

181:152
 “ AMERICA IN OTHER WORDS”
 Draft #1
 1/13/06

Nataša Ďurovičová
 natasa-durovicova@uiowa.edu
 International Writing Program
 100 Shambaugh House
 Office hours: R 12:30 –2pm
 335-2089

Spring 2006
 Tuesday/Thursday 10:55 am-12:15pm
 Phillips 319

The goal of this course is to sample a variety of representations and readings of the imaginary space of "America" at the present moment, from a variety of non-American perspectives.

Its working hypothesis is three-fold: a) that in the last twenty or so years, the image the US in the global landscape has undergone changes, first in the wake of the cold-war/bipolar era and then, more radically, in the post-9/11 period, b) that this emerging array of responses can be read off from a variety of discourses, non-fictional as well as fictional, which concern themselves with “America” (the quotation marks intend to distinguish between the political entity USA and the symbolic space it occupies in the imagination of the outside world); and c) that the linguistic, institutional and technological channels that mediate access to these discourses are themselves worth investigating.

You will be expected to (a) do the assigned readings/view the assigned films before the class meeting; (b) participate actively in discussions, and (c) write a short (1p) journal entry per week pertinent to the course’s topic and the materials at hand. At times this may involve annotated web surfing.

Those taking the class for 3 s.h.r. will also write two short (5-7 p) papers on a topic they will first discuss with the instructor, and present in class on 4/25.

Updated versions of the syllabus will be posted at www.uiowa.edu/~iwp/courses.

A copy of the required readings will be available in the Reserve Book Room. The films will be on reserve in Media Services.

*

The administrative home for this course is the International Writing Program; its academic administration is through the University College. The IWP Director is Christopher Merrill (christopher-merrill@uiowa.edu); the main office is in the Shambaugh House (SHSE), 430 N. Clinton (335-0128).

Students requiring special accommodations on grounds of disability should contact the instructor for appropriate arrangement.

*

WEEK 1:

- **1/17** Introduction to course.
-- Grigorova, "American Mammals" (handout)
- **1/19** 11'09"01: *September 11* (France, 2002) clips
(Suggested: <http://conconflicts.ssrc.org/USA/smith/pf/>)

I. Direct Address: addressing the US on its own terms.**WEEK 2:**

- **1/24** "Americanism" and "anti-Americanism": terms of debate, methods, some pre-history.
Handouts:
-Cunliffe; "New World, Old World: the Historical Antithesis,"
-Valladao, from *The 21st Century Will Be American*,
-Tepperman, "The Anti-anti-Americans"
-Kinzer, "America Yawns at Foreign Fiction"
-Vuillermey, "Farewell, America"
- **1/26** : GRANTA #77: "How They See Us";
--parts available at http://www.granta.com/back-issues/77?usca_p=t
--BBC's interview program: "What the World Thinks of America"
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/wtwt/2993310.stm>

WEEK 3

- **1/31:** The old empire speaks to the new empire.
Mikhail Iossel and Jeff Parker, eds: *AMERIKA: Russian Writers View The United States*
- **2/2:** Finish *AMERIKA* and TBA

WEEK 4

- **2/7** Breaking into the mall: foreign films reflect (on) the US
Dancer in the Dark (Denmark: L. von Trier, 2001).
-http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1069/is_5_36/ai_65643699/pg_2
- **2/9** clips /TBA
Recommended: Toby Miller: "American Popular Culture Abroad" (handout)

2. Address in translation: what we are ready to hear**WEEK 5**

- **2/14** The German perspective:
---G. Gemünden, *Framed Visions*, "Introduction"
P.S. Jungk, *The Perfect American*, (translated from the German by Michael Hoffman), ch. 1-3
- **2/16** Finish *The Perfect American*

WEEK 6

- **2/ 21** The French perspective:

Selections from de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1840) and Levy, *American Vertigo*
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/toc_indx.html>

--7PM Bernard Henri Levy reading from *American Vertigo* (Prarie Lights Books)

- **2/ 23** Jean Baudrillard, "Utopia Achieved." From *America* (translated from the French by Chris Turner).

WEEK 7

- **2/28** - Finish Baudrillard and Levy
- **3/2** [no class]

WEEK 8

- **3/7** Bollywood, "America" and post-colonialism
*Pardes*_(India: Subhash Ghai, 1997)
- **3/9** TBA

[Spring break]

WEEK 9

- **3/21** The Islamic perspective, mediated:
Slimane Benaïssa: *The Last Night of a Damned Soul* (translated from the French by Jan and Daniel Gross)
- **3/23** Selections from Adonis and *Iraqi Poetry Today* (handouts)

WEEK 10

- **3/28 +30** (tentatively): From *Macondo* to *McOndo*--South/North/America
Alberto Fuguet, *The Movies of My Life* (2003)

3. Reading America in cyberspace.

WEEK 11

- 4/4 +6: Issues in global media and world English.

Read

-Selections from Jeremy Turnstall, *Media Are American* (2nd edition)

-Rob Kroes, "Citizenship and Cyberspace," from *Them And Us: Questions of Citizenship in a globalizing World*

-<http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/8.05/tpintro.html> (special issue of *Wired* on translation, May 2000)

-http://www.fpcj.jp/e/gyouji/asia/asia_6.html

-http://crofsblogs.typepad.com/ckbetas/2004/11/the_rise_of_glo.html

-<http://www.swissinfo.org/sfr/swissinfo.html?siteSect=2105&sid=4467958>

WEEK 12

- 4/11 + 13

Websurfing China (guest/workshop)

Reading TBA

WEEK 13

- 4/18 + 20

Websurfing Japan (guest/workshop)

Reading TBA

WEEK 14

- 4/18 + 20

Websurfing the Arabic www. Cyber Islam (guest/workshop)

Reading TBA

WEEK 14

- 5/2

Paper reports. Wrap up.

**