

## COURSE DETAIL

### NAVIGATING THE UNKNOWN: UNCERTAINTY IN THE HISTORY OF NORTH AMERICA AND BEYOND

**Country**

Germany

**Host Institution**

Free University of Berlin

**Program(s)**

Free University Berlin

**UCEAP Course Level**

Upper Division

**UCEAP Subject Area(s)**

History American Studies

**UCEAP Course Number**

151

**UCEAP Course Suffix****UCEAP Official Title**

NAVIGATING THE UNKNOWN: UNCERTAINTY IN THE HISTORY OF NORTH AMERICA AND BEYOND

**UCEAP Transcript Title**

UNCERTNTY NA HIST

**UCEAP Quarter Units**

4.50

## **UCEAP Semester Units**

3.00

### **Course Description**

The current uncertain times are marked by political upheavals, rapid technological change, and ecological loss and crisis. Yet, this perception of uncertainty is not unique to the present. How have people made sense of the unknown in the past? How have they tried to predict, control, or survive uncertain futures? This seminar explores how individuals, communities, and institutions have historically responded to uncertainty, in North America and beyond. Seminar topics therefore include religious beliefs and prophecies, narratives of destiny and utopia, science and statistics, social planning, bureaucracy and record-keeping, violence and exclusion, art, sports, as well as turns to history itself. Furthermore, the class discusses how historians themselves deal with uncertainty in their work: from gaps in the archives and collective memory, to epistemological questions, biases in historical research, and contested interpretations of the past. Through these themes, students are introduced to the foundational skills of studying history: how to ask critical questions, develop an argument, read primary and secondary sources, and how to write (about) history. A field trip to a local archive offers practical insights into what it means to work as a historian, and the uncertainties that come with it.

### **Language(s) of Instruction**

English

### **Host Institution Course Number**

32400

### **Host Institution Course Title**

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### **Host Institution Course Details**

<https://www.fu-berlin.de/vv/en/lv/1036120?m=361243&pc=701222&sm=934771>

<b>Host Institution Campus</b>
<b>Host Institution Faculty</b>
<b>Host Institution Degree</b>
<b>Host Institution Department</b> John-F-Kennedy-Institut für Nordamerikastudien
<b>Course Last Reviewed</b> 2025-2026

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