



COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE USA	

Academic staff	Core academic unit(s)
Coordinating: Livija Grikietis Other:	Institute of Language, Literature and Translation Studies Kaunas Faculty, Muitinès Street 8, LT-44280 Kaunas

Study cycle	Type of the course unit
First <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Second <input type="checkbox"/>	Compulsory Course <input type="checkbox"/> Optional Course <input type="checkbox"/> Course Unit (Module) of the General University Studies <input type="checkbox"/> Course Unit (Module) of Individual Studies <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interdisciplinary Studies Course Unit (Module) <input type="checkbox"/>

Mode of delivery	Semester or period when it is delivered	Language of instruction
Face-to-face	Autumn semester	English

Requisites	
Prerequisites: -	Co-requisites (if relevant): -

Number of ECTS credits allocated	Student's workload (total)	Contact hours	Individual work
5	130	48	82

Purpose of the course unit
During this course students will get acquainted with the important trends in modern American culture. Each trend will be examined historically (beginning with its earliest appearance in the United States) and followed through its major events. Students will learn how each trend fits into the overall history of America, as well as its role in modern culture. To study different aspects of American culture, students will use content analysis of cultural artefacts (films, newspaper headlines, political cartoons, advertisements, music etc.).

Learning outcomes of the course unit	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
Having completed the course, students will be able to: - identify the major geographical and demographic landmarks of the United States;	Problem-based instruction; individual reading, individual and group presentations.	Evaluation of conclusions of group discussions and presentations.
- discuss the historical roots of current cultural phenomena;	Problem-based instruction; individual reading, individual and group presentations.	Evaluation of conclusions of group discussions and presentations.
- apply primary sources of different periods as a key into understanding those periods;	Article and literature analysis, group discussion, case study, generalization of examples, preparation for group projects, individual and group presentations.	Evaluation of solutions to case studies, conclusions of group project and presentation.

- work individually and in groups preparing individual and group presentations of various cultural artefacts;	Literature analysis, individual and group presentations.	Evaluation of conclusions of group discussions and presentation.
- develop a sense of US culture and to appreciate how it differs from their own culture.	Situation and case analysis; group discussion, debates, individual and group presentations.	Academic essay evaluation and presentation of the results of individual work.

Content	Contact hours							Individual work: time and assignments	
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Workshops	Laboratory work	Internship	Contact hours, total	Individual work	Tasks for individual work
1. The concept of culture. Cultural history: the study of cultural and historical processes.	1						1	3	Text reading; cultural symbol analysis; preparation for discussion.
2. The main stages of history and culture of the USA.	2						2	3	Reading of scholarly literature, preparation for discussion.
3. Review of different social or national groups, most important USA history facts and events in the cultural and historical aspect.	3		3				6	6	Comparative cultural analysis; discussion and preparation for individual presentation.
4. Native Americans: tribes, the history of moving to reservations, modern problems and changes.	2		1				3	5	Case study; contemporary reflection.
5. Immigrants: waves of migration.	2		1				3	6	Cultural contribution report; discussion and preparation of group projects.
6. Afro-Americans: slaves, Civil war, Jim Crow, "separate but equal" movement for the national rights, rap and bands.	2		1				3	6	Media representation analysis, discussion; introducing group projects.
7. America and war: cold war (Second world war and Soviet Union, Korea and Vietnam, Cuba and the Bay of Pigs, other phenomena of the Cold war).	2		1				3	5	Case study; propaganda analysis; discussion.
8. Terrorism (September 11, law response, Afghanistan and Iraq).	3		2				5	10	Social media narratives; preparation of a discussion and individual work.
9. Space: (Apollo, NASA, Artemis2, "Star wars", militarization of the space).	2		1				3	5	Case study; media representation; discussion.
10. Advertising: advertisement catchwords, types of product, the directives of the correct advertisement, client protection).	2		2				4	5	Influencer culture reflection; text reading and analysis; case study.
11. Shopping (credits, consolidation of loan, bankruptcy, shopping centers and shopping districts).	2		1				3	5	Discussion, preparation for

									presentation, individual work.
12. Hollywood: (outcome, influence on the culture, history review).	2		1				3	5	Film as cultural text analysis; watching/analysis of video material; media influence reflection.
13. Feminism (early movement for the women's rights).	2						2	5	Media representation analysis; preparation for presentation.
14. Human rights (civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights)	3		2				5	5	Media and awareness analysis; debates/discussion.
15. Healthy lifestyle (sport, fast food, the youth cult).	2						2	8	Social media influence; preparation for examination.
Total	32		16				48	82	
Note: Up to 2 [AS DETERMINED BY THE SPC] contact hours may be replaced by guest lectures given by social partners or educational visits to social partner organisations.									

