
Syllabus

HS 32 111 Tue, 10–12 Uhr, John F. Kennedy-Institute, Room 201, Summer term 2004

Dozent: PD Dr. Stefan L. Brandt, slbrandt@zedat.fu-berlin.de

Course description: In mainstream academic discourse, the American 1970s and 1980s are usually regarded as a period of uncontrolled change and reassessment, of effervescence, fun, and profit, but also of new challenges and controversies that irrevocably changed the fabric of social and cultural life. Perhaps most important of all, the era is seen as marked by the advent and expansion of postmodernism. The course will introduce students to postmodern cultural theories while examining and comparing works from various areas of American culture, including literature, film, television, architecture, and music. Special focus will be placed on the following phenomena: the Watergate affair, glamrock, ethnic and gay subcultures, hyperreality, cultural difference, the disappearance of the boundaries between “high” and “low” culture. The seminar will be held in English.

Credit requirements: Regular attendance, active [!] participation in class, an oral presentation, and a term paper (15-20 pages).


20. April 2004: Definitions I
Fredric Jameson, “Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism” (1993)
David Harvey, “Postmodernism” (from The Condition of Postmodernity) (1990)

27. April 2004: Definitions II
Ihab Hassan, “Toward a Concept of Postmodernism” (1982)

4. May 2004: Postmodernist Fiction
Theo D’haen, “Postmodernism in American Fiction and Art” (1986)


11. May 2004: Postmodern Consumer Culture
Mike Featherstone, “Theories of Consumer Culture” (from: Consumer Culture and Postmodernism) (1991)
18. May 2004: **Television and Music Videos**
John Fiske, “Moments of television: Neither the text nor the audience” (1989)
Lawrence Grossberg, “MTV: Swinging on the (Postmodern) Star” (1989)


25. May 2004: **Postmodern Cinema**

01. June 2004: **Postmodern Architecture**
David Harvey, “Postmodernism in the city: architecture and urban design” (1990)

08. June 2004: **Postmodern Art**

15. June 2004: **Hyperreality**

22. June 2004: **Cultural Difference**
Steven Connor, “Postmodernism and Cultural Politics” (from Postmodernist Culture) (1989)

29. June 2004: **Politics of Postmodernism**

06. July 2004: **Identity and Postmodernism**