

Culture Department Course Offerings – Winter Semester 2019/20

Ringvorlesung

32000 Curd Knüpfer/Christina Meyer

Ringvorlesung: Popular Culture, Media, and Politics in the US

Mi 18-20 Uhr, Silberlaube Hörsaal 1b

The interdisciplinary lecture series will zoom in on popular forms of culture, media, and politics in the US in the past and present. It brings together scholars both from the social sciences and the humanities, to explore practices and aesthetics of US popular culture and its global reach and to examine forms of political communication and the relationships between popular media and politics. The series will analyze changes that have occurred in the US media system over the past decades and centuries, while investigating the cultures and media of populism at various historical moments as well as the current resurgence of populist rhetoric and political styles. The interdisciplinary lens is specifically aimed at the intersection of popular culture, diverse forms of media representation, and the political landscape of the US.

Bachelor

Grundlagenmodul

32001 Sebastian Jobs/Christina Meyer/Birte Wege

Understanding North America A

Fr 10-12 Uhr; 14-16 Uhr, Raum 340

This comprehensive course introduces students to the fundamentals of the interdisciplinary field of North American Studies. "Understanding North America" (UNA) follows a two-semester format, with the first part (UNA-A) covering the disciplines of literary studies, cultural studies, and history. The second part (UNA-B) will be offered during the next summer term and expands the overall framework with the disciplinary perspectives of sociology, economics, and political science. While UNA is one of the most challenging courses at the John F. Kennedy-Institute, it will reward students with insights into multiple disciplines along with a solid foundation of knowledge and skills for further studies. UNA-A (for students of the mono bachelor North American Studies) UNA-A (UNA A1) consists of two components: lectures and tutorials. The lectures offer an overview of central developments, concepts, and questions of American culture, literature, and history. The tutorials, in contrast, provide a forum to discuss select issues in depth. You will have the chance to revisit the content of each lecture, but also to dive into specific materials and issues in smaller group discussions. The teaching assistants who organize the tutorials will assist students in their preparation for the final written exam at the end of the term. A central goal of UNA-

A is to enable students to critically investigate and analyze North American societies of the past and present from an interdisciplinary angle. At the same time, the course covers the methodological and theoretical basics of each contributing discipline, thus enabling students to make conscious decisions about their future areas of concentration at the John F. Kennedy Institute. UNA-A (for students of the BA 30 CP North American Studies program) UNA-A (UNA-A2) consists of two components: (1) all UNA lectures in the winter term 2019/20 and (2) the UNA-B lectures in the summer term of 2020 in a discipline of your choice (either political science OR sociology OR economics). The written exam takes place after the end of the summer term 2020, students are therefore not taking part in the tutorials. UNA-A (for students of the BA History or the BA 60 CP History program as part of the module "Regionale Perspektiven der Geschichte" UNA-A consists of one component: all UNA lectures by Prof. Jobs (history). The syllabus with the history lectures of UNA-A will be distributed in the orientation session (see below).

Please note: A mandatory UNA-A orientation session takes place on Wednesday, October 16 from 14:00-16:00 h in room 340 of the JFKI. During this session, the instructors will introduce the course format, the readings, as well as the credit requirements. Also, students will be assigned to a tutorial group.

Orientierungsmodul Kultur - Proseminar

32100 Alexander Starre

Rhetorics of Continuity and Change: A Survey of American Cultural History

Mi 12–14 Uhr, Raum 203

This course provides an extended overview of American cultural history ranging from the period of British settlement in the 17th century to present issues in US society. We will read influential texts (speeches, legal documents, essays, etc.) by authors such as John Cotton, Thomas Jefferson, Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, Martin Luther King, Betty Friedan, and Ta-Nehisi Coates. Throughout our readings, we will explore public rhetoric as key factors shaping the cultural trajectory of the United States. After a brief introduction to basic methodologies of cultural analysis, students will investigate the rhetorical, structural, and discursive features of the primary texts through close readings. We will also explore select representations from the fields of visual culture, art, and film. In addition, students need to do independent research on a selection of key terms that are essential for understanding the evolution of American public discourse and intellectual history.

