INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! Your application has been successful, and you have been admitted into the M.A. program in American Studies. We are pleased to welcome you to the University of Tübingen.

Beginning your Master’s degree may seem a complicated and daunting prospect. We are here to ease this process for you and guide you through the next steps. This handbook will provide you with all the basic information necessary to get you started in Tübingen.

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1. FINDING A PLACE TO LIVE

The first question you will likely have after having been admitted is how to find accommodation here in Tübingen. The sooner you sort this out, the better. Remember, Tübingen is a small city with a large number of students, which means that accommodation is in high demand as the semester approaches. In general, there are two housing types that students commonly use.

The student dormitories (‘Studentenwohnheime’) are scattered around the city and are an inexpensive student housing option. There are dorms in the historic old town (Altstadt), the quieter French quarter (Französisches Viertel), the mountainous WHO (Waldhäuser Ost), and several other parts of town. You will find detailed information regarding locations, room sizes, rent, etc. on the website of the Studierendenwerk (student union). This is also where you can fill out the online application form for a dorm room. If you are starting in the winter semester, you may apply starting 1 April of the same year; for the summer semester, applications are accepted starting 1 October of the previous year. As many students search for accommodation at the beginning of each semester, try to apply for a room as early as possible. You can do so without having been officially accepted by the university, and hand in your registration documents later.

Some students opt for private accommodation, such as flat sharing (WG, or ‘Wohngemeinschaft’). This allows for more flexibility in duration of the tenancy and location. However, private housing is usually significantly more expensive than accommodation offered by the Studierendenwerk. Websites such as WG-Gesucht (Flat Share Wanted) or the Facebook group “Wohnungen in und um Tübingen” (“Apartments in and around Tübingen”) can be of great help. These sites are often in German, but it is generally not a problem to contact people in English. In many cases, shared apartments accept
applications on a first-come, first-served basis. If you opt for private housing, you should update flatsharing offers several times a day and send out emails as soon as possible after a new offer has been uploaded. Be prepared to be in or around Tübingen when you search for private housing, as you most likely will be asked to present yourself in person. Otherwise, you might ask for a Skype interview. You should always view properties before signing a tenancy agreement.

2. GETTING TO TÜBINGEN

Tübingen can be reached by train with relative ease, as trains run regularly to and from Stuttgart. You can find national and international connections on the website of the German Rail (Deutsche Bahn).

You may also want to consider arriving by coach. Tübingen is quite well-connected in the route network of the company Flixbus. Use the search engine Comparabus to find and book connections. Fare prices are usually quite low, and baggage regulations often allow for up to two large suitcases next to one piece of hand luggage. In some cases, you may also take your bike.

You can, of course, also travel to Tübingen by plane. The nearest airport is Stuttgart-Echterdingen (STR). It is located about an hour’s journey from Tübingen on the 828 bus. Busses run twice every hour at most times of the day, and tickets can be bought from the driver.

3. GETTING AROUND IN TÜBINGEN

The easiest way to get around in Tübingen is using the local bus system. As a student, you may take the bus free of charge after 7 PM on weekdays and for the whole day on weekends and holidays by showing the corresponding paper slip you can download on the online system alma as soon as you are matriculated. Single tickets are €2.50. If you are planning on using the bus on a regular basis, it might be worth looking into buying a semester ticket (€104.90), which will allow you to travel on all city busses and some local trains for the entire duration of the semester (October through March and April through September, respectively). The smartphone app Naldo can be very useful in navigating the public transport system.

Many students in Tübingen get around by bicycle. Cycling in Tübingen is relatively stress-free, as distances are usually rather short. Various Facebook groups may be of use in finding used bikes for sale. Advertisements are also commonly posted around town. However, be aware that Tübingen is a rather hilly city. Bicycle transport is permitted on local busses outside the city center.
4. ENROLLING IN PERSON AT THE UNIVERSITY

Once you have accepted the offer to study at the University of Tübingen, you will have to enroll in person at the branch of the ‘Studierendensekretariat’ that is located in Nauklerstraße 2 (note: not the main Wilhelmstraße branch described here). This branch is responsible for the advising and admission of international students.

Please go to Nauklerstraße 2 during office hours and inquire about what you will need in order to formally enroll. See the university’s page on enrollment for international students and for German students for detailed information on this.

