

HUMAS8AB AMERICAN HISTORY AND CIVILIZATION

HUMAS8AB		ECTS Credits : 2		Semester : S8
American history and civilization		Duration : 24 hours		
Person(s) in charge :				
Susan MOLLON, ELC, susan.mollon@mines-nancy.univ-lorraine.fr				
Keywords : USA, History, Culture, Distinctive features, American Dream				
Prerequisites :				
None				
Objective :				
Study the various aspects of the so-called American Dream				
Teaching goals				
<p>A land coveted by the Spanish conquistadores in quest of Eldorado, then by the English Puritans in search of a lost paradise, ever since it was "discovered", North America has held a continuing fascination, as it has been shown by the waves of immigrants who brought their aspirations and their dreams to the new world. Ever since the beginning of their short history, the United States has exacerbated this need for the ideal, for the conquest of new geographic and spiritual territories by affirming the Manifest Destiny of their nation, all the while playing an increasingly important role in world affairs. Presenting themselves as the bearers of universal values such as liberty and democracy, and asserting themselves as the only power capable of defending and disseminating them, the United States has sparked contrasting reactions in different parts of the world. The objective of this course will be to study the different facets of what is commonly called "The American Dream" and to compare the myths conveyed through literature, the media and popular culture – particularly the cinema – to the political, economical and sociological realities, with the aim to shed some light on our perception of a country often excessively simplified.</p>				
Program and content :				
<p>Reading the documents furnished by the teacher beforehand will allow the students to get accustomed to the subjects dealt with in each class. These documents will be completed and further detailed in class. Students will also be called upon successively to lead the class, in groups of 2 or 3, in a debate on the subject of the day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Founding myths: America "wanted before being found"• Historical and geographical landmarks• "Give me your poor": Hopes and vicissitudes of immigration• The Chosen People and the Manifest Destiny• "Democracy in America"• The "Trail of Tears" of the North American Indians• "I have a dream": racial minorities in the United States• School, the leavening of American democracy?• Hollywood and the ideology of the "Dream"• Hollywood and the pastoral myth• Should one speak of the "American Empire"?• Faces of anti-Americanism• "In God we trust": religion and society in the United States• "Clash of civilizations"?• Conclusion: The United States and tomorrow's challenges <p>.</p>				
Evaluation :				
<input type="checkbox"/> Written Test	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuous Control	<input type="checkbox"/> Oral report	<input type="checkbox"/> Project	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Written Report