Vertiefungsmodul Kultur

32101 Joshua Shannon (Terra Visiting Professor)

The Americans: Photography in the United States since 1950

(Vertiefung A & B)

Mi 10-12 Uhr, Raum 319

In this course, we will consider the many uses and meanings of U.S. photography over the last seventy years. A broad variety of photographic practices will be considered, including street photography, figure and portrait photography, and the recent boom in photography of the environment. In addition to this focus on work conventionally understood as artistic photography, the course will consider the increasingly prominent roles that photography has played in other recent artistic practices, including pop art, performance, conceptual art, site-specific sculpture, and painting. We will also critically analyze American photojournalism as well as the ascendancy and changing roles of amateur snapshots. Some meetings will introduce particular themes and movements, while others will focus intensively on small bodies of work.

Please register at: culture@jfki.fu-berlin.de with your name, matriculation number, study program, home university (if applicable), zedat email address or email address of home university, and type of exchange program (if applicable). Deadline for registration is November 1, 2019. Enrollment without registration here is not possible. A final list of participants will be published on November 4.

32102 Madita Oeming
Porn in the USA (Vertiefung B)
Do 13-16 Uhr, Raum 201

“Pornography is emphatically part of American culture,” claims Linda Williams, US film scholar and founding mother of the field of Porn Studies. Indeed, there is no other country that produces and consumes as much pornographic material as the United States. At the same time, however, America has a troubled history with porn, full of obscenity trials, censorship movements, and moral panics. In this class, we will explore this complicated love-hate-relationship torn between Puritanism on the one, and freedom of speech on the other hand. In so doing, our aim is to move beyond a moral judgment of pornography and towards a better analytical understanding of its history, aesthetics, production, consumption, and cultural function. Through critical readings and selected scenes, we will go back to the “Golden Age of Porn” in the 1970s and then follow porn’s evolution, as a medium and as an industry, into the digital age. To connect with the contemporary local and international porn scene and – literally – move beyond the ivory tower, we will visit events at the PorYes Feminist Porn Award and the Berlin Pornfilmfestival. *A note on content: please be aware that we will look at sexually explicit material. If you think you are unable to engage with such media in a respectful and scholarly manner, this is not the right course for you.*

32103 Maximilian Stobbe
Affect, Digitality, and Popular Seriality (Vertiefung A)
Di 12-14 Uhr, Raum 203

The turn to affect in the humanities and social sciences, succinctly described by Margaret Wetherell as a widespread “desire to recognize the way the world moves us” (2014), has yielded numerous insights regarding the affective dynamics of digital media and our experiences of fiction respectively. Yet in the field of popular seriality studies, there is still room to theoretically undergird the various ways in which American original series and serialized adaptations – especially at a time when they proliferate abundantly on digital platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video – generate their potentials to affect us. On an elementary level, this seminar will therefore serve as an introduction to seminal approaches to affectivity and popular seriality; more

importantly, however, we will seek to bring these theoretical fields together in order to explore and conceptualize the ways in which contemporary digital series can ‘move’ their audiences – and not just by getting them emotionally ‘invested’ in specific characters or storylines. We will pay equal, if not closer, attention to the structural implications of the binge-watching model, to the various social media practices surrounding these series, to their intertextual and metamedial play, to their engagement with recent sociopolitical events, to their self-positioning within genre conventions, to the specificities of their digital publishing platforms, and to their strategies of adaptation, among other phenomena. The examples we will investigate will include, but are not limited to, *Black Mirror* (2011–), *Sense8* (2015-18), *Stranger Things* (2016–), *Lemony Snicket’s A Series of Unfortunate Events* (2017-19), *The Haunting of Hill House* (2018–), *YOU* (2018–), *The Boys* (2019–), and *Good Omens* (2019). We will not have the time to consider all of our examples in their entirety in the course of this seminar, but since studying seriality always necessitates many hours of watching, students are encouraged to sample and/or binge as much of these series as they can manage before the start of the semester.

