**Faculty of Humanities, Tunis**

**English Department**

**2018-2019**

**First year**

***Key concepts in civilisation and culture***

## Course objectives

This course is an introduction to the Anglo-American civilisation. It aims to give first year students an insight into life in the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The course will be structured around political, social and cultural key concepts. The British and American contexts would serve as examples to explain these notions since both countries stand for outstanding examples from the English-speaking world.

There will be a combination of oral lectures and in-class discussions of assigned readings. Short writing assignments and quizzes will be given out in class from time to time. Students are expected to participate in discussion and encouraged to ask questions and give comments on the readings when appropriate.

*There are at least 3objectives for this course:*

* The first is to provide students with a body of knowledge about some general key concepts. This knowledge is meant to be a background for your education and professional life.
* The second objective is to help you become better writers, by asking you to identify problems, analyse materials, evaluate options, and make your own arguments and conclusions. This objective will be achieved via in-class short writing assignments and written exam dissertations.
* The third objective is to encourage you to think critically. Civilisation and history are more than a compilation of facts. A historian does not only describe and tell stories of the past as they were recorded. The interpretation often influences the finished product. To understand the world, you need to know history, have your own interpretation of it and develop critical thinking skills decisive in shaping your future.

**Course structure during the second term**

The course is made up of **2-hour tutorials** over 19 weeks.

Attendance of tutorials is **more than** highly recommended.

Dates in 2018:

**(1)** 01/10/2018; **(2)** 08/10/2018**; (3)** 15/10/2018; **(4)** 22/10/2018; **(5)** 29/11/2018; **(6)** 05/11/2018; **(7)** 12/11/2018; **(8)** 19/11/2018; **(9)** 26/11/2018; **(10)** 03/12/2018

Dates in 2019:

**(11)** 01/02/2019; **(12)** 08/02/2019; **(13)**15/02/2019; **(14)** 22/02/2019; **(15)** 01/03/2019; **(16)** 08/ 03/ 2019; **(17)** 15/03/2019; **(18)** 05/04/2019; **(19)** 12/04/2019; **(20)**19/04/2019; **(20)**26/ 04/2019.

**Assessment**

Assessment will take place twice a year with a resit session.

* Midterm exam in January: a 2-hour written exam with a text commentary and related questions regarding course syllabus.
* Final exam in May: a 2-hour written exam with a topic regarding course syllabus.
* For those who fail in one of them or in both, there are catch-up exams in June: a 2-hour written exam for each term with a text commentary or a topic regarding the course syllabus.

**Course materials**

To explain the different concepts and reach the above stated objectives; we will rely on oral lectures, reading and analysis of both primary and secondary sources, discussion of historical video documentaries, quizzes and writing assignments.

**Teacher**

* Imen Boujedyene
* Anis Saadani

**Course outline**

**Introduction: The USA’sID**

1. Discovery and early history
2. A vast and diverse geography
3. A varied climate

**Theme 1: The political context**

Principles of the American political system

1. Federalism
2. Popular sovereignty
3. Liberalism, as part of the American (political) identity
4. Lobbying, a way of (political) life

Mechanisms of the American system of government

1. Checks and balances, the golden rule
2. A multilevel electoral system to guarantee representativeness

Layout of the American system of government

1. Presidency
2. The legislature
3. The judicial system

**Theme 2: The socio-economic context**

Pillars of the American economy

Immigration and its modern impacts

Social mobility

**Theme 3: Foreign policy & the US hegemony as a motto**

Interventionism

Americanisation of the world

**Theme 4: The cultural context**

Religion in the USA

American conservatism

The entertaining industry

1. Sports, a story of shame& glory
2. Cinema, an icon of American hegemony