

Seminar (SUV-Kategorie: 'Seminare für niedrige Semester'):

Beginning Cultural Studies: Concepts | Texts | Practices

PLEASE NOTE: Due to my participation in a somewhat urgent academic committee, the second meeting cannot take place as planned. → There won't be a meeting on 24/10 so that, from that date onwards, our original agenda will be delayed by one week (as laid down in this changed course plan).

Zeit: Do 16-18 // Philosophie-Gebäude, Ü 21

Sprechstunde: Do 12.30-13.30 // Raum 5/E/20

(Anmeldung bitte durch Eintragen in die Liste neben meiner Bürotür.)

Please study the syllabus closely before the first meeting!

KURS-KATEGORIE (SUV-BESCHREIBUNG):

Dieser Kurs gehört zur Kurs-Kategorie (SUV) '**Seminare Level 1 – für niedrige Semester**', die auf der Website des Lehrstuhls für Englische Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft wie folgt beschrieben wird:

Die Kurse dieser Kategorie richten sich an BA- und Lehramtsstudierende im 2.-4. Fachsemester. In ihnen werden die in den Einführungsvorlesungen erworbenen Grundlagenkenntnisse im Umgang mit den einzelnen Gattungen (Drama, Lyrik, Prosa) bzw. mit kulturwissenschaftlichen Konzepten und Theorien vertieft und gesichert. Sie sollten nach dem Besuch der zugehörigen Einführungsvorlesung und vor dem Besuch eines Seminars für höhere Semester belegt werden.

SEMINARBESCHREIBUNG:

"Cultural Studies", so formulierte Stuart Hall um die Jahrtausendwende, "gehen davon aus, dass es einer Menge an theoretischer Arbeit bedarf, um die Dunkelheit des Offensichtlichen zu erhellen." Aufbauend auf der *Einführungsvorlesung zur britischen Landeskunde und Kulturwissenschaft* will das Seminar *Beginning Cultural Studies* grundlegende kulturwissenschaftliche Begrifflichkeiten klären. Gleichzeitig ist es im Anschluss an die Einführung nun aber auch an der Zeit, ausführlicher in die lebendige Auseinandersetzung mit kulturellen Phänomenen – in all ihrer vermeintlichen 'Offensichtlichkeit' und/oder 'Dunkelheit' – einzusteigen.

So werden wir die Lektüre theoretischer Texte (vor allem zu Problemen der Subjektivität, der Repräsentation und der Performanz) mit der Diskussion von konkreten kulturellen Praktiken und aktuellen kulturwissenschaftlichen Forschungsfeldern verbinden.

Seminarsprache: Deutsch und/oder Englisch (flexibel je nach dem spezifischen Kontext).

VORBEREITUNG VOR BEGINN DER VORLESUNGSZEIT

Zur Vorbereitung werden allen TeilnehmerInnen *dringend* gebeten, noch vor Beginn der Vorlesungszeit ihre Kenntnisse in den Cultural Studies aufzufrischen. Dazu bietet es sich an, das Material der kulturwissenschaftlichen Einführungsvorlesung erneut zu sichten.

Bitte berücksichtigen Sie unbedingt die Angaben zur Vorbereitung auf die erste Seminarsitzung (siehe Seminarplan)!

SYLLABUS

AR = assigned reading (Please prepare these texts carefully. If not indicated otherwise, the texts will be made available on WueCampus).

EXP = These meetings will be (partly) moderated by experts (see explanation below).

17/10 Introduction: Cultural studies ???

AR:

Chris Barker, "Key Concepts in Cultural Studies", *Cultural Studies: Theory & Practice*, 3rd ed. (London: Sage, 2008) 7-12.

["Culture and signifying practices" | "Representation" | "Materialism and non-reductionism" | "Articulation" | "Power" | "Popular culture" | "Texts and readers" | "Subjectivity and identity"]

Preparatory assignment:

The file on WueCampus contains pp. 3-12; please read all, but focus in particular on pp. 7-12.