STUDYING

5. STRUCTURE OF YOUR STUDIES

Your M.A. program comprises four different pillars. The most important one is the Core Curriculum in Literary and Cultural Studies. Over the course of the first two to three semesters of your studies, you will complete four modules in this area.

- Two of these modules require you to combine a master seminar (S) with a lecture (‘Vorlesung’ or VL). Any combination is possible as long as the seminar and the lecture are listed on alma among the classes open to you. You will complete each of these modules with an oral exam of thirty minutes conducted by the instructor of the seminar. The exam will cover both the seminar and the lecture.

- The two other modules require you to combine a master seminar (S) with a workgroup (‘Arbeitsgemeinschaft’ or AG). In a workgroup you team up with other M.A. students in the class and work more or less independently, but of course supervised and supported by the instructor of the seminar, on a topic related to the class but not covered during the seminar meetings. At the end of the semester, your workgroup will do a presentation on your work, organize a small exhibition, or something similar. You will complete these modules with a term paper and a short report of ca. 5 pages on the findings of your workgroup and your process of collaboration that you hand in together with the term paper.

- You are perfectly free in which classes you choose for these four modules, meaning that you can either specialize early on or try to gain a broader picture. There is, however, one restriction. One of the two modules that you complete with a term
paper and a workgroup report must focus on the time before the American Civil War (meaning from the 17th century to the 1860s), the other must focus on the time after that war (from the 1860s to the present). If you cannot tell from the description or title of a master seminar on alma whether the class covers the pre-Civil War or the post-Civil War period, feel free to contact the lecturer.

The second pillar of your program is the Interdisciplinary Profile, which allows you to take classes in other departments (e.g. history, sociology, political science, law) that either deal with North America directly or are of interest to you because they discuss theories and concepts that can be fruitfully applied to North America. To complete the module, you attend either two seminars or a seminar and two lectures.

The other two pillars are Professional Experience and Research. The former requires you to do an internship to prepare for your future career (you may also get the opportunity to teach a tutorial for B.A. students if you wish to and are found suitable by the respective instructor); the latter prepares you for your M.A. thesis by way of a class on scholarly writing and a colloquium where staff and students present and discuss their current research projects.

So which and how many classes should you attend in your first semester? This really depends. For rather technical reasons, the Module Handbook (MHB; go to M.A. American Studies, klick on 2015) suggests that you do two modules for the Core Curriculum (meaning two master seminars, a lecture and a workgroup) and one class for the Interdisciplinary Profile.
Profile. This, however, is quite a lot and might not be the best option for everyone. We therefore recommend that you contact Dr. Isabell Klaiber (isabell.klaiber@uni-tuebingen.de) or Dr. Carsten Schinko (carsten.schinko@uni-tuebingen.de) via email and discuss with them how many and which classes you should attend. Please note that you should do this relatively soon after you have decided to join our program, so that you have enough time to do the preparatory reading for your classes.

Detailed descriptions of your module framework, including the amount of credits to be received for each module, can be found in the Module Handbook.

6. STUDENT ID CARD AND LOGIN INFORMATION

Upon enrollment at the university you will receive your university login information as well as your student ID card. Both of these are important for the entirety of your studies here. You will use your login information for:

- signing into the alma system,
- accessing your student webmail,
- printing at the university library.

You will often use your student ID card in conjunction with your login information, e.g. when you print something at the library. The ID card can, however, also be used as a debit card with which to pay for meals at the cafeteria or doing laundry in the student dormitories. You can top up your card in most university buildings, including Brechtbau, where most of your classes will be held.

At the beginning of each semester, the card needs to be validated with a semester-specific date stamp. This can be done at the University Library or at the Studierendensekretariat (main Wilhelmstraße branch) and will take no longer than two minutes.

7. THE ALMA SYSTEM

The University of Tübingen uses the online system alma for organizational matters. Use your university login and password to sign in. You will use alma to:

- find and sign up for classes; manage your schedule,
- register for exams; view your grades and credits,
- download certificates of enrollment (e.g. for your health insurance),
- find overviews of university buildings and rooms.
**Signing up for classes:** You will soon be signing up for the classes you wish to take in your first semester. To find an overview of the classes offered, you will first need to sign into *alma*. To find the relevant class listings, navigate the menu as follows:

You can then select the type of class you would like to take, e.g. ‘Seminare’/S (seminars) or ‘Vorlesungen’/VL (lectures), and view content-specific class descriptions, including abstracts on what will be covered and reading lists.

