Plagiarism*

Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct in which an individual submits or presents the work of another person as their own. Scholarship often builds upon examining and referring to thoughts and writings of others. However, doing so without proper acknowledgment is intellectually dishonest and a form of fraud. When you borrow three or more consecutive words, an original term, or a distinctive turn of phrase, you must enclose the borrowed element in quotation marks to acknowledge your indebtedness. Any instance of plagiarism can have serious professional and legal consequences, including expulsion from the course and subsequent annulment of an academic degree.

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<sup>2</sup> The URZ provides additional resources at <https://www.urz.uni-leipzig.de/dienste/digitalessemester/>.

<sup>3</sup> It is not legally allowed to record video, audio, or take screenshots without the consent of all seminar participants.

## Schedule

	Date	Session	Readings
1	Oct 27	<b>Taking Stock</b>	<p>Shu, Yuan and Donald E. Pease, “Transnational American Studies and the Transpacific Imaginary”, in: Shu, Yuan and Donald E. Pease (eds.), <i>American Studies as Transnational Practice: Turning Toward the Transpacific</i>, Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2016, pp. 1–36.</p> <p><i>Getting to know each other, course overview, planning, requirements, Q&amp;A</i></p>
2	Nov 3	<b>Pacific Connections</b>	<p>Roberts, Brian Russell and Michelle Ann Stephens, “Introduction,” in: Roberts, Brian Russell and Michelle Ann Stephens (eds.), <i>Archipelagic American Studies: Decontinentalizing the Study of American Culture</i>, Durham: Duke University Press, 2017, pp. 1–54.</p>
3	Nov 10	<b>ChinAmerica</b>	<p>Xin, Bing, “The Photograph,” in: Rabb, Jane M. (ed.), <i>The Short Story and Photography, 1880’s-1980’s: A Critical Anthology</i>, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998, pp. 121–137.</p> <p>Cheung, King-Kok, “Pearl Buck and Xin Bing: Transpacific Postcolonial and Asian American Legacies,” <i>Amerasia Journal</i> 44 (2018) 3, pp. 52–73.</p>
4	Nov 17	<b>The Philippines</b>	<p>Brody, David, “Mapping Empire: Cartography and American Imperialism in the Philippines,” in: <i>Visualizing American Empire: Orientalism and Imperialism in the Philippines</i>, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010, pp. 89–112.</p> <p>Russell, Timothy D., “‘I Feel Sorry for these People’: African American Soldiers in the Philippine-American War, 1899–1902,” <i>The Journal of African American History</i> 99 (2014) 3, pp. 197–222.</p>
	Nov 23		<b>PVL 1 due by 6 pm</b>

5	Nov 24	<b>Hawaii</b>	<p>London, Jack, "Koolau the Leper," in: <i>The House of Pride and Other Tales of Hawaii</i>, New York: Macmillan, 1912, pp. 47–91.</p> <p>Ahuja, Neel, "The Contradictions of Colonial Dependency: Jack London, Leprosy, and Hawaiian Annexation," <i>Journal of Literary &amp; Cultural Disability Studies</i> 1 (2007) 2, pp. 15–28.</p> <p>London, Jack, "Molokai," 1901–1915.</p> <p>"Spring Tours LA to Hawaii," 1927.</p>
6	Dec 1	<b>The Pacific Northwest &amp; Alaska</b>	<p>Scott, Harvey W., "The Pioneer Character of Oregon Progress," <i>The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society</i> 18 (1917) 4, pp. 245–270.</p> <p>Honcharenko, Agapius, "Alaska Scrap-Book," 1868, P-K 10/11, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection.</p> <p>[<u>Homework</u>: Analyze two or more newspaper clipping that connect Alaska and the Pacific in preparation for the session.]</p>
7	Dec 8	<b>Japan</b>	<p>Mark L. Moody Papers, USC Special Collections.</p> <p>DeMille, Cecil B., <i>The Cheat</i>, Paramount Pictures, 1915.</p> <p>Burke, <i>How Japan Could Attack U.S.</i>, 1937.</p> <p>Stanley, Gerald, "Justice Deferred: A Fifty-Year Perspective on Japanese-Internment Historiography," <i>Southern California Quarterly</i> 74 (1992) 2, pp. 181–206.</p>
8	Dec 15	<b>Intersecting Identities I</b>	<p>Malick, Terrence, <i>The Thin Red Line</i>, Fox 2000 Pictures, 1998. [<u>Note</u>: You will have to buy/stream this movie, available on Netflix, Amazon Prime, YouTube, Google Play etc.]</p> <p>Harrison, Simon, "Skull Trophies of the Pacific War: Transgressive Objects of Remembrance," <i>The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute</i> 12 (2006) 4, pp. 817–836.</p>

9	Jan 5	<b>Intersecting Identities II</b>  Cancelled due to COVID-19 university lockdown; office hours will take place at usual time, 4–5 PM	Highway, Tomson, <i>Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing</i> , 1989.  Starr, Floyd Favel, “The Theatre of Orphans / Native Languages on Stage,” in: Appleford, Roy (ed.), <i>Aboriginal Drama and Theatre</i> , Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2005, pp. 32–36 [1993].
	Jan 11	<b>PVL 2 due by 6 pm</b>	
10	Jan 12	<b>Current Challenges</b>	Serhan, Yasmeen and Timothy McLaughlin, “The Other Problematic Outbreak: As the Coronavirus Spreads Across the Globe, So Too Does Racism,” <i>The Atlantic</i> , 13 March 2020.  Nguyen, Viet Thanh, “Asian Americans Are Still Caught in the Trap of the ‘Model Minority’ Stereotype. And it Creates Inequality for All,” <i>Time</i> , 25 June 2020.  Trump, Donald, “We Are United...” <i>Twitter</i> , 20 July 2020.
11	Jan 18	<b>Presentations I</b>	<i>Note: Presentation sessions take place during the regular time slot of Dr. McCafferty’s tutorial, i.e. Monday, 9.15 – 10.45 AM.</i>  <i>Please see the “Presentation Guidelines” (PDF) on Moodle for additional details.</i>  <i>During the presentation phase office hours are moved to Monday 4–5 PM.</i>
12	Jan 25	<b>Presentations II</b>	
13	Feb 1	<b>Presentations III</b>	
14	Feb 8	<b>Presentations IV</b>	