- While reading & preparing the text, highlight the key terms mentioned.
- Do further research to make sure that you fully understand these terms and will be able to work with them.
- From the terms highlighted, select and list the *three* terms that you consider to be most important in the light of your own interests.
- Be prepared to explain and comment on the terms you have selected:
 - Why do you consider these terms especially important?
 - What can you achieve by using them as 'tools' for an analysis of cultural texts and cultural phenomena?

[24/10 No meeting]

31/10 Contemporary media culture – A first specimen

[EXP]

AR:

"The Only Thing That's Changed Is..." (iPhone 6s Commercial, 2015) [\[LINK\]](#).

Preparatory questions:

Watch the clip:

- What aspects/dimensions/spheres of 'culture' or 'cultural activity' are shown in the clip?
- Why might the commercial be interesting, not only to a prospective 'consumer' but also to a scholar of culture?
- What 'hot' topics (i.e. potential social or political problems, divisions and conflicts) are alluded to in the clip?
- Does the clip suggest solutions to such problems / divisions / conflicts?
- How can the key terms you selected for the last meeting be brought to bear on the clip?

**07/11 Early cultural studies and post-war entertainment culture:
Richard Hoggart confronting the milk bar and the jukebox**

[EXP]

AR:

[From:] Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (1957; Boston: Beacon, 1961):

- front matter, including list of contents and preface;
- "The Juke-Box Boys" (202-205).

Further material:

Samples documenting the role of the milk bar and the juke box in 1950s British 'youth culture' (to be selected and introduced by the EXPERTS for this meeting).

Preparatory questions:

- Do research on the historical environment in which Hoggart made his observations and penned his text.
- Where was the text originally published? What was the wider argument of which the assigned text is a part?
- Why is Hoggart so enraged? Can you provide reasons that make his rage understandable?
- Make sure to fully understand the entire text, including also the passages on the "eighteenth-century town-house" and the "hedonistic but passive barbarian" riding "in a fifty-horse-power bus for threepence".

14/11 New perspectives on the 'young audience'

AR:

Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel, "The Young Audience," *The Popular Arts* (1964); rpt. in *On Record: Rock, Pop, and the Written Word*, ed. Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin (London: Routledge, 1990) 22-30.

Preparatory assignment/questions:

- How does this text compare to the sample from Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy*? →What are the differences in attitude? And what are the differences in terms of perspective, method and theory? Are there also similarities between the two texts and positions?
- Is the text only about young people?
- Does the text contain arguments and approaches that still seem valid today – or is it very much 'dated'? (Please make a case for your positions and explain what you might see differently).
- Please explain and comment on the final two sentences in the text.

21/11 'Subcultures' and 'style' (I)

AR:

Dick Hebdige, "Subculture and Style," *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon During (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993) 429-440.

Preparatory assignment/questions:

- How does this text compare to the two texts previously discussed in the seminar?
→ What differences are there in terms of attitude? And what differences are there in terms of perspective, method and theory? Are there also similarities between this text and the other two?
- What is the function and import of the quotes from Genet which open and close the text?
- What is the meaning of the initial excursus on graffiti?
- This text refers to a wealth of theories and theoretical key words. Please pay close attention to all of them. Here are some terms and phrases that all participants of the seminar ought to be able to contextualize and explain:

"style" // "subversion" // "the dream of the 'organic society'" // "from fixity to transformation" // "a whole way of life" // "semiotics" // "dehistoricized, 'naturalized', converted into myth" // "the rhetoric of common sense" // "ideology" (as "common sense" or "lived relation") // "The domain of ideology coincides with the domain of signs" // "hegemony" (as a "moving equilibrium") // "Sign becomes the arena of the class struggle" // "a truly subterranean style"

28/11 'Subcultures' and 'style' (II):

The 'Mods' as a 'subculture' in 1960s Britain

[EXP]

Material:

Specimens of 'Mod' culture Britain (The Who, "My Generation" [1965] etc.) to be selected and introduced by the EXPERTS for this meeting.