When signing up for classes, you are allowed four priorities, which you should use to express in which classes you are most interested. For example, when you are signing up for a seminar and your preferred choice is, e.g., “African American Literature,” you would use your highest priority for this. *alma* now knows that this class is your first choice and will favor you over students who have given the class a lower priority. Do use your remaining three priorities; you gain no advantage by only assigning your highest priority.

On *alma*, you can also download certificates of enrollment (e.g., for your health insurance or to buy the Naldo semester ticket) and view your balance of payments. In order to access these documents, sign in and click on ‘Mein Studium’, then go to ‘Studienservice’. Now you should be able to see your personal information and a list of certificates (‘Bescheinigungen’) for all semesters in which you have been enrolled at the University of Tübingen. To view your current status of payments (i.e. the amount of tuition you need to pay), select ‘Zahlungen’.

### 8. COURSE CREDITS AND GRADES

**Credits:** Like most European universities, the University of Tübingen operates the ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System). In order to receive your M.A. degree in American Studies, you need to complete work equivalent to 120 ECTS points (sometimes just called CPs, or credit points). You will receive the majority (100 ECTS points) of your credits through class work (e.g. seminars and lectures) or internships. At the end of your studies you will write an M.A. thesis, which will be supervised by one of the lecturers in the department, and for which you will receive 20 ECTS points.

For more information on how to attain credits, please see the section “Structure of your Studies.”

**Grades:** The German grading system spans from 1 (very good) to 5 (insufficient). All grades equal to or lower than 4.0 pass; grades above 4.0 fail.
The ‘root’ grades (1; 2; 3; 4) may be lowered or raised to achieve more differentiated assessments: 1.0 (very good); 1.3 (still very good); 1.7 (better than good); 2.0 (good); 2.3 (still good); 2.7 (better than satisfactory); 3.0 (satisfactory); 3.3 (still satisfactory); 3.7 (better than sufficient); 4.0 (sufficient); 5.0 (insufficient).

Your total grade is made up of the grades you received in your classes, your master’s thesis and your final oral exam. Your grades make up 50% of your total grade, while your thesis and your oral exam combined make up the other 50%, with the thesis constituting two-thirds and the master’s oral exam one-third of the latter 50%. For details on how your total grade is determined, please refer to the Prüfungsordnung (in German; go to M.A. American Studies, click on AMS-MA).

9. IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS

Brechtbau/Neuphilologicum: As an M.A. student in American Studies, you will spend most of your time in the Neuphilologicum (most commonly referred to as Brechtbau). This is where professors and other faculty members have their offices. You will also find the departmental library on the second and third floor, where you can do research, work on your assignments, and use printers. The secretary’s office for American Studies is located in on the fifth floor of Brechtbau.
University Library/Unibibliothek (UB): The university library, or UB, is the largest library of the university. This is where you will find assorted literature across the disciplines. You can check out any books found here for home study. The UB, too, has printers and copying machines. A cafeteria is located on the ground floor of the building. You can also validate your student ID card here. The UB offers free guided tours in English.

Mensa/dining hall: Here you will be able to buy inexpensive meals or snacks. Prices commonly are around 3€ per meal. You can view the week’s menu online here. There are two other dining halls in the city, one in the old town (‘Prinz Karl’) and one in the building for sciences (‘Morgenstelle’). The one on Schlachthausstrasse and ‘Prinz Karl’ will most likely be your most practical choices, as they are near Brechtbau and the UB.

d.a.i./German-American Institute: Although the d.a.i., or Deutsch-Amerikanisches Institut, is not run by the university, there is a cooperation between it and our department, as it is a useful resource for students interested in American culture. The d.a.i. offers language courses (Business English, Spanish), support in planning of student exchanges to the USA, film screenings, topical exhibits, and various other activities throughout the year. It also has a library of books, CDs, and DVDs related to the United States. The d.a.i. offers internships that you can do as part of your Professional Experience module.

