

**Cultural Studies Colloquium / CSC 3:**

**Cultural Studies around the Anglophone World:  
Confluences and Differences between  
India, the UK, and the US**

Seminar for advanced students in American and British Cultural Studies  
[Regular meeting time: WED 10-12 // Philosophy building, room Ü 18]

**Course description:**

While there are good reasons for understanding cultural studies as an attempt to reach beyond the exclusivist rhetoric of the nation, it is (still) common practice to gear its manifestations to distinct national discourses. Thus, we firmly distinguish between 'American Cultural Studies' and 'British Cultural Studies', implicitly or explicitly constructing the two as self-contained endeavors rooted in specific traditions and serving specific discourses of democratization.

Looking at [a] seminal key texts in the long history of cultural studies as well as [b] new theories, programmatic texts and case studies, the seminar will assess the reasons and effects of such compartmentalization. We will be particularly interested in opening up bipartite constructions of the discipline by paying close attention to the history and present of cultural studies in India. In doing so, we will attempt to bring in a third (seminal) 'national' perspective. However, we will also try to trace the contours and critically test the potentials of a transnational or global cultural studies.

**Enrolling for the course:**

To help create a committed and cohesive thinking community for this course, 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](mailto:zeno.ackermann@uni-wuerzburg.de) and [maryann.snyder-koerber@uni-wuerzburg.de](mailto:maryann.snyder-koerber@uni-wuerzburg.de)) by April 10th. 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.

**Please see information below on the *format of the Cultural Studies Colloquia*, on the *shape of the course in times of the 'Corona lock-down'*, and on *participants' contributions*!**

## COURSE PROGRAM

AR = Assigned reading; please make sure to have read and studied these texts by the time indicated.

### 22/04 INTRODUCTION

For this and all subsequent 'meetings' or 'study weeks':

Please visit the WueCampus course room at least once a week in order to take note of material and tasks posted. Do not forget to always read and regularly contribute to the WUECAMPUS FORUM. We are planning to start a separate Forum for each week/meeting.

AR:

- 'STATEMENTS OF INTEREST' by all participants (texts will be uploaded to Wue-Campus).
- 'OPENING REMARKS' by the seminar conveners (→ outlining the initial questions and aims for the course; to be uploaded to WueCampus by 22/04).

TASK:

- Please use the WUECAMPUS FORUM for this meeting/week in order to comment on the participants' statements of interest and on the conveners' opening remarks.  
→ The goal is to get a clear sense of our *motivations* and *interests* and to evolve *guiding questions* and *objectives* for the seminar.

## A. TOWARDS 'CULTURAL STUDIES' – (PRE-)HISTORIES & FOUNDATIONS

### 29/04 Materialism & idealism: Marx & Arnold

AR:

- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Feuerbach: Fragment 2," *Die deutsche Ideologie* (1845/46); rpt. in *Marx-Engels-Jahrbuch 2003* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004) 115-117.
- Matthew Arnold, "Sweetness and Light," [= ch. 1 of] *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism* (1867-69); rpt. in *Culture and Anarchy: And Other Writings*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: CUP, 1993) 58-80. [Accessible online through the website of the university library! ([LINK](#)) – Note also Collini's general introduction as well as Arnold's famous 1869 preface in the same edition.]

### 06/05 The Frankfurt School & French (neo)structuralism

AR:

- Theodor W. Adorno, "Résumé über Kulturindustrie" (1963); rpt. in *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2003) 337-345. // English translation: "Culture Industry Reconsidered." *New German Critique* 6 (1975): 12-19.

- Roland Barthes, [from:] *Mythologies* (1957); trans. by Richard Howard and Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012):  
"Translator's Note" and Barthes' prefaces (vii-xii) / "In the Ring" (3-14) / "Novels and Children" (56-58) / "Toys" (59-61) / "Striptease" (165-168) / "Electoral Photogeny" (181-183) / "*Lost Continent*" (184-186) / "Plastic" (193-195) / "The Great Family of Man" (196-199).

