

COURSE INFORMATION

EUPeace Alliance University	Marburg University
Course Title	“Make America Great Again”? Or Just Authoritarian?
Department and/or Faculty	FB10 Fremdsprachliche Philologien Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures
Course Code	LV-10-008-572
Course Type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Curricular <input type="checkbox"/> Non-curricular	Course Modality <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Synchronous <input type="checkbox"/> Asynchronous <input type="checkbox"/> Both (A/S)ynchronous </div> <div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In-person <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lecture <input type="checkbox"/> Laboratory </div> </div>
Date	14.10.2025 – 10.02.2026
Language(s) of Instruction	English
Course Coordinator	Prof. Dr. Carmen Birkle
Course Instructor	Prof. Dr. Carmen Birkle

TARGET AUDIENCE

Suitable as Pre-Service Teacher Training Course

☐ Pre-primary ☐ Primary ☒ Secondary Lower ☒ Secondary Upper ☐ Tertiary

Suitable as In-Service Professional Development Course

☐ Pre-primary ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary Lower ☐ Secondary Upper ☐ Tertiary

Suitable for non-student body

☐ Administrative staff ☐ Other

TYPE – WORKLOAD – RECOGNITION

Number of hours	360
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ECTS Credits	12 (You can earn 12 ECTS credits in the <i>Specialization: English and American Studies</i> module if you also attend course <i>The African Presence in North America</i>)
<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate	

COURSE DESCRIPTION (EN/L1 [if taught in L1])

Content

What is currently happening in the United States is neither unique nor uniquely American, but it is both surprising and shocking in a nation that prides itself on American exceptionalism, on ideas of the American Dream for everyone, and on being the greatest democracy on earth. It is not unique because we see autocratic and / or totalitarian regimes emerge in many parts of the world. It is shocking because people did not believe that Donald Trump’s administration would establish the basis for such a regime in such a short period of time. Ignoring early signs leads to irrevocable power structures, as dystopian fiction has told us over and over again. In this seminar, we will briefly look at the historical and political structures of the U.S. government (e.g., checks and balances, the history and role of the president, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution) in order to then explain executive orders, the role of the Supreme Court, and Project 2025 (including the Heritage Foundation), in each case with current prominent examples (e.g., “protection of women”; abortion; education). We will then begin our reading of dystopian fiction (in chronological order), starting with Sinclair Lewis’s *It Can’t Happen Here* (1935) and moving on to George Orwell’s *1984* (1949), Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985), and Suzanne Collins’s *The Hunger Games* (2008; reading the first novel but also touching upon the other two books of the original trilogy). As a final step, we will look at the film *The Apprentice* (2024) in order to trace early influences and mindsets of the young Trump. Key issues in the seminar will be questions of power, gender, and language, which we will address in both the political and literary realms.

Competences & Learning Objectives

This course will serve to enhance critical thinking as a necessary objective in teaching (also in high school).

LINK to Course Details | Click [here](#)