An organizational note: Most of the examples on which we will focus are found on Netflix and Amazon Prime, so students are advised to ensure access to these streaming portals to adequately participate in this course.

32104 Alexander Starre

Black/White – Top/Bottom: Race and Class in American Culture around 1900 (Vertiefung A)

Di 16-18 Uhr, Raum 201

“The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line,” scholar-activist W.E.B. Du Bois famously decreed in his masterpiece *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). While this course is inspired by this pronouncement, it will also put pressure on the cultural delineation of racial groupings by interweaving Du Bois’s “color-line” with the contending lines and barriers of social class. Our historical focus is on the post-reconstruction period all the way until the end of the Progressive Era and the Harlem Renaissance. The readings mostly address Black-White relations in the shadow of the Jim Crow system as well as internal debates within African American reform movements. Text selections stretch across multiple genres (autobiography, scholarly texts, activist writings, fiction) and include works by Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells, Madison Grant, Jean Toomer, Nella Larsen, Angela Davis, and Saidiya Hartman. We will also work with visual media, including silent film and photography. Throughout the course, students will hone their analytical skills, develop strategies to approach research topics in American Cultural Studies, and practice the composition of scholarly prose.

Colloquium

32203 Tobias Jochum

BA-Colloquium Kultur/Literatur

Fr 12-14 Uhr, Raum 203

Master

Modul A

32110 Frank Kelleter

A Revolutionary Culture: Sources of America's Political Imaginary

(Grundlagenvorlesung)

Di 16-18 Uhr, Raum 319

This lecture course deals with the sources of a political imaginary in the United States, focusing on documents, debates, and artifacts from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Topics include the emergence and consolidation of a “republican” elite during and after the American Revolution, the cultural work of *The Federalist*, the French Revolution in America, the parallel appearance of political parties and a national political press, the Haitian Revolution, the South and slavery, the impact of the American Revolution on native cultures, the advent of the novel and its early genres (sentimental, Gothic, historical) as well as other issues.

The lecture course serves as “Vorlesung” of Culture-Module A (*Amerikanische Ideengeschichte und Theorien amerikanischer Kultur*) in the M.A. program.

Registration: All participants must be registered via Blackboard *and* Campus Management before the first session. If you cannot register online or cannot attend the first session, please contact Prof. Kelleter before the beginning of the term. Requirements: See Syllabus and Course Description (on Blackboard). First session: October 15.

32111 Frank Kelleter

Post-Classical Theory (HS)

Di 18-20 Uhr, Raum 319

This seminar serves as “Hauptseminar” of Culture-Module A (also possible: Module C) in the Master's degree program. It will deal with select examples of cultural theory that have emerged after the “classical” paradigms of psychoanalysis, phenomenology, traditional Marxism and their poststructuralist inflections. Individual sessions will be dedicated to field theory, actor-network-theory, systems theory, post-critique, affect theory; additional topics (to be chosen and prepared by students) can include, but are not restricted to, intersectionality, critical race theory, critical whiteness studies, new queer theories, contemporary types of media studies, post-cinema theory, critical university studies, perspectives on “settler colonialism”, global history, theories of neoliberalism, and other paradigms. Unlike Prof. Kelleter's lecture course, this seminar will be largely student-driven; about half of the sessions will be designed and moderated by the participants. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with potential course material (theoretical paradigms and texts) before the first meeting, when all participants will be asked to propose and sign up for one session topic (theoretical paradigm and/or set of texts) for classroom use (compare Syllabus).

Registration: All participants must be registered via Blackboard *and* Campus Management prior to the first session. If you cannot register online, please contact Prof. Kelleter before the beginning of the term. Requirements and Organization: See Syllabus and Course Description (on Blackboard). To participate in this course, you need to be present and prepared in the first session (no exceptions)! If you would like

to participate but cannot attend the first session, please contact Prof. Kelleter no later than October 8. First session: October 22.

