

Culture Department Course Offerings

Summer Term 2025

Bachelor

Orientierungsmodul Kultur - Seminar

32100 Martin Lütke

Theorizing Culture (Seminar)

Mon 14-16 h, room 340

The object of this seminar is to introduce students to theories of culture(s) or 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 North American studies (and literary and cultural studies, specifically). We will also make use of an introduction to North American cultural studies, which will help us to contextualize our theoretical texts. 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.

Requirements and class mechanics:

Participation credit requires regular and active attendance and a written response to reading assignments for a total of **eight** sessions. Full credit requires all of the above and an in-class exam. Participation in class and reading responses will be ungraded.

Vertiefungsseminare Kultur

32101 Alexis Salas

Queer Latinx Art (Vertiefung A/B)

Wed 14-16 h, room 319

This BA-level advanced seminar in contemporary art focuses upon makers who identify as queer and Latinx (United States-ian, including Puerto Rico) whose visual artistic practice address queerness by challenging heteronormative, cis, settler colonialist, Western, and patriarchal frameworks of bodies, histories, and ideas. Starting in the 1960s and extending to the present, the course's historical scope encompasses various Civil Rights movements: the Chicano movement, HIV/AIDS crisis, marriage equality, and current anti-queer/trans and anti-immigrant legislation, while offering a narrative overview of queer Latinx artists across visual art mediums. Recognizing that different historical moments have named and understood Latinx-ness and queerness through their contemporary experiences, the course traces the work of thinkers and makers who engage with the theoretical and practical possibilities offered by a convening of these concepts. Please register at: culture@jfki.fu-berlin.de with your name, matriculation number, study program, and zedat email address before lecture time starts.

32102 Martin Lütke:

The Sitcom and U.S. American TV (Vertiefung A/B)

Tue 14-16 h, room 340

In this seminar we will look at the sitcom as an important genre in the history of TV broadcasting. In fact, we will aspire to conceive of the heyday of TV as entangled with the success and pervasiveness of the sitcom. Beginning with radio, the situational comedy has impacted U.S. serial storytelling even before U.S. American families made room for TV and has undoubtedly served as an engine of the broadcasting era (and arguably all the way through the private cable / the post-network era of the 1980s and 1990s). Even our contemporary media age of post-TV initially still capitalized on the familiarity of the sitcom formula; however, the age of digital streaming services and the second screen has since impeded on the lasting success of the sitcom as genre, partly as a result of changing programming and viewing practices (think: complex TV and reality TV as powerful competitors in our contemporary audiovisual digital media ecologies). We will look at a variety of different sitcom formats (from the classic family and work-place sitcoms to the animated sitcom) and on the cultural work they have done (and still do?) and the stories they allow U.S. culture to tell itself about itself. **Requirements and class mechanics:** Participation credit requires regular and active attendance and a written response to reading assignments for a total of **eight** sessions. Full credit requires all of the above and a research paper. Participation in class and reading responses will be ungraded.

32103 Katie Deane

Popular Romance and/as Genre (Vertiefung A/B)

Thu 14-16 h, room 203

From romance-only bookstores to BookTok Bestsellers, Romantasy fandoms to Dark Romance debates, the past five years have seen a dramatic increase in the visibility of one of the most-read fiction genres in North America: Popular Romance. This course will use three interconnected ways of thinking about genre – as aesthetic forms, as material objects, and as communities – to examine what Romance is, how Romance is made, and what Romance does. Over the course of the semester, we'll discuss issues critical to the genre in the context of its historical development in the U.S. and Canada, from the narrative function of the happy ending, to the inclusion of explicit sexual content and fights for more diverse representation. We will ask both what the Romance genre can tell us about social, material, and technological shifts in North America, as well as how genres form, operate, and reproduce. Students will come away with a foundational understanding of Popular Romance for further academic study, experience in digital research methods, and the vocabulary to address other transmedial popular genres.

