



American Resource Center Newsletter
 U.S. Embassy Helsinki
 January 2016, Issue 1

Happy New Year!
Hyvää Uutta Vuotta!

Thank you to all of our friends and visitors for the past year!

We have had many fun times with you - thank you all for visiting our events and attending our briefings! Hope to see you again in 2016.



2015 WAS A GOOD YEAR



State of the Union Address on January 12, 2016

President Obama will deliver his final State of the Union address on January 12, 2016. Stay up to date at the White House website at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sotu> and at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/11/30/when-2016-state-union>.

In the trivia section of the White House website you can check which president delivered the longest or the shortest State of the Union, and what the State of the Union was originally called.

#SOTU

American Resource Center aloittaa vuoden 2016 järjestämällä luentosarjan *Tulevaisuuden Yhdysvallat* yhdessä Helsingin yliopiston Pohjois-Amerikan tutkimuksen kanssa. Helsingin yliopiston luennoitsijat tutkivat kuuden torstai-illan ajan tulevaisuuden Yhdysvaltoja. Tervetuloa mukaan aikamatkalle!

The Future of the United States / Tulevaisuuden Yhdysvallat

luentosarja Kaisa-kirjastossa torstaisin klo 17:00-18:30

The United States has often been seen as the beacon of the future; what takes place in the U.S. today might take place elsewhere tomorrow, whether it is the idea of democracy or hip hop music. How do we see the future of American society? What kinds of hopes, dreams, fears or possibilities do we attach to America and its possible future? Do various utopias or dystopias tell more about life today than future developments? In what ways do cultural products like science fiction or political rhetoric reflect possible futures of the United States? Have these imaginary scenarios come true or not?

This lecture series will explore old and new visions for the American future. We will seek explanations for today's United States from past experiences and we will boldly go where no one has gone before and look at the imaginary United States of Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton.

21.1. Alkuperäiskansat, maailmankuvat ja luonto
Rani-Henrik Andersson

28.1. Evolution of Civil Rights
Jonathan Lagerquist

4.2. Demokratian kriisi
Jüho Turpeinen

11.2. Kuolemattomuuden saavuttaminen
Outi Hakola

18.2. The Future Is a Choice Between Star Trek and The Matrix
Janne Salminen

25.2. "What If They're All Us? Star Trek and the Universalization of the American Imaginary."
Austin Lane Crothers & Martha C. Horst



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WebPicks

collected by the ARC staff

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American Life

The Domsday Invention by Raffi Khatchadourian. The New Yorker, November 23, 2015.

Will artificial intelligence bring us utopia or destruction?

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/11/23/doomsday-invention-artificial-intelligence-nick-bostrom>

The History of the United States' First Refugee Crisis by Nicholas Foreman. Smithsonian Magazine, January 5, 2016.

Fleeing the Haitian revolution, whites and free blacks were viewed with suspicion by American slaveholders, including Thomas Jefferson.

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/history-united-states-first-refugee-crisis-180957717/>

The Siege of Miami by Elizabeth Kolbert. The New Yorker, December 21&28, 2015.

As temperatures climb, so, too, will sea levels.

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/12/21/the-siege-of-miami>

Smile, Frown, Grimace and Grin —Your Facial Expression Is the Next Frontier in Big Data by Jerry Adler. Smithsonian Magazine, December 2015.

Engineer Rana el Kaliouby is set to change the way we interact with our devices—and each other.

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/rana-el-kaliouby-ingenuity-awards-technology-180957204/?no-ist>

The Truth About Mexican-Americans by Julia Preston. The New York Review of Books, December 3, 2015.

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2015/12/03/truth-about-mexican-americans/>

The Women of Hollywood Speak Out by Maureen Dowd. The New York Times Magazine, November 20, 2015.

Female executives and filmmakers are ready to run studios and direct blockbuster pictures. What will it take to dismantle the pervasive sexism that keeps them from doing it?

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/22/magazine/the-women-of-hollywood-speak-out.html?_r=0

Economy & Politics

Amazon Dominated Nearly Everything This Year by Alex Shephard. New Republic, December 21, 2015.

