

Culture Department Course Offerings

Summer Term 2021

Due to the measures taken by Freie Universität to contain the spread of COVID-19, all courses at the JFKI will be offered in digital formats. Course instructors will communicate further details about their teaching modes via Blackboard, where all courses will be set up to let students self-enroll so that they can access course syllabi during the sign-up period. As usual, students are also automatically added to Blackboard when they register for their courses on Campus Management. If you run into any problems using Blackboard or if you have other concerns regarding your participation, please contact your instructor individually (via email) as soon as possible. Please also check the JFKI website regularly for further updates.

Note: All seminars in the Culture Department will take place as *synchronous courses*, i.e. they will be conducted in live meetings on Webex in the time slots indicated below. The two lectures by Prof. Dr. Kelleter and Dr. Starre in the MA modules A and B will be taught as *asynchronous courses*; lecture videos will be shared each week via Blackboard to be screened individually by students.

Bachelor

Orientierungsmodul Kultur - Seminar

32100 Maxi Albrecht

Theorizing Culture (Seminar)

Mon 10 – 12 h, synchronous

The object of this seminar is to introduce students to theories of culture(s) and cultural theory. With theories of culture abounding, we will only be able to discuss a selection of canonized texts. These texts will – hopefully – help to enhance our understanding of how we have come to theorize culture(s) in the field of literary and cultural studies, as well as cultural history. Furthermore, we will tackle various angles of how we make meaning of and through culture and how culture informs related fields of inquiry, such as, for example, media studies, philosophy, and sociology.

This class will be held online, and the first session takes place on April 12. Please make sure to sign up on Blackboard as soon as possible.

Vertiefungsseminare Kultur

32101 David Getsy (Terra Visiting Professor)

Queer Histories of U.S. Art, 1950s to 1990s (Vertiefung A & B)

Wed 18 – 20 h, synchronous

In the wake of the Second World War, demographic shifts fostered new concentrations of lesbian, gay, and otherwise non-heterosexual people in U.S. cities starting in the 1950s. Visual art that addressed these increasingly visible communities began to flourish in these decades, and this course will track the shifts in the queer production of art during this time. We will examine the transition from highly coded and covert registrations of queer lives in the 1950s to the forthrightness and activism that emerged after the Stonewall uprising in 1969 to the rage of the 1980s spurred by government inaction on the AIDS crisis. The course will be structured around case studies that examine changing attitudes toward the politics of visibility, the question of assimilation, the need for radical refusal, and the disruption of norms and naturalized roles. Throughout, our examinations will be focused on larger questions for the history and historiography of U.S. art, including the erasure of non-white subjects from queer art historical narratives, the appropriation of transgender histories by queer art and politics, and the continuing institutional censorship of queer art.

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).

32102 Anthony Obst

The Black Radical Tradition (Vertiefung B)

Wed 12 – 14 Uhr, synchronous

This course provides a historical overview of the theories and practices animating what Cedric Robinson has called “the black radical tradition.” Following Robinson in tracing the roots of the tradition to African peoples’ resistance to “enslavement, racial domination, and repression” (*Black Marxism* 309), the course explores the myriad ways in which Black people in the Americas have critically theorized and sought to fundamentally transform political, economic, and social conditions. Taking seriously the tradition’s challenges to Eurocentric epistemologies, the course seeks to destabilize notions of what constitutes theory through explorations of Black protest music, film, and literature, alongside analyses of key texts by thinkers such as Robinson, W. E. B. Du Bois, Angela Davis, and Saidiya Hartman. In an online seminar setting, students will familiarize themselves with methodologies of cultural studies and develop analytical frameworks attuned to intersecting issues of race, class, and gender. In doing so, students will build conceptual approaches and vocabularies for

participating in and historically situating discussions around contemporary topics such as police abolition and the Movement for Black Lives.

32103 Maxi Albrecht

Gender, Race and Class beyond the End of the World? Speculative Fiction and Neoliberal Meritocracy (Vertiefung B)

Thu 12 – 14 h, synchronous

Speculative fiction builds imaginary storyworlds that are alternative realities created through extrapolation, altering or removing those power structures that govern or even determine our real lives. Considering the history of the speculative genre as didactic, political and potentially even revolutionary genres, speculative fiction has been credited with offering visions of humanity beyond our socio-cultural constraints. Some see these narratives as postgender, postfeminist or postracial utopias, while others criticize their failures in terms of formulating progressive identity politics. A dominant streak of dystopian and post-apocalyptic fiction has marked US-American cultural production during the last decade. These dark speculations often focus intensely on the survival of humanity in general, of individuals and of collective groups of people. While real-world power structures may be absent, or altered, the ethos of survival takes on structural significance in this type of narrative. In this course, we will investigate the interconnection of survival in speculative fiction with the concept of neoliberal meritocracy in order to question this genre's entanglement in gender, race and class politics in the 21st century. We will focus on different types of media, such as television series, film, and novels, as well as different genres such as dystopia, young adult fiction, post-apocalypse, zombie fiction and others, to tease out the complex negotiations of gender and identity politics in the speculative imagination of the 21st century, while also paying special attention to their historic embeddedness in the socio-economic moment of neoliberalism.

