

REVIEW

Explorations in American Life and Culture

JAVORČÍKOVÁ, J. & DOVE, M. E. (2013). *Explorations in American Life and Culture*. Banská Bystrica : Fakulta humanitných vied v Banskej Bystrici, 203 s. ISBN 978-80-557-0611-5

The university coursebook *Explorations in American Life and Culture* focuses on the interdisciplinary field of cultural studies, with special emphasis on English-speaking countries and in particular the USA. Formally, the coursebook consists of ten systematically organized chapters which introduce a general theoretical background of the selected topic and also includes specific information such as facts about the country and the translation of specific terms from English into Slovak.

Explorations in American Life and Culture was written for a specific target-audience—university students of humanities and philology specialising in English and American Studies. However, the content of the coursebook is universal and may also be used in courses of “Realia of English-speaking Countries”, “Cultural Studies of the USA, Canada and Great Britain”, for specific needs of Departments of European Cultural Studies and also courses taught at various Faculties of International Relation and Political Science. The coursebook is written in the English language and therefore it is usable at various international educational institutions.

The coursebook fills a blank space among university coursebooks related to cultural studies in Slovakia. Although several publications have been published in Slovakia during the last decade, none of these is purposely written for the needs of an academic course of “realia” and none of them meets general spatial or temporal requirements of academic courses in Slovak universities. Moreover, most of the available publications in Slovakia (Czech and Slovak) serve different needs; they are more informal (Fraus, 2008), focused on preparation for a specific exam (e.g. *Príprava na maturitu z anglického jazyka*, 2010), or designed for specific purposes of departments of history, geography, and so on. These publications often skip important topics necessary for students of philology and English teacher training.

This dual-author (Javorčíková – Dove) publication is a contribution in other areas too. Contentwise, the first chapter introduces the subject of study, and the basic terminology of cultural studies, as well as exploring the benefits of cultural

studies for teachers and translators. Various theoretical ideas are illustrated by specific examples and case studies.

As to organisation, the coursebook stimulates interaction between the reader and the content – each chapter is accompanied by a set of exercises focused on translation, explanation and critical analysis of selected cultural problems. The graphical and formal part of the coursebook is also attractive and appealing to the reader; the text is segmented graphically, important terminology is printed and, in relevant cases, visual features such as photographs, illustrations and charts add to the information and throw more light on the discussion.

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