
American Studies in Switzerland : A Preliminary Overview



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- 1 In contrast to many other Western European countries, there are no independent departments of American Studies at Swiss Universities. Many of the seminars and institutes are not large enough to allow narrow specialization. Chairholders are therefore often generalists in terms of teaching, although their research may be more focused. Some departments have professorships which are defined as chairs in “American Literature” (Basel, Geneva, Lausanne)—the majority, however, have chairs in “English and American Literature” (Bern, Basel, Fribourg, Neuchâtel, Zurich). It is therefore not possible to study “American Literature” or “American Studies” at one of the Swiss universities as a major, or, indeed, a first or second minor. Instead, American Literature / American Studies is integrated to a greater or lesser degree (depending on the students’ interests and the offerings of the departments) in “English”, “Anglistik”, “English Languages and Literatures”, etc. as the subjects are called in the various departments.
- 2 Historically, American Literature was offered for the first time in Switzerland at the universities of Basel and Zurich in the 1930s. In Basel, the first courses were taught by Prof. Henry Luedecke who later published a *Geschichte der Amerikanischen Literatur* (History of American Literature 1952, second edition 1963). In Zurich, American Literature was introduced to the department by Prof. Heinrich Straumann who also wrote a study of American Literature—*American Literature in the Twentieth Century*—an overview which was published in 1965 by Harper and Row. Both, Luedecke and Straumann basically taught English but offered courses in American Literature regularly.
- 3 In the course of the twentieth century, more and more universities filled at least one chair with a professor who would offer both, English and American Literature. The first (and up to now only) department to have a chair in American Studies was the University of Geneva where John G. Blair was Professor of American Literature and Civilization until recently.
- 4 At present, the situation of English and American Literature is the following (listed by university, in alphabetical order, and including also the chairs in linguistics which are part of many departments):

- 5 Basel
- 6 Englisches Seminar
- 7 <http://pages.unibas.ch/anglist/>
- 8 - Prof. Dr. Balz Engler (English Literature)
- 9 - Prof. Dr. Hartwig Isernhagen (American Literature)
- 10 - Prof. Dr. Christoph Ribbat (Assistant Professor of North American Literatures and Cultures)
- 11 - Dr. Werner Brönnimann (Titularprofessor English and American Studies)
- 12 - Dr. Franziska Gygax (Titularprofessorin English and American Literature)
- 13 - Dr. Therese Steffen (Titularprofessorin Gender Studies in the Anglophone Context)
- 14 Bern
- 15 Institut für englische Sprachen und Literaturen
- 16 <http://www.cx.unibe.ch/ens/>
- 17 - Prof. Dr. Margaret Bridges (Medieval English Language and Literature)
- 18 - Prof. Dr. Werner Senn (English Literature)
- 19 - Prof. Dr. Gabriele Rippl (English and American Literature)
- 20 - Prof. Dr. Christiane Schlote (Assistant Professor in Post-Colonial Literature)
- 21 Fribourg
- 22 Department of English Studies
- 23 <http://www.unifr.ch/das/>
- 24 - Prof. Dr. Dimiter Daphinoff (English Literature)
- 25 - Prof. Dr. Anthony Mortimer (English Literature)
- 26 - Prof. Dr. Robert Rehder (English and American Literature)
- 27 Geneva
- 28 Département de langue et littérature anglaises
- 29 <http://www.unige.ch/lettres/angle/>
- 30 - Prof. Dr. David Spurr (Modern English Literature)
- 31 - Prof. Dr. Guillemette Bolens (Medieval English Literature)
- 32 - Prof. Dr. Deborah Madsen (American Literature)
- 33 - Prof. Dr. Lukas Erne (Modern English Literature)
- 34 Lausanne
- 35 English Department
- 36 <http://www2.unil.ch/angl/>
- 37 - Prof. Dr. Neil Forsythe (English Literature)
- 38 - Prof. Dr. Peter Halter (American Literature)
- 39 - Prof. Dr. Denis Renevey (Old and Middle English)
- 40 Neuchâtel
- 41 Institute of English Studies

- 42 <http://www2.unine.ch/anglais>
- 43 - Prof. Dr. Patrick Vincent (English and American Literature)
- 44 - Prof. Dr. Lukas Erne (Visiting Professor in English Literature)
- 45 St. Gallen
- 46 Fachbereich Englische Sprache und Literatur
- 47 <http://www.kwa.unisg.ch/org/kwa/web.nsf/wwwPubInhalteGer/Englische+Sprache+und+Literatur?opendocument>
- 48 - Prof. Dr. Alan Robinson (English)
- 49 - Dr. Werner Brönnimann (Titularprofessor English and American Studies)
- 50 Zürich
- 51 Englisches Seminar
- 52 <http://www.es.unizh.ch/>
- 53 - Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Bronfen (English and American Literature)
- 54 - Prof. Dr. Andreas Fischer (English Philology)
- 55 - Prof. Dr. Udo Fries (English Linguistics)
- 56 - Prof. Dr. Martin Heusser (19th- and 20th-Century Literatures in English)
- 57 - Prof. Dr. Peter Hughes (English and American Literature)
- 58 - Prof. Dr. Allen Reddick (English Literature)
- 59 - Dr. Fritz Gutbrodt (Titularprofessor Modern Literatures in English and Comparative Literature)
- 60 - Dr. Hans Osterwalder (Titularprofessor English Literature)
- 61 - Dr. Therese Steffen (Titularprofessorin Gender Studies in the Anglophone)
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