32106 Andreas Lipowsky

A Second Native American Renaissance? An Introduction to Indigenous North America (Vertiefung A/B)

Thu 16-18 h, room 203

"Armageddon in Our Bones, Utopia in Our Souls" (Julian Brave NoiseCat) ----- In recent decades, Indigenous societies in the United States and Canada have made significant strides toward political sovereignty and cultural self-determination. This seminar will introduce participants to some of the key discourses and issues that resonate in Indian Country today. It also seeks to reflect on indigeneity as an increasingly globalized identity formation, a relatively recent phenomenon. On this basis, we will turn to the vibrant, if often paradoxical, relationship between Indigenous lifeworlds and political struggles and their reception in academic discourse, particularly in the context of discussions of the Anthropocene and political anthropology. We will discuss Indigenous resurgence movements from Red Power to the Standing Rock protests, read testimonies from residential school survivors, and engage with the writing of Indigenous theorists such as Vine Delora, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, and Robin Wall Kimmerer.

Colloquium

32104 Martin Lütke

BA-Colloquium Culture/Literature

Tue 16-18h, room 340

This class aspires to support BA students in the processes immediately before and during the writing of their respective theses. ----- **Course requirements:** We will discuss course requirements in our first session, as they depend on the number of students enrolled in the colloquium. What I can disclose at this stage is that in addition to regular attendance and active participation (in the shape of small assignments), you will present a tentative project description for participation credit (which is all you need here).

Master

Modul A:

32110 Alexander Starre

Discourses and Practices of Colonization and Settlement

(Grundlagenvorlesung)

Wed 10-12 h, room 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 fifteenth and eighteenth 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 seventeenth century and in the context of the Great Awakening (Cotton Mather, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Chauncy, Benjamin Franklin).

32111 Alexander Starre

Early America Now (Hauptseminar)

Wed 12-14 h, room 319

The presence of early American culture still looms large in the contemporary United States: from the *New York Times* “1619 Project” to Disney’s *Pocahontas* and to the collective myth of the “city upon a hill” in American political rhetoric from John F. Kennedy to Ronald Reagan and Barack Obama. This course has two objectives: In the first part of the course, we will sample some of the most influential and innovative recent scholarship in cultural, literary, and historical studies that usefully revises and expands earlier accounts of colonial era. In the second part, students will work on a selection of twentieth- and twenty-first century primary sources (television series, films, novels, visual art, speeches, and other

media) that explore the present meaning of the distant American past. Final selections for this second part will be made collectively in class. ----- Please note: This M.A.-level seminar ties in closely with Dr. Starre's lecture course "Discourses and Practices of Colonization and Settlement in North America." It is recommended to take both courses in conjunction (and thus complete Culture Module A).

Modul C

32112 Frank Kelleter

American Culture after World War II (Grundlagenvorlesung)

Tue 16-19 h, room 319

Emerging 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 arrival 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 the 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 2025, 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.

32113 Frank Kelleter

Post-Classical Theory (Hauptseminar)

Tue 14-16 h, room 319

This seminar serves as "**Hauptseminar**" of Culture-**Module C** in the **Master's degree program**. We will study different types of cultural theory that have emerged after the "classical" paradigms of psychoanalysis, phenomenology, orthodox Marxism, and their poststructuralist inflections. Our introductory sessions will survey several developments from the 1970s-2000s (revisionary Marxism, field theory, actor-network-theory, systems theory). Additional topics (to be chosen and prepared by students) can include, but are not limited to, later or other paradigms such as poststructuralism (e.g., Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida), affect theory (e.g., Lauren Berlant, Kathleen Stewart, Sara Ahmed, Margaret Wetherell), post-critique and new formalism (e.g., Rita Felski, Caroline Levine), new queer theories (e.g., José Esteban Muñoz), trans theories (e.g. Jack Halberstam, Paul Preciado), media archaeology and media ecology (e.g., Lisa Gitelman, Katherine Hayles, Jay Bolter, Richard Grusin), post-cinema theories (e.g., Shane Denson), seriality studies (the JFKI's own Popular Seriality Research Unit, e.g., Kathleen Lock, Maria Sulimma, Daniel Stein, Ruth Mayer, Frank Kelleter), contemporary aesthetic theories (e.g., Sianne Ngai), critiques of postfeminism (e.g., the Judith Butler-Nancy Fraser debate, Catherine Rottenberg), black feminism and intersectionality (e.g., Combahee River Collective, Audre Lorde, bell hooks, Kimberlé Crenshaw), theories of neoliberalism (e.g., David Harvey, Wendy Brown), critical university studies (e.g., Christopher Newfield), critical whiteness studies (e.g., Claudia Rankine, David Roediger), Afropessimism and philosophies of blackness (e.g., Hortense Spillers, Saidiya Hartman, Fred Moten), black Marxism (e.g., Angela Davis, Cedric Robinson, Karen and Barbara Fields), contemporary theories of neofascism (Alberto Toscano, David Neiwert, Cynthia Miller-Idriss, George Hawley, Simon Strick), or any other new publication or trend you would like to discuss.