10. ADMINISTRATION

STUDENT ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
For any administrative matters regarding your studies, such as leave-taking, change of address, and loss of student ID, you should contact the Studierendensekretariat, which is just down the road from Brechtbau and the UB.

**Address:** Wilhelmstraße 11 | 72074 Tübingen  
**Hours:** Please check here.  
**Telephone:** +49(0)7071-29-74444  
**Email:** studentensekretariat@verwaltung.uni-tuebingen.de

AMERICAN STUDIES SECRETARY’S OFFICE

For matters regarding your classes in American Studies, please get in contact with Linda Wennekus at the secretary’s office, which is located in room 553 of Brechtbau.

**Address:** Wilhelmstraße 50 | 72074 Tübingen | Room 553  
**Hours:** Mon. to Thu. 10:00-12:00 and 14:00-16:00; Fri. 10:00-12:00  
**Telephone:** +49(0)7071-29-72910  
**Email:** amerikanistik@uni-tuebingen.de

11. ACADEMIC GUIDANCE

HELPDESK

Students can come to the Helpdesk of the English/American Studies department to discuss any questions concerning their studies. Typical issues would be your selection of courses, degree requirements (‘Prüfungsordnung’), the stipulations of the module handbook, or an upcoming oral exam. The Helpdesk can also admit you belatedly to classes in case you did not get a spot in a course you need. To discuss these or other questions, please feel free to drop by the Helpdesk (no appointment required), which is also to be found in Brechtbau.

**Address:** Wilhelmstraße 50 | 72074 Tübingen | Room 555  
**Hours:** Mondays and Tuesdays, 13:00-15:00; Wednesdays and Thursdays, 11:00-13:00  
**Email:** helpdesk@es.uni-tuebingen.de

RESEARCH AND WRITING CENTER

The Research and Writing Center (RWC) is there to assist students within the English Department in their academic research and writing. It is staffed with peer tutors, who are students themselves. You are encouraged to bring in your work at any stage during the writing process to discuss aspects such as finding relevant literature, coming up with a good thesis, and improving academic register. The 1-on-1 tutorial sessions are available five days a week, and appointments can be made one day in advance or earlier.
Address: Wilhelmstraße 50 | 72074 Tübingen | Room 407
Hours: daily; please see the RWC’s website
Email: english.writingcenter@uni-tuebingen.de

CONTACT PERSONS

Different matters within the department fall under different staff members’ responsibilities. Whether it be BAföG, course recognition, or student exchanges, you will find the right person to contact on the page for American Studies Faculty & Staff, nearly all of whom have their offices in Brechtbau.

WEBSITE, FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM

Website: The official website of the American Studies department contains announcements, faculty and staff office hours, and general information about the study programs.

Facebook and Instagram: You will find news and announcements (exam dates, class enrollment dates, student assistantships) that are relevant to all students of the English Department on the department’s official Facebook page, “Englisches Seminar der der Universität Tübingen” as well as its Instagram page (@esunituebingen). The American Studies Department, too, has an official Facebook page (“American Studies Tübingen”) and an Instagram page (@american.studies.tuebingen).

There is also an unofficial student group, “Englisches Seminar Uni Tübingen”, with well over 1,000 members. Here you can ask fellow students questions such as “Is the lecture on Puritanism taking place tomorrow?” and receive quick responses. You may also want to join the group just for students of American Studies, “Interdisciplinary American Studies Universität Tübingen.”

For other useful websites, please see the last chapter of this handbook.

12. LEISURE

Tübingen offers plenty of things to do and discover in your free time. Are you keen on staying in shape or trying out new sports? If so, check out Hochschulsport, the university’s sports program, which offers a variety of sports classes usually taking place weekly. Try to register shortly after the registration period opens, as classes sell out quickly. Fancy going to the movies? Unikino screens different movies in their original versions in a big lecture hall. Admission is cheap and you can bring your own beverages and snacks. Tübingen’s cinemas also regularly screen movies in their original versions.

