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Julius-Maximilians-Universität (JMU) Würzburg
Sommersemester / Summer term 2021

Cultural Studies Colloquium / CSC IV:

Cultural Studies & Sound: From Foundational Theories to Current Research

(#WueOnline // #WueGlobal)

WED 10-12 (German time)
= India Standard time: 1.30 p.m. -3.30 p.m. (until the end of Oct.) /
12.30 p.m. - 2.30 p.m. (from the beginning of Nov.)



"For twenty-five centuries, Western knowledge has tried to look upon the world. It has failed to understand that the world is not for the beholding. It is for hearing. It is not legible, but audible. [...] Now we must learn to judge a society more by its sounds [...] than by its statistics. By listening to noise, we can better understand where the folly of men and their calculations is leading us, and what hopes it is still possible to have."

Thus claimed Jacques Attali in his pathbreaking book *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, which was first published in French in 1977. Looking at key theoretical texts and at current research in cultural studies and sound studies, our seminar will assess the grand hope that 'close listening' will not only provide new modes for understanding social systems and everyday practices but that a detailed attention to sound might also furnish a basis for envisioning a more sustainable relationship to the human as well as the non-human world.

The transnational format of the course

As the pandemic still forces us to conduct most seminars online, we have decided to make a virtue of necessity and would be delighted to welcome students from our Indian partner institutions into the course.

The idea is to enliven the discourse and widen the horizon by having students and scholars of culture with varying backgrounds and experiences work together. Upon completion of the seminar, the WueGlobal: Writing, Learning, Digital Connection initiative funded by the International Virtual Academic Collaboration (IVAC) Program of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) will provide a certificate of participation for all students. As part of the WueGlobal initiative, we will also be making participants aware of further international opportunities and asking for your feedback in shaping effective international collaboration for the semesters to come.

The Cultural Studies Colloquia

The course on 'Cultural Studies & Sound' is an instalment of our Cultural Studies Colloquia. These are a combined project of American and British Cultural Studies at JMU Würzburg. The format of the colloquia 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.

Enrolling

This is a research seminar. To help create a committed and cohesive thinking community for our CSC courses, we ask students to compose a brief statement of purpose 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 both instructors (zeno.ackermann@uni-wuerzburg.de and maryann.snyder-koerber@uni-wuerzburg.de) by the 10th of October.

After submission of your statement of interest, we will get in touch with you and register you for the course. Please note that there is no self-registration for this course.

Contributions / Assessment

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. RESPONSE ESSAYS are prepared during the study & writing weeks integrated into the course. We ask that essays be submitted on the Friday before our shared seminar session so that seminar participants have time to read the responses as part of their focused preparation for the session in addition to the core assigned readings. The length of the RESPONSE ESSAYS and CONCLUDING REFLECTION OR PROJECT REPORT can be freely allocated by individual participants as long as the combined length of all texts (including 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). We will also regularly offer the opportunity for students to briefly present (c. 10-15 minutes) on additional readings as a springboard to further discussion within the seminar sessions (one to two slots will be made available for such presentations per session starting in November) as well as opportunities for presenting and developing ideas within the concluding CULTURAL STUDIES COLLOQUIUM STUDY DAY (02/02)

An internet forum will be made available for organization, exchange and discussion.

PROGRAMME

There will be an introductory Zoom meeting on the 20th of October. After our second meeting (on the 27th of October), new texts will be scheduled for reading and discussion EVERY OTHER WEEK. The time in-between (‘study & writing weeks’) enables coordinated reflection, study, writing and exchange. Zoom meetings are regularly scheduled for two full hours, from **10 s.t. to 12 s.t.**

Please make sure to have read and studied at least the ‘assigned reading’ **[AR]** texts by the time indicated. The ‘additional texts’ **[AT]** constitute recommended but optional reading. Please see the course bibliography (below) for general introductory as well as for further reading. For those who read German, Daniel Morat and Hansjakob Ziemer, eds., *Handbuch Sound: Geschichte – Begriffe – Ansätze* (Metzler, 2018) – a handbook that is accessible online through the university library – might be a particularly valuable aid in accessing and organising the field.

