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[FACULTÉ DES LETTRES](http://www.unige.ch/lettres/)

MAÎTRISE UNIVERSITAIRE (MASTER OF ARTS, MA) - ANGLAIS
MA1 : LANGUE ET LITTÉRATURE ANGLAISES I

**The Rhetoric of American Exceptionalism**

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| Code | Durée par semaine | Horaire |
| 34E0195 | 2 h de séminaire | SE 2h P Je 14-16, B104 |

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| **Enseignant(s)** |
| [MADSEN Deborah Lea](http://wadme.unige.ch:3149/pls/opprg/w_rech_cours.resultat_rech?P_CN_INDIVIDU=134908&P_ANNEE=2013), professeur-e ordinaire[, coordonnées professionnelles](http://wadme.unige.ch:3149/pls/opprg/w_rech_cours.page_detail_prof?p_langue=1&p_annee=2013&p_prof=134908) |
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| **Descriptif** |
| Contemporary political discourse in the United States is informed by the exceptionalist assumption that America possesses a special, exceptional, destiny to save the world. In this seminar, we will analyze the rhetoric of exceptionalism as we encounter it in public documents such as governmental websites, tourism websites, public lectures and video posted online, blogs, online newspapers, and digital images. Though the focus will be on contemporary articulations of exceptionalism, we will trace the inheritance of this idea in key documents from the seventeenth century onwards. The topics covered include: origins and theories of American Exceptionalism, the forms of exceptionalist rhetoric, the concept of the US as a 'Redeemer Nation,' 'Manifest Destiny,' the 'American Dream,' and opposition to the exceptionalist view of the US. The seminar does not ask whether Americans are somehow 'different' or whether there is any truth to the exceptionalist description of the US; rather, our interest will be directed towards understanding how this narrative of national formation has endured as a powerful rhetorical structure that continues to shape the public rhetoric of US identity. Throughout the seminar we will also ask: how can the techniques of literary and cultural analysis transform the digital media of the internet into a body of knowledge? |