

Key Moments in American History, Part 1: From the Mayflower Pilgrims to the Civil War



Course description

The purpose of this seminar is to examine some key moments, movements and events in American history through a variety of documents (original texts and engravings, cartoons, Simpsons episodes, TV shows and documentaries). Some episodes or stories in US history have been told and retold so often that it is sometimes difficult to tell myth from reality; other important events or moments are less well known, especially in France, while they are crucial to the proper understanding of some fundamental issues in contemporary America. Our aim, then, will be twofold: we shall endeavor to reassess our knowledge of the most well-known episodes in American history, even as we try to gain some basic understanding of other periods, characters, and political, social or intellectual movements. All five CAE skills (aural comprehension, oral expression, oral interaction, written expression and written comprehension) will be practiced during this course.

Course pre-requisites (a) and assessment (b)

- (a)** An interest in both factual and cultural history.
The willingness to participate and share your thoughts and ideas.
A good command (B2 min) of both written and spoken English.
- (b)** The evaluation will consist of 50% for the continuous assessment (participation in class, attendance, homework) and 50% for the final exam.

Course Outline

1. The Mayflower Pilgrims, the world they came from, their sea voyage and the new world they created.
2. The Witches of Salem in the context of 17th century America.
3. The Political Birth of the American Nation.
4. The Expedition of Lewis and Clark: motives behind the voyage and key facts.
5. The election of Andrew Jackson and the birth of modern campaigning techniques.
6. The first American intellectuals: the New England Renaissance and the critical reception of the transcendentalists.