

Culture Department Course Offerings

Summer Term 2022

Please note: We expect all classes in the summer term to move back to in-person instruction. Please check the JFKI website as well as the special FU Berlin Coronavirus website regularly for updates to rules and regulations. If you are facing any difficulties in attending in-person courses at the JFKI, please do get in touch with the respective instructor(s). For general concerns, you may also reach out to Alexander Starre (contact info see website).

Bachelor

Orientierungsmodul Kultur - Seminar

32100 Hannah Spahn

Theorizing Culture (Seminar)

Wed 12-14 h, R. 340

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 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.

Vertiefungsseminare Kultur

32101 JoAnne Mancini

Sounding American Art (VM A & B)

Tue 10-12 h, R. 340

Since the eighteenth century, when the silversmith and printer Paul Revere engraved the frontispiece to the first book of published music by a US composer, William Billings, there has been an ongoing relationship between American art and American music. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, this module will consider that relationship from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. At the same time, it will also explore some of the ways in which intersection has been explored not only by art historians but also by musicologists and others outside of art history.

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 April 12, 2022. Please register on Campus Management as well and as soon as possible.

32102 Hannah Spahn

History as Memoir (VM B)

Wed 16-18 h, R. 319

Last year, Juneteenth was established as a national holiday in the United States, commemorating June 19, 1865, the day that the end of slavery was proclaimed in Texas (more than two years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, and two months after the formal surrender of the Confederate army). Briefly before President Biden signed Juneteenth National Independence Day Act, Annette Gordon-Reed's *On Juneteenth* was published, a memoir whose significance, as one critic had it, may "land between" *The Education of Henry Adams* and Benjamin Franklin's autobiography (H.W. Brands). This seminar uses Gordon-Reed's slim but powerful book as a window into the genre of the memoir. To explore the cultural borderlands between literature, politics, and history, we will put into conversation memoirists from different backgrounds and periods, from the eighteenth century to today. While we will also aim at getting an overview of general problems of autobiographical writing, our main focus will be on the representation of key problems of American history and politics through the personal lens of the memoir.

Please purchase: Annette Gordon-Reed, *On Juneteenth* (New York: Liveright, 2021).

32103 Hannah Spahn

Narratives of Enslavement and Emancipation (VM B)

Thu 12-14 h, R. 201

Forms of slavery and enforced labor have existed all over the globe in most periods of world history, including today. What makes US-American slavery different is its complex relationship to the contemporaneous development of a modern democracy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Although the transatlantic Enlightenment and the American Revolution brought along an unprecedented wave of critique that led most Northern states to abolish slavery, the institution persisted, and even became more entrenched, in the Southern states during the early national and antebellum periods. In this seminar, we will approach the problem of slavery in an increasingly polarized democratic culture through the lens of autobiographical and fictional narratives about personal experiences of enslavement and emancipation. While the genres of the slave narrative and the novel will figure prominently in our discussions, we will also recur to contemporaneous essays, letters, and poetry to trace the intellectual history of evolving modern discourses of slavery, freedom, "race," and nationhood.

32104 Alexander Starre

Material Text Studies and American Print Cultures (VM A)

Wed 10-12 h, R. 340

Print culture studies and book history have been among the most vibrant fields of interdisciplinary inquiry in American Studies in the past decades. This course introduces students to the historical, cultural, and aesthetic analysis of material texts. While the printed book will be the center of interest, students will also investigate the expansive media ecology of print as embodied in pamphlets, periodicals, and recent digital formats. The course first addresses theoretical and methodological dimensions; it will then follow a rough chronology of the evolution of print forms and technologies in North America. Each session covers foundational critical works and up-to-date scholarship on topics such as colonial print culture, print nationalism, shifting ideas of authorship and readership, multimodal literature, and the dynamics of race, class, and gender connected to material texts. Students will read seminal works by Robert Darnton, Elizabeth Eisenstein, Michael Warner, and Benedict Anderson alongside theoretical texts by Marshall McLuhan, Niklas Luhmann, and Amaranth Borsuk as well as recent interventions by Jonathan Senchyne, N. Katherine Hayles, and Derrick R. Spires. Pairing these readings with a set of “print objects,” the course explores key moments in American book history as represented in works by John Eliot, Benjamin Franklin, Phillis Wheatley, Pauline Hopkins, Harriet Monroe, Shelley Jackson, Jennifer Egan, Mark Z. Danielewski and others.