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| 20/10 | <p>Introduction / Getting started on SOUND and SOUND STUDIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jonathan Sterne, “Sonic Imaginations,” [Introduction to:] <i>The Sound Studies Reader</i>, ed. Sterne (Routledge, 2012) 1-17. [AR] ➤ Diverse specimens of sound culture/s & cultural stagings of sound, including Humphrey Jennings and Stewart McAllister (dirs.), <i>Listen to Britain</i> (1942; c. 20 mins.) [please watch in preparation for the meeting: LINK]. |
| 27/10 | <p>Sound Studies: CLAIMS & CONCEPTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny, introduction, <i>Keywords in Sound</i>, ed. Novak and Sakakeeny (Duke UP, 2015) 1-11. [AR] • Marshall McLuhan, “Visual and Acoustic Space” (1989), rpt. in <i>Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music</i>, ed. Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner (Continuum, 2005) 67-72. [AR] |
| 03/11 | <p>Study & writing week – Please submit RESPONSE ESSAYS by 05/11</p> |
| 10/11 | <p>‘NOISE’ – ‘CULTURE’ – ‘NATURE’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meri Kytö, “‘We are the rebellious voice of the terraces, we are Çarşı’: Constructing a Football Supporter Group through Sound,” <i>Soccer & Society</i> 12.1 (2011): 77-93. [AR] |

- Karin Bijsterveld, "Listening to Machines: Industrial Noise, Hearing Loss and the Cultural Meaning of Sound," *The Sound Studies Reader*, ed. Sterne (2012) 152-167. [AR]
- Cheryl E. Leonard, "Playing Antarctica: Making Music with Natural Objects and Sounds from the Antarctic Peninsula," *Antarctica: Music, Sounds and Cultural Connections*, ed. Bernadette Hince, Rupert Summerson, and Arnan Wiesel. ANU Press, 2015. 121-132. [AR]

[17/11] Study & writing week – Please submit RESPONSE ESSAYS by 19/11

24/11 **MEDIATED sound & MUSIC**

- Paul Nataraj, "Surface Tension: Memory, Sound and Vinyl," *The Routledge Companion to Sound Studies*, ed. Michael Bull (Routledge, 2019) 258-267. [AR]
 - Barry J. Faulk, "Bob Dylan and Sound: A Tale of the Recording Era," *Sound and Literature*, ed. Anna Snaith (Cambridge UP, 2020) 372-388. [Accessible online through UBW.] [AR]
 - Charles Hirschkind, "Cassette Sermons, Aural Modernities and the Islamic Revival in Cairo," *The Sound Studies Reader*, ed. Sterne (2012) 54-69. [AT]
- ➔ **Presentation Opportunity:** *Short presentation on Hirschkind's topic*

01/12 Study & writing week – Please submit RESPONSE ESSAYS by 19/11

08/12 **Sound & (social/urban) SPACE**

- R. Murray Schafer, "The Soundscape," *The Sound Studies Reader*, ed. Jonathan Sterne (Routledge, 2012) 95-103. [AR]
 - [From:] Brandon LaBelle, *Acoustic Territories: Sound Culture and Everyday Life* (Continuum Press, 2010) [accessible online through UBW]:
 - "Introduction: Your Sound Is My Sound Is Your Sound" (xiii-xxvi) [AR]
 - "Shopping Mall: Muzak, Mishearing, and the Productive Volatility of Feedback" (163-200) [AT]
 - [From:] Tripta Chandola, *Listening in to Others: In between Noise and Silence*, PhD thesis, Queensland University of Technology, 2010, web (open access):
 - Abstract (4-6) [AR]
 - "Sonic Practices of Space" (217-251) [AT]
 - Hervé Tchumkam, "Banlieue Sounds, or, The Right to Exist," *Remapping Sound Studies*, ed. Gavin Steingo and Jim Sykes (Duke UP, 2019) 185-202. [AT]
- ➔ **Presentation Opportunities:** *Short presentation on LaBelle's study and the sonic space of the shopping mall; Short presentation on Chandola's study; Short presentation on Tchumkam's essay and topic*

