



Graz International Summer School Seggau - Seminars

SEMINAR 1: CONTESTED TERRITORIES

Week 1: Don E. Walicek, University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus, don.walicek@upr.edu

Week 2: Ricardo Pagliuso Regatieri, Federal University of Bahia, Brazil,
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Course description

Week 1

The seminar's first week combines insights from the humanities with case studies, theoretical tools, and significant historical events to consider narratives that have been told and retold by writers, scholars, institutions, and some of the world's most powerful nation-states. Emphasis will be placed on tensions, ruptures, and struggles that have resulted in social, economic, and political change, including forms of being that are more egalitarian and just.

Week 2

In the second week of the seminar, we will shift to more directly consider perspectives from the social sciences, approaching the topic of contested territories first by discussing colonialism and coloniality of power in the production of the geo-cultural region called the Americas. Focusing more specifically on Latin America, and with a special attention to Brazil, we will then move on to look into contested narratives about the nation, the role of race in the definition of the nation and the question of cultural identity.

SEMINAR 2: MEDIA AND SOCIETY IN A POST-DIGITAL AGE

Mirko Petrić, Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar, Croatia, mirko.petric@pilar.hr

Course description

As recently noted by Schmitt (2021), the word 'post-digital' by no means describes a world without computers and the Internet. On the contrary, it simply suggests a new understanding of the digital and its new role in our self-understanding. In other words, in a context in which the palpable technological aspects of contemporary media seem to increasingly disappear, their role in our everyday lives remains significant, albeit in changed forms.

This seminar module will discuss the relationship between media and politics in what can be seen as an emerging post-digital age. This is a context in which once prominent 'virtual communities' (Rheingold, 1993) have been all but forgotten, and an increasing integration of offline and online activities in all spheres of (human) life takes place. On the other hand, we live in a world in which 'seamless data exchange' is allegedly becoming the norm in the machine context. But does this alleged 'interaction seamlessness' extend to human-machine relations? And, more specifically, do media and technology effects have a decisive bearing on how humans cast their votes in political elections?



Trying to provide answers to these and similar questions, we will attempt to paint a clearer picture of the connection between media and politics in a context that further complexifies what Blumler (2016) described as the 'fourth age of political communication'. However, we will also try to learn from the past, by examining the complex interplay of media technologies and political practices evolving in different historical contexts. We will also thematize the changing notions of the public and private spheres in deliberative democracies.

SEMINAR 3: CHALLENGES OF ECONOMY

Luis San Vicente Portes, Montclair State University, USA, portesl@montclair.edu

Course description

Reset. Back to square one. Blank slate. Let your imagination run. How would you re-invent the world? Or let's say, what would you change about the world? And how? Would it involve deconstructing and rebuilding? Would it be disruptive of the way things are? A challenge to the order of the world or some aspects of how society is organized?

But wait, do we have to be that radical? Does a blank slate mean giving up your smart phone? Your running water? Vaccines? Solar power? Longer lives? Maybe we just need to resist or rethink some systems and processes, could it be?

Ok, let's start here. Why don't we reverse-engineer or playback our march to progress. Maybe along the way we created problems without solutions(?) or even solutions without problems(?).

In this Seminar we will explore the economic path that we have followed and what underpins it. This will take us into questions of inequality, sustainability, market systems, social planning, gendered labor markets, artificial intelligence, monetary arrangements, cryptocurrencies and ... capitalism?

SEMINAR 4: JEWISH STUDIES

Yael Siman, Universidad Iberoamericana Ciudad de México, Mexico, yaelsiman@gmail.com

Course description

Jews immigrated to Latin America in several waves, starting from the time of the Inquisition. However, contemporary Jewish communities began forming in the latter half of the 19th century or the first decades of the 20th century. Jewish individuals journeyed from Europe and Asia, settling in different Latin American cities and countries. With them, they brought diverse languages, religious, ethnic and national identities. National historical and political processes, such as military coups, social revolutions, violence and transitions to democracy, impacted Jewish identities in various ways. Yet, the impact of the Shoah (Holocaust) was particularly significant across the region.

This course delves into how Jewishness is presently defined in Latin America, examining factors such as migration, Jewish settlement after the Shoah, and the legacies of the Jewish past. Specifically, the course explores questions related to memory-building among Jews in the



region and the diverse ways in which this memory has shaped present-day Jewishness in a region that is considered part of the Global South.