Unlike Prof. Kelleter's lecture course, this seminar will be largely student-driven; more than half of our 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; compare Syllabus). **Registration:** All participants need to be registered via Blackboard *and* Campus Management by the first session. If you cannot register online or cannot attend the first session, please contact Prof. Kelleter before the beginning of the term (no later than April 11).

Before our first meeting, all communication about and within this class will be channeled through the course's Blackboard site, so make sure you are registered there. **Organization:** Please download the **Syllabus and Course Description** (with a description of all course requirements) from the "Teaching" section of Prof. Kelleter's JFKI website or from 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). **Please read the Syllabus/Course Description carefully!** It contains detailed information on the seminar's structure and suggestions for preparing "your" session. Note that we will finalize our class schedule in the first two meetings. This means that **everyone who wants to attend this course needs to be present in the first session** in order to sign up for a topic (student-run session) or have contacted Prof. Kelleter beforehand by e-mail (no later than April 11). There is no auditing this class. **First session:** April 15.

32114 Alexis Salas

Queer Art – New Critical Readings from the Americas

(Hauptseminar)

Fri 9 May 9-18h, Fri 23 May 9-18h, Fri 20 June 9-18h, room 203

This three-day block seminar takes place on three full days and coincides with the Terra Symposium. In this seminar, we survey the state of research by reading and meeting with theorists and practitioners and approximate local histories by visiting special collections and taking inventory of archives and resources. One day will be devoted to student presentations on new queer art theory as well as an archive visit/ workshop titled "Introduction to Archive Work" at the Schwules Museum. A second day will be dedicated to student Research Presentations and workshopping of papers. The third and final day will consist of Terra Symposium with the option to present a paper. A large part of the content will be determined by student interests. In principle, we engage with queer art practices of the Americas (North + Central + South America + the Caribbean) which challenge heteronormative, cis, settler colonialist, Western, and patriarchal frameworks of bodies, histories, and ideas. Using tools from queer theory, Latin American and Latinx studies, women's, gender, and sexuality studies, critical race studies, as well as media and visual culture studies; we discuss works of performance art, craft, and conceptual practices. Please register at: culture@jfki.fu-berlin.de with your name, matriculation number, study program, and zedat email address before lecture time starts.

32115 Martin Lütke

Network Nation: Media Change and Media Theory in North

American Culture (Hauptseminar)

Mon 12-14 h, room 319

This seminar aspires to introduce students to the history of media change in the United States. Starting from the assumption that media matter – and have mattered – in the United States (and beyond), we will explore and discuss the changing media ecologies in U.S. history, beginning with the American Revolution and all the way through to the 21st century. Not only, but also, in light of the recent debates in the context of the digital turn, we will re-visit crucial moments in the history of United States decisively from the vantage point of media history and media theory. Beginning with Bernard Bailyn's ideas regarding the American Revolution as the result of printing technologies (and the medial form of the pamphlet) all the way up to Katherine N. Hayles' "Writing Machines" and contemporary debates in the context of the post-human era, this seminar will hopefully provide a space for us to think critically through the media/history nexus. ----- As credit requirements depend on the number of students enrolled in the class, we will discuss them in the first session of the summer term.

Graduate School

32120 Frank Kelleter

Advanced Theory and Methods in the Study of Culture

(Oberseminar)

Wed 14-16 h, room 201

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 (no later than April 11).

32130 Frank Kelleter / Stefanie Müller

Research Colloquium Culture/Literature

Wed 18 – 20 h, room 201

Each summer semester, the Departments of Culture and Literature organize a joint research colloquium with invited 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. For details, please see poster and program (online).