05/12 Ethnicity & the politics of representation (I)

AR:

Stuart Hall, "New Ethnicities" (1989), *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London: Routledge, 1996) 441-449.

[Cont'd on next page ...]

WED, 11/12, 18-20, room TBA // Film screening:

Stephen Frears (dir.), *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985).

12/12 Ethnicity & the politics of representation (II):

An example from 1980s Britain

[EXP]

Material:

My Beautiful Laundrette – scenes (please limit total playing time to about 15 mins!) to be selected and introduced by the EXPERTS for this meeting. Please contextualize the film historically & read/discuss it in relation to the concepts and the approach of Hall's essay on "New Ethnicities".

19/12 The problem of gender

AR:

[From:] Judith Butler, "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire," *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999) [only pp. 3-13; participants' preparation of the text may stop at the hard break on p. 13].

– Christmas break –

09/01 Gender in contemporary British advertising OR popular music

[EXP]

Material:

Specimens (advertisements, songs, clips, etc.) selected and briefly introduced by the EXPERTS for the meeting.

16/01 Animal studies / posthumanism

[EXP]

AR:

[From:] Donna J Haraway, "When Species Meet: Introductions," *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2008) 3-19. [= Beginning of Haraway's long introduction to the book.]

Representations of dogs – specimens to be selected by the EXPERTS from Robert Rosenblum, *Der Hund in der Kunst: Vom Rokoko zur Postmoderne* (Wien: Passagen-Verlag, 1989) and from clips posted on YouTube and other online platforms.

23/01 Media studies

AR:

Marshall McLuhan, "Introduction" [to the first ed.] & "The Medium Is the Message," *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964; Abingdon: Routledge, 2001) 3-6 & 7-23.

30/01 NEW media studies & Wrap-up / revision

[EXP]

AR:

Jane Vincent and Leslie Haddon, "Introducing Smartphone Cultures," *Smartphone Cultures* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018) 1-8 (& further chapters from the book to be drawn on by the EXPERTS for this meeting).

Material:

Specimens selected and introduced by the EXPERTS for the meeting.

06/02 Final test – Room TBA

[Please see description of course requirements etc. on the following page!]

REQUIREMENTS & TYPES OF CONTRIBUTIONS:

To **earn credit points** participants have to

- (1) pass the *final test*.
- (2) EITHER act as *experts* for a specific meeting
OR write two *reading responses*.

Experts are teams of two participants who do special preparatory work for a specific seminar meeting. In collaboration with me, the experts will chair parts of a seminar meeting. The experts' tasks include:

- doing further reading and research work on the topic of the meeting;
- selecting relevant material (e.g. images, text passages or film scenes) that will allow us to gain access to specific cultural discourses and/or historical moments;
- preparing this material for discussion in class.

Setting a clear agenda for discussion and suggesting exciting positions of their own is essential for a successful 'expert performance.'

Please consult the syllabus above or the list below to find out when experts will be needed. You can sign up as an expert before the beginning of the lecture period (please send me an e-mail) or in the first seminar meeting.

All experts are expected to see me at least a week before their 'performance'.

A **reading response** is a *short* (ideally no longer than 2 pp.) essay-like *academic* text that responds to the material to be discussed in a specific meeting.

'Material' means everything (texts, audiovisual material etc.) on the desk for the meeting in question.

'Responding to' means to contextualize and discuss the material in light of the seminar's agenda.

→ How can the material be contextualized? (What is it? Who produced it for which purposes? Etc.)

→ How does the material tie in with the seminar discussion so far?

→ What questions should be posed in relation to the material?

→ What can (probably) be shown or established in relation to the material?

Reading responses are due two days before the respective meeting. Send your reading response by e-mail, as an attachment in Word or a PDF file. Please note that I may decide to publish reading responses on WueCampus. Moreover, reading responses may be returned for revision.

LIST OF EXPERTS:

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EXP 2: _____

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