SEMINAR 5: CULTURE, GENDER, AND NARRATIVE PEDAGOGIES

Fabiana Fazzi, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy, fabiana.fazzi@unive.it,
Nicole Haring, University of Graz, Austria, nicole.haring@uni-graz.at

Course description

This seminar will provide an interdisciplinary perspective on culture, gender, and narrative pedagogies with the aim to bring popular critical social justice theories, with regard to gender, intersectionality, and language, in dialogue with cultural and educational studies to explore the potential of a critical narrative analysis for research, education, and everyday life. Critical engagements with cultural narratives and storytelling practices are in the focus of the seminar to invite a discussion on how our existing in the world as individuals within collective and institutional settings can be experienced in terms of broader social, political, cultural, and historical contexts. Deconstructing narratives of social constructs, such as race, class, gender, language, ethnicities, and age, are powerful tools for awareness of self and others as well as expressions of resistance to confining social realities. Intersectionality and relationality are didactic concepts that help negotiate action on a personal as well as public level and may provide a useful link to critical and narrative pedagogies. At the same time, there is a need to consider language(s) ideologies and practices as fundamental when decolonizing both educational and other public settings, such as museums. In times of immense global challenges, such as increasing political divides, migration, climate change, demographic transformation, technological revolutions, and biomedical advancement, it is essential that we as humans recognize our lives as narrated and thus open to interpretation and shaping. This understanding is didactic in its core and will be in the center of the seminar, which focuses on creative expressions and academic approaches to what it means to be human and challenges participants to engage in radical re-thinking of how narratives shape our lives as individuals as well as global citizens. Finally, this seminar will experiment with storytelling practices to engage in creative outlets and critical pedagogies first hand.

SEMINAR 6: AGING IN DATA

Kim Sawchuk, Concordia University, Canada, kim.sawchuk@concordia.ca

This two-week course will consider both aging as data and the datafication of aging, by posing a critical approach to aging as more than number (a chronological, demographic approach to ag/ing). In an academically intergenerational environment (BA, MA, PhD students), we will explore critical age and critical data studies.

We will interrogate politics of representation to question common notions of both age and data. In the context of age, we pay explicit attention to the key concept of intersectionality. Discussing the power of algorithms, we explore social implications, such as inclusion and exclusion or “data harms” (Redden 2018) through datafication.

We will also, in concrete terms, focus on the question of what it means to age in a datafied world. Students will examine issues, such as quantified aging and the appropriation of digital tools by various communities of practice.

Students participating in the seminar will be given the opportunity to engage in project development, and to explore data collection from a qualitative point of view. As we discuss the many forms that data takes, from a critical age studies perspective, we will return to issues such as the representation of perspectives, voices, and the politics of data collection and analysis as they are related to our own local practices.





SEMINAR 7: SOCIETY, POLITICS, AND EMOTIONS

Week 1: Katharina Scherke, University of Graz, Austria, katharina.scherke@uni-graz.at

Week 2: Murray Forman, Northeastern University, USA, m.forman@northeastern.edu

Course description

Week 1:

Emotions and affect are social phenomena not only because they are shaped by our social existence but also due to their significant influence on our future actions, unfolding group dynamics and thus also on the emotional climate in our society as a whole. The seminar will give a short introduction into main concepts of sociology of emotions. A special focus will be given to feeling rules, i.e. social norms and expectations for the expression (and also experience) of emotions in various social situations. It will be shown, how these feeling rules are shaped by political actors, media and the cultural sector. Furthermore, different emotions and their role in maintaining group cohesion within social movements, but also their role in attracting new followers for these movements, will be discussed. The usage of emotions in populist rhetoric will be another topic for our discussions, which will be shown at the example of nostalgia, that very often has been framed by cultural critiques as leading to political conservatism and restorative attitudes. We will have a look at different aspects of nostalgia from a sociology of emotions point of view and try to figure out its relevance for future-oriented action.

Week 2:

This section of the seminar will critically examine the ways that emotions and affect inform subjective identity - the self - in particular relation to fans and fandom as well as exploring the role of emotion and affect in forming the bonds that align individuals, facilitating the aggregation of social cohorts within varied contexts of popular culture and politics. Understood as a "shimmering" of force and intensity, affect is "not the same as emotions or desires. Affect is closely tied to what we often describe as the feeling of life...Some things feel different from others, some matter more, or in different ways, than others" (Grossberg 2002). Affect is also a relational force, a vector which can conjoin individuals, providing the means by which social cohorts - affective alliances - might cohere or disperse. In 21st century media society, it is safe to assume that we are all audiences of something, and within this audience and reception mode, we are very often also fans, which is to say we are more deeply and personally invested in the object of our fandom, more open to the resonant intensities that define the fan's identity. Thus, our emotions and affective compulsions are prodded and buffeted and appealed to in myriad ways as we position ourselves in media streams, immersing ourselves in the media's fast-flowing channels. The overarching seminar theme will be extended through critical analysis of the media as they function within a powerful and pervasive affective economy and are integral to the formation of contemporary political party affiliations, social justice movements, popular fandom, and individual pleasures.