32113 Sören Schoppmeier

Critical Approaches to Digital Culture(s) (HS)

Do 10-12 Uhr, Raum 201

The aim of this course is to explore dominant as well as emerging digital technologies and the cultures that accompany them from a critical perspective. Engaging the work of leading scholars from a variety of fields, including Media Studies, African American Studies, and Law, we will turn a critical eye toward the algorithmic technologies that are increasingly coterminous with American life in the twenty-first century. Looking at phenomena ranging from search engines and videogames to social media and predictive algorithms, we will ponder questions such as the following: How can algorithms be racist? Are social media really anti-social? Should we worry about the Googlization of everything? How do videogames promote a politics of whiteness? Studying these and other formations of digital culture as well as some of their representations in popular culture (e. g., film, TV, literature) will help us problematize the broader impact of new technologies and media that present themselves as neutral or even beneficial even as they are deeply entangled with longstanding ideological formations and political and economic interests. We will thus look for the continuities rather than disruptions presented by digital culture, paying special attention to power differentials along the lines of race, class, gender, and others.

Please register via Campus Management and Blackboard. Registration will open during the first half of October. Participants are expected to acquire a copy of Dave Eggers's novel *The Circle* (2013) and to have read it by the time it is discussed in class (later in the semester). All other course materials will be distributed via Blackboard. The final three sessions or so will be organized by students; this includes selecting topics of interest as well as critical work on the topics assigned for reading and moderating the in-class discussion.

32116 Herman Bennett (GSNAS Visiting Professor)

Formations of Blackness: The Cultures of Slaves & Free Blacks in Eighteenth-Century America (HS)

Di 12-14 Uhr, Raum 201

This course addresses the relationship between the cultures of the enslaved, racial formation and political modernity's most notable concept: freedom. Posed as a question, one might ask what are the historical dynamics between the emergence of black cultural formations, the formation of polities throughout the Atlantic world and freedom? Asked differently, how might slavery and the cultures of the enslaved engendered freedom in the eighteenth century? In what ways did freedom enable the emergence of black and African cultures in the wake of European imperial expansion and what are the implications for our understanding of individualism, sovereignty, the public sphere, liberalism, nationalism, republicanism, and the nation state? Such questions flow obviously from recent scholarship on late eighteenth-century free blacks who left various destinations in the Americas or England for Sierra Leone and Liberia, or for that matter the thousands of emancipated Africans from the Bight of Biafra and West Central Africa who joined previous arrivals in the fledgling 'black' colonies in West Africa in the nineteenth century. Armed with a newly acquired but ill-defined freedom,

blacks—from the Americas and England—along with ethnic Africans—forged new social selves and polities that shaped the modern political histories of Atlantic Africa. But similar conclusions should be drawn for the sizeable pockets of free blacks throughout the Americas and England who did not return to Africa. Indeed, the vast settlements of free blacks in Latin America had a profound but largely overlooked political impact on New World societies, decisively shaping the expressions of political modernity (individualism, sovereignty, nationalism) throughout the Atlantic world. These free blacks were also *criollos* (creoles). Overlooked beyond the field of Latin America history until Benedict Anderson ascribed them a leading role in the origins of nationalism, scholars have narrowly associated *criollos* with whites—ignoring the fact that blacks, especially free blacks, carried that label and constituted the majority of that population.

In one sense, this course concerns itself with the problem of freedom before, during, and after the Enlightenment thereby seeking to disrupt the singular teleology that characterizes modern liberty. Freedom—much like conversion—has been rendered a singular event. But freedom, like other concepts that comprise the lexicon of political modernity, has a genealogy that precedes an ascendant consumer society and bourgeois subjectivity all the while embodying a vast array of different and conflicting experiences. The focus on earlier and distinct incarnations of freedom directs our attention to a series of neglected histories. Rather than labeling these narratives as exceptions, we should ponder in what ways do they bring into relief the distinct genealogies and pluralities of freedoms.

For the first day of class, participants are asked to read Fred Moten's "Knowledge of Freedom" *CR: The New Centennial Review* 4.2 (Fall 2004): 269-310.