Assessment strategy	Weight %	Deadline	Assessment criteria
Presentation	30%	Week 2-16	Quality of the presentation content and oral performance. The assessment criteria are as follows: 10 – slide presentation demonstrates excellent knowledge and skills; 9 - slide presentation demonstrates very good knowledge and skills; 8 - slide presentation demonstrates good knowledge and skills; 7 - slide presentation demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and skills; 6 - slide presentation demonstrates average knowledge and skills; 5 - slide presentation demonstrates minimum knowledge and skills; 4-0 - minimum requirements for slide presentation are not met.
Group presentation	30%	During the semester	The assessment criteria are as follows: 10 – slide presentation demonstrates excellent knowledge and skills; 9 - slide presentation demonstrates very good knowledge and skills; 8 - slide presentation demonstrates good knowledge and skills; 7 - slide presentation demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and skills; 6 - slide presentation demonstrates average knowledge and skills; 5 - slide presentation demonstrates minimum knowledge and skills; 4-0 - minimum requirements for slide presentation are not met.
Participation	10%	During the semester	Quality of participation in class. Attention is given to positive outlook, enthusiasm and commitment of the students.
Examination	30%	Examination session	The assessment criteria are as follows: 10 points - 10 theoretical questions answered properly and correctly.

			<p>9 points - 1 of 10 theoretical questions is not answered properly or correctly.</p> <p>8 points - 2 of 10 theoretical questions are not answered properly or correctly.</p> <p>7 points - 3 of 10 theoretical questions are not answered properly or correctly.</p> <p>6 points - 4 of 10 theoretical questions are not answered properly or correctly.</p> <p>5 points - 5 of 10 theoretical questions are not answered properly or correctly.</p> <p>0-4 points – 6 or more of 10 theoretical questions are not answered properly or correctly. Student knowledge and skills do not satisfy the minimal requirements.</p>
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REGARDING THE EXTERNAL EXAMINATION OF THE COURSE UNIT

Mark <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		If permitted, please provide the conditions	
Not permitted	<input type="checkbox"/>	Permitted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			<p>For those wishing to take the external examination of this course unit, the course assessment consists of an individual project (30%); a group project (30%); and an exam (30%). Projects must be submitted to the lecturer via email (or uploaded to the e-learning platform) and presented using MS Teams no later than 5 days before the date of assessment/exam.</p> <p>When evaluating projects and exam, the same criteria are applied as when studying the subject regularly.</p>

REGARDING THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (GenAI) TOOLS (SUCH AS "CHATGPT", ETC.) WHEN STUDYING THE COURSE UNIT

Mark <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		If permitted, please provide the conditions	
Not permitted	<input type="checkbox"/>	Permitted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			<p>GenAI may only be used if the lecturer specifies that a particular assignment may be completed using GenAI; otherwise, the assignment will not be evaluated.</p> <p>If the use of GenAI tools is permitted for completing assignments, the citation requirements set forth in the Guidelines for the Use of Artificial Intelligence at Vilnius University must be strictly followed.</p>

REGARDING ACADEMIC PROGRESS

A student who (1) **throughout the semester consistently** fails to demonstrate **progress in achieving the expected learning outcomes of a subject (module)** during the practical classes (seminars, exercises, laboratory work, etc.) and (2) fails to complete all interim assessment requirements and tasks within the time specified in the course description, is not allowed to participate in the examination session.

Author (-s)	Publishing year	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing house or web link
Required reading				
Angle, P. M.	2001	<i>The American Reader</i>		Kessinger Publishing
Bryson, B.	2001	<i>Made in America: An Informal History of the English Language in the United States</i>		New York: Perennial
Campbell, N., Kean, A.	2000	<i>American Cultural Studies: an Introduction to American Culture</i>		Routledge
Erdman Farrell, A.	2011	<i>Fat Shame: Stigma and the Fat Body in American Culture</i>		New York University Press
Cassill, R. V.	2001	<i>The Norton Anthology of Contemporary Fiction</i>		New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Howard, C.	1994	<i>An Outline of American History</i>		Washington, D.C. : USIA
Smith, P.	2000	<i>A New Age Now Begins: A people's History of the American Revolution</i>		New York: Penguin Books
Temperley, H., Bigsby, C.	2013	<i>A New Introduction to American Studies</i>		Taylor and Francis
Urofsky, M. I.	1998	<i>Basic Readings in U.S. Democracy.</i>		Washington, D.C. : USIA
Recommended reading				
Escobedo, D.	2021	<i>Native American Boarding School Policy: Patriotic Pageantry and Militarized regimen in Indian Schools During the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century.</i>	The Toro Historical Review, 11(1), 1–21.	https://doi.org/10.46787/tt.hr.v11i1.2576
Garcia Delgado, A. K.	2020	<i>The Institution of Slavery in British Colonial America</i>	The Toro Historical Review, 9(1).	https://doi.org/10.46787/tt.hr.v9i1.2400
Gubar, S.	2000	<i>Racechanges: White Skin, Black Face in American Culture</i>		Oxford University Press
Lewis, R. D.	2006	<i>When Cultures Collide</i>		Boston: Nicholas Brealey Publishing
Rubin, R. L., Melnick, J.	2006	<i>Immigration and American Popular Culture: An Introduction</i>		NYU Press
Serrano, J.	2020	<i>Propaganda on the American Home Front: The Driving Force of Mobilization.</i>	The Toro Historical Review, 9(1).	https://doi.org/10.46787/tt.hr.v9i1.2397
Villalobos, J.	2025	<i>Call It a Femicide: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.</i>	The Toro Historical Review, 16(1), 74–96.	https://journals.calstate.edu/tthr/article/view/5182

NOTE: Additional sources may be recommended for specific topics.