## B. 'BRITISH CULTURAL STUDIES'

### 13/05 **The dawn of 'BCS' – An enlightened nationalism?**

AR:

- Richard Hoggart, [from:] *The Uses of Literacy* (1957; Boston: Beacon, 1961) 1-11 & 202-205: Front matter, including list of contents and preface; subchapter on "The Juke-Box Boys."
- Raymond Williams, "Culture is Ordinary" (1958); rpt. in *The Raymond Williams Reader*, ed. John Higgins (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) 10-24.

### 20/05 **'Subcultural Studies' in Britain**

AR:

- Paul E. Willis, "Introduction: Profanity and Creativity," *Profane Culture* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978) 1-8.
- Dick Hebdige, [selections from:] *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1979).

### 27/05 **Collaborative Session 1: (More) Recent texts & trends in Britain**

AR:

The readings for this meeting will be group-sourced from the course.

⇒ Please post your suggestions on the WUECAMPUS FORUM for this meeting/week!

#### **Potential nominees might include:**

Angela McRobbie, "In Defence of Cultural Studies," *In the Culture Society: Art, Fashion, and Popular Music* (London: Routledge, 1999) 93-108. // Mark Fisher, "The Slow Cancellation of the Future," *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (Winchester: zero books, 2014) 1-29.

## C. 'AMERICAN CULTURAL STUDIES'

### 03/06 **'Always Historize!' – Marx in America, 1980s edition**

AR:

- Fredric Jameson, "On Interpretation: Literature as a Socially Symbolic Act," *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1981) 17-102 (abridged version of chapter will be provided as a PDF).

10/06 **Transatlantic dialogue & institution building**

AR:

- Lawrence Grossberg, "On Postmodernism and Articulation: An Interview with Stuart Hall," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10.2 (1986): 45-60.
- Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler, "Cultural Studies: An Introduction," *Cultural Studies*, eds. Grossberg, Nelson, and Treichler (New York: Routledge, 1981) 1-22.

17/06 **Collaborative Session 2:  
(More) Recent texts & trends in North America**

AR:

The readings for this meeting will be group-sourced from the course.

⇒ Please post your suggestions on the WUECAMPUS FORUM for this meeting/week!

**Potential nominees might include:**

Leslie Rak, "Attack of the Fifty-Foot Anthology! Adventures in Teaching Cultural Studies, *The Renewal of Cultural Studies*, ed. Paul Smith (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2011) 45-52. // The Editors, "Cultural Revolution," *N+1 Issue 16: Double Bind* (Spring 2013) (<https://nplusonemag.com/issue-16/the-intellectual-situation/cultural-revolution/>).  
Lawrence Grossberg, "Pessimism of the Intellect, Optimism of the Will," *Cultural Studies* 32.6 (2018): 855-888.

**D. CULTURAL STUDIES BEYOND (?) THE ANGLO-AMERICAN WEST**

24/06

AR:

- Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelhart, "From the Noble Savage to the Third World," rpt. in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Nilanjana Gupta (New Delhi: Worldview, 2014) 138-152; = excerpt from *How to Read Donald Duck* = trans. of *Para leer al Pato Donald* (1971).
- Inderpal Grewal, "Traveling Barbie: Indian Transnationalities and the Global Consumer," *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms* (Durham: Duke UP, 2005) 80-120 (but with pictures!).

**E. CULTURAL STUDIES IN INDIA:**

01/07 **Indian cultural history and the paradigm of the 'postcolonial'**

AR:

- Elleke Boehmer and Rosinka Chaudhuri, introduction, *The Indian Postcolonial: A Critical Reader*, ed. Boehmer and Chaudhuri (London: Routledge, 2011 / Indian rpt.) 1-13.
- Pallabi Chakravorty, "Kathak in Calcutta: A Story of Tradition and Change"; rpt. in Gupta (2004) 187-214.

- [Potential additional text or 'further reading':] Sameena Dalwai, "Bar Girls and Caste Capital," *Bans & Bar Girls: Performing Caste in Mumbai's Dance Bars* (New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2019) 1-39.

08/07 **Subaltern theory and feminism**

AR:

- Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1983).
- Maitrayee Chaudhuri, introduction, *Feminism in India*, ed. Chaudhuri (New Delhi: Kali for Women & Women Unlimited, 2004) xi-xlvi.

