

Cultural Studies Colloquium / CSC IV:

CULTURAL STUDIES AROUND THE WORLD

Theories of Engaged Scholarship between National and Transnational Frameworks

– Seminar for advanced students of literary and cultural theory –

14/04/2021 to 07/07/21

Regular meeting time: WED 10 a.m.– 12 p.m. CET
2.30 p.m. sharp – 4.30 p.m. IST

The seminar will generally take place as a full two-hour synchronous class meeting every other week via Zoom (please, see plan below for details).

In the weeks between these Zoom meetings students will be engaged in asynchronous writing-based interaction mediated through the shared WueCampus learning platform.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Since its inception in mid-20th-century Britain, the field of cultural studies has undergone significant transformations: while starting out as a distinctly national discourse of British self-ethnography and democratic empowerment, it also took up influences from continental Europe and was quick to be adopted and modified in many parts of the world. Today, it is common practice to conceive of the various strands of cultural studies according to a vocabulary of related, but fundamentally different and compartmentalized sub-divisions (such as ‘American Cultural Studies’ vs ‘British Cultural Studies’).

The overarching goal of this seminar is to develop both an understanding and a critical re-examination of these lines of division in their historical and current forms. By taking into close consideration [1] theoretical foundations like Marxism and structuralism as well as [2] the past and present of cultural studies in India along with [3] key texts from the two formations of ‘British’ and ‘American Cultural Studies’, we hope to enable a discussion of the problems and merits surrounding these ‘nationally specific’ perspectives. Finally, it remains to be seen whether this kind of compartmentalization is inevitable, or whether cultural studies might also be configured as a transnational or global field of research and critical intervention.

The transnational format of the course (WueGlobal):

As the pandemic forces us to conduct most seminars via online platforms, we have decided to make a virtue of necessity and would be delighted to welcome students from our Indian partner institutions (esp. from Jawaharlal Nehru University and Jamia Millia Islamia) into the course. The idea is to enliven the discourse and widen the horizon not only by taking into account texts from ‘around the world,’ but by having students and scholars of culture with varying backgrounds and experiences work together. Upon completion of the seminar, the WueGlobal initiative will provide a certificate of participation for all students.

Enrolling for the course:

To help create a committed and cohesive thinking community for this course, we ask students to apply for participation by composing a brief **statement of interest** in which they (1) introduce themselves and (2) outline their interest/s in this semester's topic. Please mail your statement (c. 1,5 pages) to our WueGlobal course co-ordinator, David Janocha (david.janocha@stud-mail.uni-wuerzburg.de) by **March 31st** at the latest.

Format of the Cultural Studies Colloquia:

The Cultural Studies Colloquia are a combined project of American and British Cultural Studies at JMU Würzburg. The format of these joint courses is discussion-based. While the course is particularly geared to advanced students and students with theoretical interests, our project profits from a range of insights and experiences. We would love to integrate perspectives from students with back-grounds in ethnological and performance disciplines, as well as in philosophy and history, for example.

Participants are required to write **four response essays** dealing with texts from the seminar's reading list as well as a **concluding reflection or project report** at the end of the seminar. The length of these pieces can be freely allocated by individual participants as long as the combined length of all texts (including also the statement of interest) will finally constitute a **portfolio** of approximately 20 pages. At least one of the response essays should deal with an 'additional text' (see below for categorizations).

An **internet forum** will also be made available for the discussion of points arising from both the syllabus reading as well as the participants' essays.

COURSE PROGRAM:

Please make sure to have read and studied at least the '**assigned reading**' (=AR) texts by the time indicated. The '**additional texts**' (=AT) constitute optional and recommended reading, should time permit.

There will be an introductory Zoom meeting on the 14th of April. After our second meeting on the 21st of April, new texts will be scheduled for reading and discussion **every other week**. The time in-between ('study & writing weeks') is meant to enable reflection, study, writing and exchange.

Please note: The syllabus presented here is not final and details are liable to change. The syllabus is included here for indicating the general scope and direction of the seminar.

14/04 **Introduction** [Zoom meeting]

AR:

'Statements of interest' by all participants.

PREPARATORY TASK:

Please reflect on points for discussion based on the statements of interest. The goal is to get a clear sense of our *motivations* and *interests* and to evolve *guiding questions* and *objectives* for the seminar.

21/04 **Marxist roots** [Zoom meeting]

AR:

Chantal Mouffe, "Hegemony and ideology in Gramsci," *Gramsci and Marxist Theory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979) 168-203.

AT:

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Feuerbach: Fragment 2," *Die deutsche Ideologie* (1845/47); rpt. in *Marx-Engels-Jahrbuch* 2003 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004) 115-117. // English translation: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, [*A Critique of] The German Ideology*, *Marx/Engels Internet Archive* <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/Marx_The_German_Ideology.pdf> (See pp. 8-9 for the relevant passage).

Louis Althusser, "On Ideology," *On the Reproduction of Capitalism – Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (1995), trans. G. M. Goshgarian (London: Verso, 2014) 171-207.

28/04 Study & Writing Week

05/05 **British Cultural Studies** [Zoom meeting]

AR:

Raymond Williams, "Culture is Ordinary" (1958); rpt in *The Raymond Williams Reader*, ed John Higgins (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) 10-24.

Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies,"; *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, Paula Treichler (New York and London: Routledge, 1992) 277-294.

AT

Dick Hebdige, [selections from:] *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1979).

12/05 Study & Writing Week

19/05 **Structuralist Strands and Transatlantic Transformations** [Zoom meeting]

AR:

[Selected passages from:] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (1957); trans. Richard Howard and Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012).

[Extract from:] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic* (1993).

26/05 Study & Writing Week

02/06 **American Cultural Studies** [Zoom meeting]

AR:

Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler, "Cultural Studies: An Introduction," *Cultural Studies*, ed. Grossberg, Nelson and Treichler (New York: Routledge, 1981) 1-22.

Fredric Jameson, "On 'Cultural Studies.'" *Social Text* 34 (1993): 17-52 (esp. 17-18; 24-33).

09/06 Study & Writing Week

16/06 **Cultural Studies in India I – Cultural Studies as Subaltern Studies** [Zoom meeting]

AR:

Ranjit Guha, “On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India,” *Subaltern Studies I – Writings on South Asian History and Society*, ed. Ranajit Guha (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1982) 1-8.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak” (1983) [abridged].

AT:

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak” (1983) [full text].

23/06 Study & Writing Week

30/06 **Cultural Studies in India II – Feminism in India & Transnational Studies** [Zoom meeting]

Maitrayee Chaudhuri, introduction, *Feminism in India*, ed. Chaudhuri (New Delhi: Kali for Women & Women Unlimited, 2004) xi-xlvi.

Inderpal Grewal, “Traveling Barbie: Indian Transnationalities and the Global Consumer,” *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms* (Durham: Duke UP, 2005) 80-120 (but with pictures!).

07/07 10.00-16.00 **Study Day** [Zoom meeting]

Project presentations by course participants and discussion.

End of the teaching period.

31/08 **Portfolios due** (please send by e-mail to the course co-ordinator (david.janocha@stud-mail.uni-wuerzburg.de)).