Colloquium

32105 Hannah Spahn

BA-Colloquium Culture/Literature

Thu 8:30-10:00 h, R. 340

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.

Master

Modul A

32110 Christina Meyer

Discourses and Practices of Colonization and Settlement (Grundlagenvorlesung)

Wed 12-14 h, R. 319

“In the beginning, all the world was America,” John Locke proclaimed in his Second Treatise on Government (1689-90). But when and where does “America” begin? This lecture course deals with colonial societies and intercultural contact zones in North America between the 15th and 18th centuries. We will look at competing European settler cultures, practices of intercultural conflict and intermixture, as well as interdependent socio-economic, aesthetic, and ecological transformations in early modern times (shifting perspective from a Europe-centered narrative of “discovery” to a postcolonial account of conflictive hybridity). Topics include: Early European New World writings (Bacon, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Las Casas, De Vaca, etc.), the first British descriptions of Virginia and New England (John Smith, Thomas Harriot, William Bradford, Thomas Morton), Puritan writings both orthodox and heterodox (John Winthrop, Anne Hutchinson, Edward Taylor, Anne Bradstreet, and others), Indian captivity narratives and missionary tracts (Mary Rowlandson, John Eliot), ideas and institutions of slavery and freedom (John Woolman, Phyllis Wheatley, Olaudah Equiano), intellectual shifts in the late 17th century and in the context of the Great Awakening (Cotton Mather, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Chauncy, Benjamin Franklin).

32111 Alexander Starre

Reading W.E.B. Du Bois across Genres and Institutions (HS)

Tue 16-18 h, R. 340

When in 1903 William Edward Burghardt Du Bois wrote that “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line,” he not only voiced a prophetic outlook, he also positioned himself as the intellectual leader whose approach would help to confront, study, and ultimately improve race relations in the United States. In this course, students will read a generous selection of W.E.B. Du Bois’s sprawling oeuvre from the first half of his career (roughly from the 1890s to the 1920s). We will encounter an enterprising scholar-activist who worked tirelessly at finding the right style, the right form, and the right institutions to spread his ideas on the history, sociology, and aesthetics of Black culture in the USA. Du Bois’s writing stretched across the domains of scholarship, journalism, civil rights activism, and belles lettres; he produced statistical analyses, qualitative surveys, historical accounts, and social theory while working within the genres of the academic monograph, the essay, the manifesto, the (auto-)biography, the short story, the novel, and the editorial. A foundational figure both for the civil rights movement and for the field of Black Studies, Du Bois articulated the injustices and paradoxes of Jim Crow America like no other.

While we will spend time with Du Bois's most widely read book *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), the focus of our readings will be on a variety of less canonical texts including *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* (1911), *Darkwater* (1920), as well as excerpts from *The Crisis* magazine and select archival materials.

Modul B

not offered this semester

Modul C

32112 Christina Meyer

American (Media) Culture after World War II (Grundlagenvorlesung)

Thu 14-16 h, R. 340

Having emerged from World War II as a world power, the United States faced numerous problems of cultural self-definition in the second half of the 20th century. The Cold War produced not only an ideology of international leadership but also new anxieties about America's social identity and the nation's changed position in the world. Topics discussed in this lecture course include the advent of a postindustrial economic order, the decline of New Deal liberalism, postmodernist aesthetics, the New Hollywood, and the interrelated emergence of the New Left and the New Right. In the early 21st century, many of these developments have been radicalized under conditions of military hegemony, globalized capitalism, corporate anti-statism, neoliberal governance, and catastrophic ecological transformations. Our lecture course focuses on select phases and moments of cultural production between 1945 and 2020, when American novels, poems, films, and TV shows often defined the state of the art in their respective fields. We will concentrate on literary sources (especially poetry and fiction), sociological writings, political documents, cinema, television, and other cultural fields. there.