With \$100 billion in revenue in sight, Amazon's terrifying logistical takeover of the world may soon be complete.

<https://newrepublic.com/article/126369/amazon-dominated-nearly-everything-year>

The Equalizer: Bill de Blasio vs. Inequality by Molly Ball. The Atlantic, December 2015.

The New York City mayor has some big ideas, but they may be too much too fast. This past May, Bill de Blasio, the first-term mayor of New York City, traveled south from his home turf to Washington, D.C. He had come to solve America's problems.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/12/the-equalizer/413158/>

The Front-Runner Fallacy by David Greenberg. The Atlantic, December 2015.

Early U.S. presidential polls have tended to be wildly off-target. There's no reason to think this time is different.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/12/the-front-runner-fallacy/413173/>

The Primary That Disqualified the Qualified by Robert Draper. The New York Times Magazine, December 29, 2015.

This year, Republican voters rebelled against any candidates with real governing experience.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/03/magazine/the-primary-that-disqualified-the-qualified.html>

The Ugly, Offensive Year in Immigration Politics by Steven Cohen. New Republic, December 28, 2015.

Xenophobic rhetoric overwhelmed meaningful action to address the reasons migrants are on the move in record numbers.

<https://newrepublic.com/article/126588/ugly-offensive-year-immigration-politics>

Global Challenges

The U.S. is the Chair of the Arctic Council from May 2015 through May 2017. We will be highlighting Arctic issues in the WebPicks through the chairmanship.

Alarming Research Finds Humans Are Using up Far More of Earth's Water than Previously Thought by Chelsea Harvey. The Washington Post, December 3, 2015.

Freshwater is one of the planet's most precious resources — and as the global population grows and our demand for water rises, so does the need to carefully monitor its use and availability. But in a worrying new study in the journal *Science*, scientists argue that we've been significantly underestimating our water footprint — in fact, their research raises the estimate of our global water consumption by nearly 20 percent and suggests that we may have crossed an unsustainable threshold in our water use.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2015/12/03/alarming-research-says-humans-are-using-up-far-more-water-than-previously-thought/>

America's Food System Could Be More Vulnerable to Climate Change Than We Thought by Tim McDonnell. Mother Jones, January 6, 2016. New research quantifies the devastating impact of extreme weather on essential crops.

<http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2016/01/americas-food-system-could-be-more-vulnerable-climate-change-we-thought>

Could Renewable Energy Be Stored in Balloons in the Ocean? by Maya Wei-Haas. Smithsonian, January 6, 2016.

Underwater compressed air energy storage is promising, but the fate of this tech remains unknown

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/could-renewable-energy-be-stored-balloons-ocean-180957603/#wLOFxeZPv6upJoo7.99>

Farming and the Return of the Local Economy by Gary Kleppel. Mother Earth News, December 2015.

Discover how the rise of farmers markets and CSA programs are helping to bolster local economies and eliminate the inherent risks of farming.

<http://www.motherearthnews.com/homesteading-and-livestock/sustainable-farming/farming-return-of-local-economy-zeoz1512zhou.aspx>

Road Trip? Record Numbers of Americans Hit the Highway by Jarrett Renshaw et al. The Christian Science Monitor, December 16, 2015.

Cheaper gasoline means more Americans are driving — and are buying trucks and SUVs — which means US fuel economy and greenhouse gas emissions are going in the wrong direction, a government report says.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Society/2015/1216/Road-trip-Record-numbers-of-Americans-hit-the-highway>

Arctic Issue: See for Yourself: How Arctic Ice Is Disappearing. National Geographic, December 14, 2015.

Since satellites began regularly measuring Arctic sea ice in 1979, it has declined sharply in extent and thickness. Much of the ice that's there in winter is thin stuff that doesn't survive the summer. The loss of ice is affecting the entire Arctic ecosystem, from plankton to polar bears. And some scientists think that, by altering the jet stream, it's affecting weather—and people—around the Northern Hemisphere.