- 15/12 Study & writing week – Please submit RESPONSE ESSAYS by 17/12
- 22/12 **Sound & BODY, VOICE, GENDER**
- Jonathan Sterne, “Voices,” *The Sound Studies Reader*, ed. Sterne (Routledge, 2012) 491-494. [AR]
 - Nina Sun Eidsheim, “Multisensory Investigation Of Sound, Body, and Voice,” *The Routledge Companion to Sound Studies*, ed. Michael Bull (Routledge, 2019) 35-43. [AR]
 - Marie Thompson, “Gendered Sound,” *The Routledge Companion to Sound Studies*, ed. Michael Bull (Routledge, 2019) 108-117. [AR]
 - Jeff Roy, “Remapping the Voice through Transgender-Hijrā Performance, *Re-mapping Sound Studies*, ed. Gavin Steingo and Jim Sykes (Duke UP, 2019) 173-183. [AR]
- ➔ **Presentation Opportunity:** *Short presentation on Roy’s essay and topic*
- (See also further relevant texts by Roland Barthes, Nick Coleman, Richard Middleton, and Katja Silverman.)
- Christmas break
- Please submit STUDY DAY PROPOSALS by 05/01
& RESPONSE ESSAYS for the next seminar session by 08/01
- 12/01 **Sound & ETHNICITY or ‘RACE’**
- Alex W. Corey, “Sounding Out Racial Difference,” *The Routledge Companion to Sound Studies*, ed. Michael Bull (Routledge, 2019) 99-107. [AR]
 - Nina Sun Eidsheim, “Introduction: The Acousmatic Question: Who Is This?” *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African American Music* (Duke UP, 2019) 1-37. [AR]
 - (See also further relevant texts, esp. by Daphne A. Brooks, Paul Gilroy, Richard Middleton, Jennifer Lynn Stoeber and Alexander Weheliye.)
- 19/01 Study & writing week Please submit RESPONSE ESSAYS for the next seminar session by 21/01
- 26/01 **Re-Thinking SOUND / Thinking Sound and ‘THE SOUTH’**
- [From:] Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Masumi (1977) (U of Minnesota P, 1985):
 - “Listening” (3-20) [AR]
 - [From:] Brandon LaBelle, *Sonic Agency: Sound and Emergent Forms of Resistance* (Goldsmiths Press, 2018):

- “Unlikely Publics: On the Edge of Appearance” (1-28) [AR]
- “Poor Acoustics: Listening from Below” (154-163) [AT]
- [From:] Gavin Steingo and Jim Sykes, eds., *Remapping Sound Studies* (Duke UP, 2019):
 - Steingo and Sykes, “Introduction: Remapping Sound Studies in the Global South” (1-36) [AR]
 - Steingo, “Another Resonance: Africa and the Study of Sound” (39-60) [AT]
 - ➔ **Presentation Opportunity:** *Short presentation on Steingo’s chapter on Africa*

02/02 **STUDY DAY**

- Mary Caton Lingold, Darren Mueller, and Whitney Trettien, introduction, *Digital Sound Studies*, ed. Lingold, Mueller, and Whitney (Duke UP, 2018) 1-25. [AT]

Course Bibliography

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- . *Voicing the Popular: On the Subjects of Popular Music*. Routledge, 2006.
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- See esp. The following entries: Steven Feld, "Akustemologie" (2-7) // Veit Erlmann, "Auralität" (8-13) // Jens Gerrit Papenburg, "Körperlichkeit" (25-31) // Mary Helen Dupree, "Performanz" (39-45) // Jenny Schrödl und Doris Kolesch, "Stimme" (223-229).
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→ See esp. "Sonic Imaginations" & "Voices" (1-17 & 491-494).

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