This class will be held online, and the first session takes place on April 15. Please make sure to sign up on Blackboard as soon as possible.

32104 Alina Vaisfeld

Issues in American Feminism(s): An Introduction (Vertiefung B)

Mon 14 – 16 h, synchronous

This course will introduce students to American Feminism(s). Contextualizing and relating the many different strands of feminist thought, it will serve as a historical exploration of U.S. feminist movements. But, more importantly, the course will focus on feminist philosophy, that is, the issues, questions, and debates with which feminists have struggled and continue to struggle. Topics will include the relation between sex and gender, the space of biology, the question of the body, domesticity and desire, kinship and motherhood, and complex forms of oppression and their intersections. We will study thinkers and activists such as Sojourner Truth, Betty Friedan, Audre Lorde,

Angela Davis, bell hooks, Judith Butler, Sara Ahmed, Annette Fausto-Sterling, and Paul B. Preciado. By listening in on the conversations between these authors and by actively contributing to them, students will encounter feminism not as a monolithic discourse, but rather as wide-ranging and often discordant reflections on the kind of lives we want to lead and the kind of world we want to inhabit.

Colloquium

32105 Maxi Albrecht

BA-Colloquium Culture/Literature

Thu 16 – 18 h, synchronous

This course will provide guidance to students who are preparing for or are in the process of writing their bachelor's thesis. The colloquium will be divided into two sections. Section 1 will center on questions such as finding a topic, literature research, methodologies and theories, and academic writing. Section 2 of the course will take the form of a symposium where students give presentations on their proposed topics and the progress of their research so far.

This class will be held online, and the first session takes place on April 15. Please make sure to sign up on Blackboard as soon as possible.

Master

Modul A

32110 Frank Kelleter

A Revolutionary Culture: Sources of America's Political Imaginary

(Grundlagenvorlesung)

Tue 16-18 h, asynchronous

This lecture course deals with sources of the U.S. political imaginary, 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 and racial capitalism, anti-blackness and slavery, settler colonialism and the impact of the American Revolution on Indigenous peoples, early trans-Atlantic feminism, 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 need to be registered via Blackboard *and* Campus Management by the first session. If you cannot register online, please contact Prof. Kelleter before the beginning of the term.

Requirements and Online Organization: See **Syllabus and Course Description in the “Teaching” section of my JFKI website or on Blackboard** (go to “Kursmaterial”; you may have to click on “open Syllabus here” to download it; if this doesn’t work, try a different browser: students have reported problems with the Chrome browser). All communication about and within this class will be channeled through the course’s Blackboard site; please make sure you’re registered there.

First session: April 13. Online Course – Lecture Uploads: Tuesdays

32111 Maxi Albrecht

"I will not equivocate" Social Movements from the Early Republic to the Antebellum Era (HS)

Wed 14 – 16 h, synchronous

The United States were founded under the motto that “all men are created equal.” The existence of racialized slavery, the treatment of Native Americans, and the selective enfranchisement or disenfranchisement of specific groups of people appears to be at odds with that premise. From the very founding of the nascent nation, different types of social (reform) movements sought to challenge the principles of inclusion and exclusion through different types of protest and with different goals in mind. In this class, we will consider social movements ranging from anti-slavery sentiments to abolitionism, the early movement for women’s right and suffrage, as well as public education, prison reform and the temperance movement from the period of the Early Republic to the eve of the Civil War. In some sessions we will also take a transnational perspective, when we consider, for instance, the impact of the Haitian Revolution in anti-slavery and abolitionist discourses. The course will primarily center on understanding the goals and means of social reform movements of that time, but we will also examine some contemporary renderings of these issues, such as the movie *Amistad* (Spielberg, 1997).

This class will be held online, and the first session takes place on April 14. Please make sure to sign up on Blackboard as soon as possible.

32112 David Getsy (Terra Visiting Professor)

Transgender and Nonbinary Art and Performance in U.S. Culture (HS)

Wed 14 – 16 h, synchronous

This graduate seminar in theory and methodology will ask what transgender studies and art history have to say to each other. The seminar will introduce transgender

studies and examine the ways in which the discipline of art history can contribute to its debates about form, the status of the human figure, the legibility of bodies, and the visualization of complex and successive states. Our primary focus will be on how transgender studies compels us to read and write U.S. art history differently. Our topics will include work by transgender cultural producers and artists, but we will also examine the ways in which transgender and nonbinary methods can be used to look at canonical, mainstream, and ostensibly non-trans topics in a new and more accurate light. While there will be case studies from contemporary art, the majority of the seminar will be focused on the methods that can be used to write new historical narratives of nineteenth- and twentieth-century in U.S. art history. This is a reading-intensive, theoretically-focused graduate seminar in which students are expected to produce original scholarly research.