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2016/01/arctic-ice-shrinking-graphic-environment-text>

Arctic Issue: Thinning Ice Leads to Winter Warming in the Arctic by Thomas Sumner. ScienceNews, November 23, 2015.

Heat-trapping blanket of moisture rising from the sea causes trouble for North Pole, climate simulation shows.

<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/thinning-ice-leads-winter-warming-arctic>

International Relations

Avoiding War in Europe: The Risks from NATO-Russian Close Military Encounters by Ian Kearns. Arms Control Today, November 2015.

Whether or not the current situation amounts to a new Cold War, the upshot is a confrontation in which both sides now perceive their fundamental interests to be at stake.

https://www.armscontrol.org/ACT/2015_11/Features/Avoiding-War-in-Europe-The-Risks-from-NATO-Russian-Close-Military-Encounters

The Global Conflicts to Watch in 2016 by Uri Friedman. The Atlantic, December 17, 2015.

Concerns about the Middle East, and especially Syria, have displaced other threats.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/12/global-conflicts-wars-2016/420426/>

Kremlin Caricature: Washington's Distorted View of Russia and Putin by Paul Starobin. The National Interest, December 14, 2015.

Gleeful jokes come as more thoughtful consideration of the U.S.-Russia relationship is sorely needed.

<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/kremlin-caricature-washingtons-distorted-view-russia-putin-14620>

Natural Resources Were Supposed to Make Afghanistan Rich. Here's What's Happening to Them by Antony Loewenstein. The Nation, December 14, 2015.

Traveling to Logar Province reveals unmanageable violence and co-optation by foreign companies.

<http://www.thenation.com/article/resources-were-supposed-to-make-afghanistan-rich/>

The Syrian Civil War and its Consequences for Hezbollah by Benedetta Berti. FPRI E-notes, December 2015.

Beginning as a largely non-violent, non-sectarian political mobilization, the Syrian revolution gradually morphed into a protracted and bloody civil war as well as into a regional proxy conflict that has directly involved both regional states and non-state actors alike. Today, the Syrian conflict remains deeply internationalized, militarized and fractionalized. The domestic battlefield is characterized by a crucible of different political and armed movements. But while the fragmentation and proliferation of armed groups within the anti-Assad camp is well known, the Syrian regime has also been relying on a number of non-state allies. These include Syrian local 'community-defense' groups and other pro-regime paramilitary organizations; Shiite militia groups (mostly from Iraq) and, most notably, the Lebanese Hezbollah.

<http://www.fpri.org/articles/2015/12/syrian-civil-war-and-its-consequences-hezbollah>



Public lecture

Trigger Warnings, Racist Symbols, and Free Speech: American Campuses Today

by Cheryl Greenberg

Paul E. Raether Distinguished Professor of History
at Trinity College

Friday, January 15, at 13:00
Kaisa Library auditorium (7th floor)

Professor Cheryl Greenberg is visiting Finland in January 2016. She was the Bicentennial Chair in American Studies at Helsinki University in 2002-2003, and a visiting professor at the Renvall Institute in 2008. She is also Docent at the University of Helsinki in the North American Studies program. The American Resource Center has the pleasure of welcoming her for a free public lecture "Trigger Warnings, Racist Symbols and Free Speech: American Campuses Today" in which she debates over whether professors should issue "trigger warnings" for emotionally difficult course content as well as the recent campus protests over racism and racist imagery, and debates over free speech.



Professor Greenberg has taught at Trinity for most of her career. She teaches courses in African American history and the history of race in the U.S., as well as courses on many social and cultural history topics including crime, protest movements, Star Trek, and American society during and after the Cold War.

Professor Greenberg's research interests are equally varied, ranging from African American communities during the Great Depression to grass-roots organizing in the Civil Rights movement, and from postwar liberalism to Black-Jewish relations. Her current long-term projects include a history of civil rights organizations' views about "hate speech" legislation, and another tracing shifting African American attitudes toward gay marriage. She is also editing the memoir of a civil rights worker in Marks, Mississippi.



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