In your spare time, you might want to explore Tübingen, including a stroll through the historic city center and the botanical garden, a walk up the church tower, or a visit to the castle of Tübingen. Guided city tours are offered in German and English. Tübingen is surrounded by forests, which makes it the perfect place to go hiking (for suitable
destinations, check out Wurmlinger Kapelle or Burg Hohenzollern). If you do not feel confident enough to organize your own hike, the international student group StudIT offers plenty of hikes and other activities such as international dinners and city trips all year round. In the summertime, make sure you take a punt (Stocherkahn) tour on the Neckar. You can also rent a pedal boat or SUP, or chill at Tübingen’s public pool. The Stocherkahn race, taking place in June, is a must see. In the winter, have some mulled wine at the Christmas market or profit from the free chocolate snacks at the Chocolate Festival.

FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

13. VISA

DO NOT NEED VISA: You will not need a visa if you are a citizen of one of the following countries: member states of the European Union, Australia, Canada, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Lichtenstein, New Zealand, Norway, South Korea, Switzerland, and the USA.

DO NEED VISA: If you are a citizen of any other country, you will need to apply for a student visa. Please do this as soon as you have accepted our offer; you may not be able to enter the country without it. Do not enter Germany on a tourist visa, as it cannot be extended nor be converted into a student visa.

The visa which you will need is called ‘Visum zu Studienzwecken’ (visa for study purposes).

You can obtain the visa at a German embassy or diplomatic mission in your home country. You will find a listing of all German missions abroad here. After you contact the embassy/mission, they will inform you of the documents necessary to apply for the visa. These will likely be:

- certificate confirming health insurance (insurance of home country may be enough; see health insurance section below)
- proof of financial resources
- certificate of past academic work and achievements
- certificate of German language proficiency or proof that you intend to attend a language course in Germany
- notification of admission/study offer from German university (you received this document from us, the University of Tübingen).

Please be aware that it can take up to several months from the application for a visa to its issuing. More information can be found on the DAAD webpage on visas.

14. HEALTH INSURANCE

You will need to show a proof of health insurance when applying for a visa (if relevant), as well as when you enroll in person at the university.
DO NOT NEED NEW HEALTH INSURANCE: If your health insurance was issued by a member state of the European Union, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Morocco, Macedonia, Montenegro, Norway, Switzerland, Serbia, Tunisia, or Turkey, you will not need to apply for separate health insurance. Germany has signed a social security agreement with these countries that covers you for any medical treatment.

Private domestic and foreign health insurance policies from other countries may also be recognized in Germany. You should inquire about the details with your health insurance provider before you leave. If your health insurance from your home country is recognized, you will need confirmation that you are exempted from public health insurance coverage when you enroll. In this case, contact a German health insurance provider in Tübingen after you arrive but before you enroll at the university and have them issue you a letter certifying that you are insured. Keep in mind that once this confirmation is issued, you will no longer be eligible to sign up for German public health insurance for the whole duration of your studies.

DO NEED NEW HEALTH INSURANCE: You should always first inquire about the coverage details with your current health insurance provider. However, if your health insurance was issued by a country not included in the above list, you will most likely need to sign up for separate health insurance here in Germany.

Public health insurance will cost you around 90€ per month if you are under the age of 30. After that, monthly fees rise to 160€ per month or more, depending on the provider. In any case, it is important to clarify your health insurance status before you begin your trip to Germany. In order to enroll and apply for a residence permit, you have to present a confirmation of health insurance coverage. Your health insurance provider in your home country and the university’s Office for International Affairs will be able to assist you in finding a health insurance provider in Tübingen.

Find more information on the DAAD’s page on health insurance.

15. RESIDENCE REGISTRATION

For all international students – including those who do not require a visa –, the very first step after having found accommodation is to register with the Resident Registration Office (‘Bürgeramt’/’Bürgerbüro’). You will need this to apply for a residence permit:

- passport (including, if relevant, your visa) or ID card
- tenancy agreement (’Mietvertrag’) or a document from your landlord confirming your tenancy
- landlord’s confirmation (’Wohnungsgeberbescheinigung’), which has to be signed by your landlord beforehand.
In Tübingen, you can register as a resident at either of the Bürgerbüros Stadtmitte (city center), Lustnau, or Derendingen.

Find more information on residence registration on Tübingen Research Campus.

Do not be confused by the similar names of the steps Resident Registration and Residence Permit; they are separate processes. It may seem illogical to register as a resident first and then apply for a residence permit, but this is indeed the correct order.

