

Seminar (SUV-Kategorie: 'Level 1 – Seminare für niedrige Semester'):

Beginning Cultural Studies: Concepts | Texts | Practices

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

Sprechstunde: Bis auf Weiteres finden meine Sprechstunden telefonisch statt. Ich bin donnerstags von 12 bis 15 Uhr unter meiner Büro-Telefonnummer erreichbar: 0931 31-86587.

Course coordinator: Selina Stranz <selina.stranz@stud-mail.uni-wuerzburg.de>

Max. number of participants: 25.

Please study the syllabus closely before registering for the course – and then again 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 Landeskunde und Kulturwissenschaft will das Seminar 'Beginning Cultural Studies' grundlegende kulturwissenschaftliche Begrifflichkeiten klären. Gleichzeitig ist es Zeit, in die lebendige Auseinandersetzung mit kulturellen Phänomenen einzusteigen.

So werden wir die Lektüre theoretischer Texte (vor allem zu Subjektivität, Repräsentation und Performanz) mit der Diskussion von konkreten kulturellen Praktiken und aktuellen kulturwissenschaftlichen Forschungsfeldern verbinden. Das Spektrum reicht von Mensch/Tier-Beziehungen bis zu den Klang-, Konsum- und Sozialformen der populären Musikkultur.

VORBEREITUNG VOR BEGINN DER VORLESUNGSZEIT

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

! Bitte beachten Sie die nach dem Ablaufplan platzierten Informationen zu Studium und Lehre in Zeiten der 'Corona-Krise' ...

PROGRAMME

AR = assigned reading → This may be texts or other materials. Please read/view & prepare these texts or materials carefully.

We will think in terms of '**course weeks**'. A course week begins on the Monday before the respective meeting and ends on the following Sunday. The first course week, for example, begins on MON 20/04 and ends on SUN 26/04.

! Participants' responses to tasks set need to have been uploaded to WueCampus by WEDNESDAY 6 P.M. of the respective course week.

23/04 **Cultural studies ???**

TASK:

For our first 'virtual course meeting,' please make up your mind in relation to the following set of questions:

- ➔ What is cultural studies?
- ➔ What is the point of cultural studies?
- ➔ What do *you* hope to learn and achieve by 'doing' cultural studies?

The questions may look simple, but they are in fact quite demanding.

Do some research & reading on these questions. You may want to consult the material of the 'Introduction to Cultural Studies' that you have attended. Moreover, the material and suggestions provided on WueCampus for this meeting will prove helpful in working out a considered response.

Finally, state your take on the questions in a short but clearly argued academic essay of 0,5 to 1 page.

! Please upload your essay (as a text file) to WueCampus by Wednesday, 22/04, 6 p.m.

30/04 **Key concepts in 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"]

TASK:

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.
- Write and send in a short but clearly argued academic essay (c. 1 page) on the terms you have selected. → Questions to be addressed:
 - Why do you consider these terms (or concepts) especially important?
 - What can be achieved by using them as 'tools' for an analysis of cultural texts and cultural phenomena?

! Please upload your response/essay (as a text file) to WueCampus by Wednesday, 29/04, 6 p.m.

07/05 **Contemporary media culture – A first specimen**

AR:

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

TASK:

Watch the clip several times & pen a short response essay (c. 1,5 pages) that addresses the following questions. Please consult relevant texts and study aids in order to work out satisfactory responses to these questions:

- What may be meant by and should be understood as 'culture'?
- What aspects/dimensions/spheres of 'culture' or 'cultural activity' are shown in the clip? (Please be as specific as possible. You may want to 'zoom in' on one or two passages from 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?

While all of these questions should 'resonate' in your essay, it is OK to focus on one or two in particular.

! Please upload your response/essay (as a text file) to WueCampus by Wednesday, 06/05, 6 p.m.

14/05 **Early cultural studies and post-war entertainment culture:
Richard Hoggart confronting the milk bar and the jukebox**

AR:

- [From:] Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (1957; Boston: Beacon, 1961):
 - front matter, including the list of contents and the preface;
 - subchapter on "The Juke-Box Boys" (202-205).

TASK:

Read & prepare the text carefully. Do research on Hoggart and on the historical environment in which he penned his text. Then pen a short response essay (c. 1 to 1,5 pages) on the text. Your essay should consider the following points or questions:

- Flesh out the cultural context or cultural moment from which the text emerged.
- Explain the reasons for Hoggart's irritation or rage.
- Explain the slightly difficult passages on the "eighteenth-century town-house" and the "hedonistic but passive barbarian" riding "in a fifty-horse-power bus for threepence."

! Please upload your response/essay (as a text file) to WueCampus by Wednesday, 14/05, 6 p.m.

[21/05 Holiday (Ascension)]

28/05 **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.

! From here on, tasks will only be posted in the WueCampus course room.

04/06 **'Subcultures' and 'style' (I) – Concepts**

AR:

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

[11/06 Holiday (Corpus Christi)]

18/06 **'Subcultures' and 'style' (II) – Texts & practices**

No specific AR → Do research on various specific 'subcultures'! (See WueCampus for details!)

25/06 **Ethnicity & the politics of representation (I) – Concepts**

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.

02/07 **Ethnicity & the politics of representation (II) – Texts & practices**

No specific AR → Research concrete examples of how ethnicity is represented & negotiated in contemporary culture. (See WueCampus for details!)

09/07 **Gender (I) – Concepts**

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].

16/07 **Gender (II) – Texts & practices**

No specific AR → Research concrete examples of how gender is represented & negotiated in contemporary culture. (See WueCampus for details!)

Concluding discussion / concluding posts (due by 31/07)

See information on the course format & participants' contributions on the next/last page!

'Distant' learning & teaching –

Notes on the shape of the course in times of the 'Corona lock-down':

This will be an unusual semester, but we will not allow the current 'lock-down' on normal life to stop us from learning and teaching. Rather, we will undertake the experiment of conducting the seminar in the 'virtual realm,' making use of available communication resources such as WueCampus and e-mail.

This will be a challenge. However, if we engage in the experiment with both seriousness and humour, the special situation may – in spite of obvious disadvantages – even yield some positive 'side effects.' *Let's try it out!*

Should it become possible to return to normal studying and teaching, we will of course do so. (Our course plan admits of this option.)

We will think in terms of **'course weeks'**. A course week begins on the Monday before the respective meeting and ends on the following Sunday. The first course week, for example, begins on MON 20/04 and ends on SUN 26/04.

→ Participants' tasks:

- 1) Visit the **WUECAMPUS** course room *at least once* every week.
- 2) Participate in the WueCampus **DISCUSSION FORUM**:
→ For each 'meeting' or course week, there will be an open discussion forum on WueCampus. Please make sure to *regularly contribute* posts to this forum and to *always read* the posts provided by other members of the group.
- 3) Find the **ASSIGNED READINGS** and/or other materials provided for this week. Read/view and prepare these texts and materials.
- 4) Find the **TASKS** set for this week. Respond to these tasks and upload your responses to WueCampus by Wednesday 6 p.m.
→ Tasks set will comprise answering questions, penning short essays or researching information and material (texts, images, clips, etc.) on a certain topic.

→ Assessment:

This semester, there will be no final test.

Assessment will be according to the 'PORTFOLIO' PRINCIPLE. → All the contributions you will make to the course during the semester will automatically become part of your portfolio. Successful participation will depend on weekly, timely and satisfactory contributions. The portfolio will be graded at the end of the semester.