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Modul B

32114 Alexander Starre

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

Tue 18 – 20 h, asynchronous

This lecture course deals with the interlocking of Romanticism, cultural nationalism, and practices of political reform; it focuses on a broad archive of autobiographical writings, political tracts, literary works, philosophical essays, and popular entertainment from the period between the Jacksonian era and the Civil War. Topics include: the evolution of democratic culture, “Indian Removal,” New England transcendentalism, debates on slavery and national expansion, sentimentalism and the abolitionist imagination, the emergence of popular entertainment forms and genres, the slave narrative. Combining a focus on narrative forms and cultural self-descriptions with inquiries into shifting configurations and hierarchies of race, gender, and region, the lecture engages works by James Fenimore Cooper, William Apess, Alexis de Tocqueville, Margaret Fuller, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Lydia Maria Child, Maria Stewart, Frederick Douglass, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Edgar Allan Poe, Harriet Jacobs, P.T. Barnum, Emily Dickinson, Harriet Beecher-Stowe and others.

This course functions as “Vorlesung” in the M.A. Module B (Kultur der Nationalität und Diversität). As such, it is closely associated with my accompanying seminar “(Counter-)Narratives of American Nationhood and Citizenship in the Antebellum Period.”

Due to the Coronavirus situation, lectures will be pre-recorded and made available on Blackboard in time for the weekly time slot of the class.

32115 Alexander Starre

(Counter-)Narratives of American Nationhood and Citizenship in the Antebellum Period (HS)

Wed 12 – 14 h, synchronous

The antebellum period saw the rise of an extended literary culture in the U.S. – attached to the classic works of writers such as Dickinson, Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville, and Thoreau – but, as David Reynolds famously argued, there was a welter of messy cultural activity “beneath the American Renaissance.” In this seminar, we will embrace this messiness, surveying the cultural landscape of an increasingly refined and artistically ambitious but also sensationalist, expansionist, and violent America that grappled with the modernization of ideas like “the nation” and “the citizen.” Alongside a selection of primary materials from the period that showcase competing national narratives and counternarratives, the course introduces foundational scholarship as well as recent critical interventions from C19 American Studies in areas such as popular/visual culture studies, Black studies, Native American studies, gender studies, transnational studies, and New Southern Studies. A key area of concern in this course will be scholarly practice, including methodology and archival research, as well as the composition of scholarly prose. During yet another digital semester, the seminar will also be an experiment in a more collaborative style of learning, as students will actively contribute to the shape of the syllabus while they develop individual research projects. This seminar is taught in close conjunction with the lecture “Reform, Diversity, and Cultural Nationalism in the Age of Romanticism”; students are encouraged to attend the lecture alongside the seminar.

Due to the Coronavirus situation, the seminar will be offered as a synchronous online course via Webex.

32116 Brett Mills

Comedy on Screen (HS)

Mon 12 – 14 h, synchronous

This course explores key developments in media comedy from the birth of mass media to the present day. We will consider the status of the comedy in American culture and relevant broader debates associated with television studies, film studies and media studies. We will also map the ways in which media humour responds to and reflects specific social and historical contexts and explore examples across the breadth of comedy in media. The course will explore ways in which we can study humour and comedy, and how this has been theorised historically, drawing on Humour Theory that can be traced back to Aristotle and Plato.

Key to the module is the assumption that comedy is often seen as a 'lower' form of culture, and this affects how it is understood within society and the roles it often plays. Debates about comedy are persistent and highly charged, encompassing notions of free speech, offence, and the power of language and communication. The course will equip you to engage with such contemporary debates, and encourage you to see media comedy as a particular cultural form that, while often seen as illegitimate or problematic, is instead a vital social phenomenon with particular mechanisms and functions.

32111 Maxi Albrecht

"I will not equivocate": Social Movements from the Early Republic to the Antebellum Era (HS)

Wed 14 – 16 h, synchronous

(description see above)

Modul C

32112 David Getsy

Transgender and Nonbinary Art and Performance in U.S. Culture (HS)

Wed 14 – 16 h, synchronous

(description see above)

32116 Brett Mills

Comedy on Screen (HS)

Mon 12 – 14 h, synchronous

(description see above)

Graduate School

32120 Frank Kelleter:

Advanced Theory and Methods in the Study of Culture

(Oberseminar)

Tue 14-16 h, synchronous

This Ph.D.-course continues last semester's "Theory and Methods in the Study of Culture." Members of the Graduate School are invited to attend. Please register prior to the first class with Prof. Kelleter.

32130 Frank Kelleter / Ulla Haselstein

Forschungskolloquium Kultur/Literatur

Wed 18 – 20 h, synchronous

Each summer semester, the Department of Culture and the Department of Literature organize a joint research colloquium with international speakers. This course is addressed chiefly to Ph.D. students, post-docs, visiting scholars, and faculty members, but it is open to B.A. and M.A. students and the general public as well. It cannot be taken for credit; it is not an "M.A.-Kolloquium." For details, please see poster and program (online).