

Mash-Ups, Remixes, and Hybrids: The New American Literature

Tony Magagna, Ph.D., Millikin University (Fulbright Lecturer, Potsdam University)

I hope to highlight the trend among contemporary American writers to bend, break, or simply ignore many traditional literary “boundaries.” I will discuss how, amid the pervasive social, cultural, and technological diversity of the global era, American writers have increasingly blurred the edges of genre, form, and canon to craft a new American literature that challenges what we define as both “literature” and “American.”

Movement and Meanings: New Approaches to the Study of American Migration History

Katherine D. Moran, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (Fulbright Professor, Free University Berlin)

The idea that the United States is a “nation of immigrants” plays a large role in American culture. Scholars have described the United States in many different ways—as a “melting pot,” a “salad bowl,” or a “symphony orchestra” of different immigrant groups—yet all have agreed that immigration has contributed significantly to the formation of the nation, and continues to do so today. At the same time, scholars also recognize the importance of large-scale migrations within the boundaries of the United States, such as the westward migrations of the 19th century to the mass suburbanization after the Second World War. Migration history is an innovative and growing field, and this talk will offer an introduction to a variety of different approaches to the subject. Approaches include: the study of immigration as ethnic history, the history of immigration law and policy, the history of nativism and anti-immigrant sentiment in the U.S., the history of multiculturalist and pluralist thought in the U.S., the importance of large migrations within U.S. borders as well as across them, the global context of U.S. migration history, the role of transportation and communication technologies in migration history, and the intersection of themes of race, class, gender, and religion in migration history.

The Pilgrims’ English

Prof. Dr. Alexander Brock (MLU Halle-Wittenberg)

People often stress the differences between American and British English, and indeed they both sound quite different even to an untrained ear. But over the whole “tomayto—tomato”-debate we tend to forget that the English the Pilgrim Fathers took to America was the same language that was spoken in England in the early 17th century. This historical state of the English language is the focus of this lecture. We shall look at its lexicon, pronunciation, and grammar as well

as at some of the reasons for its change into modern British and American English.

Workshop: “American Culture(s)—Myths and Facts”

David Rinderknecht (Leipzig)

Workshop: “Theater and Performance”

Amber Smith (Leipzig)

In this workshop we will be discussing the use of drama activities in the foreign language classroom. Drama activities, such as improvisation, character creation and rehearsing scenes from the class play, can be used to explore the nuances of the foreign language that make it expressive. By integrating drama into their courses, teachers can place special emphasis on a variety of language features, be it word choice, pronunciation of individual phonemes or intonation. Students who experience drama activities in the classroom will be able to deliver lines of text or natural speech convincingly and confidently.