

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 2026		Academic year of realisation of subject		2026/2027		
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						
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_K01] Is prepared to critically assess the scope of their knowledge and skills, especially in the field of American literary and cultural studies, contextual knowledge of American studies and the English language.	Is ready to critically evaluate his knowledge and acquired skills in the field of phenomena and processes shaping 21st-century US society.	[SK1] oral statement/conversation/discussion [SK2] presentation/project/paper/report
	[AMERMU2_W12] Knows and understands selected issues in American history, society, politics and art, constituting contextual knowledge necessary for research into literary and cultural phenomena and processes in North America.	Knows and understands selected important social issues in North America in the 21st century.	[SW1] oral statement/conversation/discussion [SW2] presentation/project/paper/report
	[AMERMU2_W14] Knows and understands the fundamental dilemmas of contemporary civilisation in the context of issues related to the development of North American literature, culture and society.	Knows the ethical and economic conditions of 21st-century US society, recognizes its multiculturalism and complexity.	[SW1] oral statement/conversation/discussion [SW2] presentation/project/paper/report
	[AMERMU2_U04] Is able to use contextual knowledge in the field of American literary and cultural studies, including history, society, politics and art.	Can formulate interpretative theses and complex theoretical problems concerning phenomena of contemporary US society in speech and writing, using specialist terminology appropriate for American studies.	[SU1] oral statement/conversation/discussion [SU2] 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
	participation in class discussion	60.0%	30.0%
	final project presentation	60.0%	70.0%
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.
--------------------------	---

		Downs, Stuart (1995) <i>Violence in America</i>. A 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	

Document generated electronically. Does not require a seal or signature.