32113 Michael Thomas

Black Aesthetics: Sensibility, Culture, and the Reality of Race (HS)

Wed 16-18 h, R. 340

This course explores Black Aesthetics as a theoretical, critical, and artistic practice of constructing and maintaining black life worlds. This focus on Black Aesthetics as a practice is meant to emphasize that our engagement with the study of black thought, expressive objects, and history is simultaneously an intervention in our modes of engagement with communities of black people and their boundaries. Thus, "aesthetics" takes on the wide meaning of an examination of the forms of sensibility at work in our perception and judgement, the cultural practices that generate these forms of sensibility, and the racialized socio-political structures that generate these practices and forms of perception in our reality. We will begin our exploration with a discussion of the methods of Black Studies and Black Aesthetics with an emphasis on how we ought approach work by black thinkers in conditions of anti-blackness. Our second phase will develop and critique an aesthetic theory of race constructed by placing the work of W.E.B Du Bois, James Baldwin, and Audre Lorde in conversation with contemporary readings from philosophy, religious studies, cultural studies, critical race theory, sociology, political theory, and literary theory. Our topics will include the status

of race as a concept, racialization as an aesthetic project, Post-racial sensibility and the problem of Recognition, and Intersectionality as a politics of experience. We will conclude the course by testing and refining our theory through a series of discussions on topics that we will select as a class. Potential topics include: "Memorialization and the Politics of Mourning," "Violence and the Racialization of Space," "Racial Temporalities," "Afro-Futurism, Afro-Surrealism and Freedom Dreaming," "Blues Legacies and Blues Women," "Hip-Hop Testimony as Subjugated Knowledge," "Black Power and Black Arts," "#BlackLivesMatter," "Afro-Pessimism and Anti-Blackness," and "Black Feminist Affect(s).

32114 JoAnne Mancini

Topics in American Art History (HS)

Tue 14-16 h, synchronous, R. 340

This module will explore the history of American art through recent research and writing. Focusing on a series of topics explored by contemporary scholarship, its aim will be to develop familiarity with current approaches to American art by art historians and interdisciplinary scholars.

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32115 Christina Meyer / Birte Wege

Graphic Narratives (HS)

Thu 10-12 h, R. 203

As the recent uproar about the book-ban for Art Spiegelman's Pulitzer Prize-winning work MAUS shows, comics remain a contentious topic. They are frequently derided as low-brow, kid's stuff, a threat to literacy or even to moral values. Fans and scholars alike, meanwhile, see them as – often avant-garde – work that is uniquely situated to engage with political and social issues of their day, beyond what is available for other modes of expression. This seminar will provide an introduction and overview to the works of the broad category of 'graphic narrative.' We will combine theory readings from comics-, literary-, and cultural studies with key primary texts in each session, ranging from early comic strips and wordless novels to superheroes, underground comix, and the many iterations of the graphic novel genre produced in the last three decades. We will examine the work of, amongst others, George Herriman, Jerry Siegel and Joe Schuster, R.Crumb, Art Spiegelman, The Hernandez Brothers, Alison Bechdel, Ho Che Anderson, and Lynda Barry.

Interdisziplinäres Modul

32115 Christina Meyer / Birte Wege

Graphic Narratives (HS)

Thu 10-12 Uhr, synchronous, R. 203

See description 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 Alexander Starre / Ulla Haselstein

Forschungskolloquium Kultur/Literatur

Wed 18-20 h, room 340

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).