16. RESIDENCE PERMIT

**DO NOT NEED RESIDENCE PERMIT:** Citizens of EU member states as well as citizens of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland do not need a residence permit. You will have automatically received a residence permit when you registered as a resident.

**DO NEED RESIDENCE PERMIT:** If you are not a citizen of one of the above-named countries, you will need to apply for a residence permit (even if you did not have to apply for a visa before your arrival). This must be done at an Alien Registration Office (‘Ausländermeldeamt’/’Ausländeramt’) within your first three months here. You will receive a residence permit that is valid for two years (and can be extended).

You will need to bring:

- confirmation of registration from the Resident Registration Office
- confirmation of private or public health insurance coverage
- student ID from the University of Tübingen and certificate of enrollment (‘Immatrikulationsbescheinigung’).
- proof of financial resources (if not already submitted while applying for visa)
- passport (including, if relevant, your visa)
- biometric passport photos
- money to pay the residence permit fee (approx. 100€).

In Tübingen, this can be done at the Ausländeramt in Schmiedtorstraße 4.

17. BANK ACCOUNT

As one of the first things when you get to Tübingen, you will want to open a bank account. A good option for you is to open a checking account (‘Girokonto’), which will provide you with all basic functions, such as cash withdrawal, online money transfer, paying bills, and making purchases using a debit card. Deutsche Bank and Volksbank offer free checking accounts if you are under the age of 30 (Deutsche Bank) or 25 (Volksbank).
You will need to bring to the bank:

- passport or ID card
- registration certificate issued by the ‘Bürgerbüro’
- statement of funds (issued by your home bank).

It is also strongly recommended that you obtain personal liability insurance (‘private Haftpflichtversicherung’). This will protect you from the risks of liabilities imposed by lawsuits and similar claims. It will cover for financial damages, e.g. if you accidentally cause an accident or if something in your apartment breaks. In most cases, you will be able to effect an insurance when opening your bank account. This will cost you around 100€ per year. For more information, contact the Welcome Center.

18. USEFUL WEBSITES

| BUREAUCRATIC | |
| **Federal Foreign Office** | Germany’s foreign ministry. Official information on visa and resident requirements. |
| **Study in Germany** | Detailed information on every step of the process of moving to Germany as a student, including advice on visa, health insurance, accommodation, etc. |
| **German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)** | Service designed to make academic exchanges in Germany simpler. Database of scholarships for international students. Information on visa, health insurance, accommodation, bureaucratic matters. |
| **University of Tübingen International Office** | Information on enrollment and other formal matters. List of services for international students, such as welcome meetings and other events. |
| **City of Tübingen administrative bodies** | Listing of services provided by different administrative bodies in Tübingen, such as issuing or renewal of residence permits or change of address. |
| **Student Union (‘Studierendenwerk’)** | Information on student dormitories, dining halls, and assistance in other student matters. |

| ACADEMIC | |
| **Moodle** | Online platform used by most instructors to upload class reading and other material. |
| **Brechtbau Library Catalog** | Philological library located on second and third floor of Brechtbau. Catalog of books, journals, and electronic media. |
| **University Library Catalog** | Largest library of Tübingen. Catalog of books, journals, and electronic media across the disciplines. |
| **Faculty of Humanities**  
| **Registrar's Office** | Module handbooks, study regulations, grade explanations. |
| **LEISURE AND OTHER** | |
| **University of Tübingen**  
| **Language Learning Center** | Free language courses offered by the university (sign up timely!). Languages currently taught: English, French, Spanish, Catalan, Italian, Swedish, Russian, Japanese, Arabic. |
| **Learn German** | German language classes offered by the university (sign up timely!) |
| **University of Tübingen**  
| **Hochschulsport** | Sports teams and classes organized by the university. Sports include soccer, volleyball, handball, tennis, swimming, weight training, martial arts, dance, yoga, archery. Sign up timely on the registration day as classes sell out quickly. |
| **Various Facebook groups** | Jobs in and around Tübingen | 1 Question – 1 Answer | Free Your Stuff | Used Books | |
| **Carpooling** | BlaBlaCar | Teilauto Tübingen |