15/07 **Collaborative Session 3:**

**Concluding discussion: Transnational cultural studies?**

⇒ Readings will be group-sourced and/or generated by the course in the form of concluding statements, short presentations, etc.

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**Format of the Cultural Studies Colloquia:**

Our Cultural Studies Colloquia are a combined project of American and British Cultural Studies. The format of these joint courses is discussion-based. *Participants are asked to actively bring in their own perspectives and interests.* The choice of topics for each semester is based on both current scholarly discussions and the interests of participants. While the course format 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 backgrounds in ethnological and performance disciplines, for example, in addition to philosophy and history. If you have questions about the course and its applicability to your studies, please contact the instructors.

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

a) *'Distant' learning & teaching ...*

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 Wue-Campus, e-mail, and to some extent also the telephone.

→ Please see below for our plans for tackling the situation by creating specific tasks for both seminar participants and ourselves.

This will be a challenge. However, if we take the experiment with both seriousness and humor, the special situation may – in spite of obvious disadvantages – perhaps also yield some positive 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 does admit of this option.)

*b) Our guests from India ...*

The course was originally designed to feature contributions by colleagues and PhD students from Jamia Millia Islamia and Jawaharlal Nehru University (both are universities in Delhi) who were scheduled to stay at our university this summer. In the current situation, this exchange will most probably not be possible.

In view of this, we plan to offer a continuation of the seminar in the following semester (WiSe 2020/21). We believe that our Indian guests will then be able to attend. These plans would mean that a semester of 'distant' reading, writing and feedback would be followed by a semester of live-exchange on the same topic. Of course, it would still be possible for students to attend only one of the two legs of the resulting two-semester course and earn credit points on this basis.

**Participants' contributions:**

Due to the 'lock-down,' this will need to be a semester of *reading* and *writing* on the side of the participants and of providing *feedback* on the side of the seminar conveners.

→ Everybody will *continuously* produce written work (and other documented contributions to the seminar). These contributions will result in a *portfolio* on which assessment will be based.

Here are the different **types of contributions:**

**(1) READING REPORTS:**

There are usually two assigned readings for each 'virtual meeting' (amounting to c. 20 to 50 pp. of reading matter).

→ All participants are asked to reflect and comment on these texts in a short READING REPORT (length: 0,5 to 1 pages; to be uploaded to WueCampus by Wednesday of the respective course week).

→ This READING REPORT is meant to briefly consider how the respective readings relate to the *seminar topic/s*, to our *guiding questions* and to the *seminar discussion so far*. Most importantly, a READING REPORT should offer at least one seminal *discussion question*.

**(2) RESPONSE ESSAYS:**

A RESPONSE ESSAY is a longer (2-3 pp.) and freer academic text.

→ It should consider the topic/s and texts set for the respective course week in a *broader light and context*, ideally articulating a *personal research agenda* and providing *links between several readings* assigned so far.

→ Please upload your response essay by the Sunday of the respective course week. Of course, you need not write a reading report for a meeting for which you are contributing a response essay.

→ Every participant is asked to contribute a total number of THREE response essays.

**(3) FORUM POSTS:**

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.

**(4) CONCLUDING REFLECTION:**

Participants should round off their portfolios with a CONCLUDING REFLECTION (c. 5 to 7 pp. long). This is meant to be an academic essay that *revisits* the central *concerns, discussions* and *trajectories* of the semester and *integrates* them from the standpoint of clearly articulated *personal interests and questions*.

The concluding reflection can serve as a jumping board for BA, MA or PhD projects on which some participants may wish to embark after the semester. Ideally, concluding reflections might already be uploaded to WueCampus by 15/07, thus becoming part of our concluding discussion.

**} PORTFOLIO:** At the end of the semester (more precisely: by 30/09), every participant will submit all his or her written work in a single file. Besides 8 short reading reports (c. 0,5-1 p.) and 3 more extensive response essays (c. 2-3 pp.), this portfolio will also include the original statement of purpose (c. 1,5 pp.) as well as the concluding reflection (c. 5-7 pp.). Consequently, it will be at least 20 pages long.