Modul B

32114 Christina Meyer

Reform, Diversity, and Cultural Nationalism in the Age of Romanticism (Grundlagenvorlesung)

Do 18-20 Uhr, Raum 319

This lecture is designed to introduce students to the complexities of U.S. cultural production and social life in the age of romanticism, roughly from the 1820s to the Civil War. In order to avoid a teleological "reading back" of the period leading up to the Civil War, the lecture will attempt to take romanticism seriously in its own right as a distinct moment in U.S. cultural history and we will aspire to both, come to terms with and complicate the central concepts introduced in the title of the lecture. Next to discussing material of what we consider to be canonized for the period at hand and voices in the debates about reform, diversity, and nationalism in the first half of the 19th century, we will also look into different (yet related) fields of publishing – that is, newspapers, magazines, books, and advertising –, in order to get a better understanding of communication practices, knowledge management, and prevalent (visual) discourses of the time period. In this lecture, students are encouraged to develop their skills in critical reading of primary sources and secondary literature, and to develop strategies for historical research of cultural artifacts.

32112 Winfried Fluck
American Exceptionalism (HS)
Mi 12-14 Uhr, Raum 319

The belief in an American exceptionalism has been a key element in the formation of a national identity throughout American history. It has had an unexpected comeback in the last decades. This course will focus on the main historical documents of American exceptionalism, starting with Puritanism and leading up to the present, and discuss them in the light of current revisionist reinterpretations of American history.

32115 Joshua Shannon (Terra Visiting Professor)
The Future is a Rectangle: American Modernist Architecture in its Global Context (HS)
Mi 14-16 Uhr, Raum 319

This course offers a history of modern architecture in the United States, with an emphasis on its ideological aspirations and socio-political contexts. The course emphasizes the period 1945 - 1985, focusing especially on the adaptation of modernism to serve as the default style for new schools, post offices, university campuses and other ordinary civic building projects. We will investigate in particular the political meanings of this vernacular use of "International Style" modernism. Please register at: culture@jfki.fu-berlin.de with your name, matriculation number, study program, home university (if applicable), zedat email address or email address of home university, and type of exchange program (if applicable). Deadline for registration is November 1, 2019. Enrollment without registration at: culture@jfki.fu-berlin.de is not possible. A final list of participants will be published on November 4.

32116 Herman Bennett (GSNAS Visiting Professor)
Formations of Blackness: The Cultures of Slaves & Free Blacks in Eighteenth-Century America (HS)
Di 12-14 Uhr, Raum 201

see description above

Modul C

32111 Frank Kelleter
Post Classical Theory (HS)
Di 18-20 Uhr, Raum 319

see description above

32113 Sören Schoppmeier
Critical Approaches to Digital Culture(s) (HS)
Do 10-12 Uhr, Raum 201

see description above

32115 Joshua Shannon (Terra Visiting Professor)
**The Future is a Rectangle: American Modernist Architecture in its
Global Context (HS)**
Mi 14-16 Uhr, Raum 319

see description above

Colloquium

32117 Christina Meyer
MA-Kolloquium Kultur/Literatur
Do 16-18 Uhr, Raum 319

The colloquium is designed for students who are currently working on their master thesis. We will meet for an orientation session on Thursday, October 17 at 4 pm. Please make sure you are there.

Registration: all participants must be registered via Blackboard and Campus Management before the first session. If you cannot register online, or if you would like to participate, but cannot attend the first session, please contact Regina Wenzel (culture@jfki.fu-berlin.de) before the beginning of the term

Graduate School

32120 Frank Kelleter
Theory and Methods in the Study of Culture (Oberseminar)
Di 14-16 Uhr, Villa

This Ph.D.-course deals with theoretical and methodological issues in the study of American culture, focussing on current research projects (doctoral and post-doctoral level) at the John F. Kennedy Institute. Members of the Graduate School are invited to attend; please register prior to the first class with Prof. Kelleter (no later than October 9).