



Course Schedule

Winter Semester 2012/13

1. Introduction to Transcultural Studies

Harald Fuess et al. Tu, 11-13 KJC-212

The concept of transculturality can be used both as a heuristic device (e.g. multi-perspectivity and multi-locality) and focus of study (e.g. cultural entanglements). It is embedded in a large and very heterogeneous landscape of theoretical and methodological approaches that come from various disciplines and cover different thematic, historical and geographic areas. Jointly conducted by the five Cluster chairs, this lecture class will discuss the contributions and limitations of inherited and current notions of transculturality. Focusing on the three study areas of the MA TS, and the respective fields of research of the lecturers, theories and methods will be tested, e.g. in explorations of global art and exhibition practices, appropriations of philosophical and religious ideas, and the relationship between patterns of consumption and the exchange of commodities. The goal of the course is to introduce students to diverse disciplinary perspectives enabling them to frame their own studies of transcultural phenomena and perspectives.

FOCUS: "KNOWLEDGE, BELIEF AND RELIGION"

2. What is – and is there – "Chinese Logic"?

Joachim Kurtz Tu, 14-16 KJC-212

Until 1898, Chinese and foreign scholars agreed that China had never known, needed, or desired a field of study similar in scope and purpose to European logic. Less than two decades later, Chinese literati claimed that the discipline had been part of the empire's learned heritage for more than two millennia. Today, a voluminous body of literature, in Chinese and many other languages, presents "Chinese logic" as one of the "world's three great logical traditions." In recent years, however, a number of critics has disputed this comforting claim. In this seminar, we will trace the fierce discussions on the nature and "legitimacy" of Chinese logic through close readings of ancient Chinese sources and their modern interpretations -- not so much to gain insights into alleged "Chinese ways of thinking" but in order to understand how assertions of a distinctive logical tradition have become part of China's philosophical identity.

3. Buddhism I: The Arising and Development of Buddhism on the Indian Subcontinent

Birgit Kellner We, 11-13 nUni HS04

This is the first part of a two-semester introduction to Buddhism. The course introduces doctrines, practices and the socioreligious framework of Buddhism on the Indian subcontinent



from a historical perspective, covering a timespan from the presumed life date of the historical Buddha (~ 480-400 BCE) until the disappearance of Buddhism from India approximately in the 13th century CE.

4. Die "Entdeckung" Tibets: Cultural Brokers und ihre Produktion von Wissen über Tibet zwischen dem späten 17. Und frühen 20. Jahrhundert

Markus Viehbeck Tu, 17-19 KJC-112

The term "cultural broker" is used to designate people who play a special role in the exchange between spheres that are perceived as culturally different. As missionaries, merchants, diplomats, researchers etc., these people not only traverse these spheres, but also have specific competences (e.g., knowledge of languages and local customs, contacts) to appropriate and transmit knowledge about them.

How does one come to be a "cultural broker," what forms their knowledge, and which factors are important for the transmission of this knowledge?

The seminar will explore these questions by highlighting some of the more commonly known early "explorers" of Tibet, investigating their respective backgrounds and individual agendas, and analysing the depictions of Tibet they left behind. This will include not only written sources such as personal travelogues and systematic accounts of Tibet and its culture, but also drawings, maps, photographs, and films, produced in their endeavours.

5. Begriffsgruppen im Buddhismus – zwischen Mnemotechnik, mind maps und Achtsamkeit

Birgit Kellner Mo, 14-16 KJC-212

Wer sich mit dem Buddhismus zu beschäftigen beginnt, stößt schnell auf Begriffsgruppen oder Listen wie die vier edlen Wahrheiten, den edlen achtfachen Pfad, oder die 37 zum Erwachen führenden Faktoren. Einige solcher Begriffsreihen sind durch die lange mündliche Überlieferungszeit des frühen Buddhismus zu erklären und dienten als leicht im Gedächtnis zu behaltende Nuclei für Predigten, während andere durch die Systematisierung der Lehre im Abhidharma zustandekamen und die Bildung verschiedener Schulrichtungen und Denksysteme reflektieren.

In diesem Seminar werden auf der Basis von Quellen im Sanskrit und (fallweise) Pāli beispielhaft einige dieser Begriffsreihen und aus ihnen gebildete Netzwerke aus verschiedenen Schulen und Perioden behandelt. Dadurch soll ein Grundverständnis buddhistischer Terminologie in jenem Rahmen vermittelt werden, den die buddhistische Tradition selbst geschaffen hat. Darüber hinaus werden mit diesen Begriffsreihen verbundene Praktiken behandelt: Praktiken der mündlichen und schriftlichen Überlieferung, vielleicht modernen mind maps vergleichbar, Methoden und Strukturen der Gestaltung von Lehrsystemen, sowie spirituelle Praktiken wie etwa die Einübung von Achtsamkeit (Sanskrit *smṛti*, Pāli *sati*).



6. Potlach, Powwow, "Snake Dance": Ritual dynamics and changing knowledge cultures in Native North America

Cora Bender We, 11-13 KJC-002

One of the most current images of today's global pop culture is that of the traditional American Indian as an ecological saint steeped in "natural" spirituality. This, however, is a projection that corresponds more to the needs and wishes of "us moderns" than to those of the people it emulates. In this course, we will explore rituals in native North America from a different perspective: We will look at native North American cultures as knowledge cultures with a present as well as a history. Dealing with 500 years of Euro-American presence, these knowledge cultures underwent considerable change, sometimes by force, sometimes self-determined. Ritual and performative action is one of the key arenas in which the issues of domination, adaptation, self-determination, and resilience are being played out. Examining rituals as knowledge that can be transferred, transformed, suppressed, forgotten, and re-activated, we will use critical approaches from history, anthropology, and media studies to obtain multiple perspectives on the interactions of native and non-native peoples in matters of ritual.

FOCUS: "SOCIETY, ECONOMY AND GOVERNANCE"

7. Global Economic History of Europe and Asia

Harald Fuess Mo, 11-13 KJC-212

For a long time historians have debated the issue why the industrial revolution originated in Northwestern Europe when other parts of the world at various times seem to have reached stages of economic development variously described as proto-industrialization or industrious revolution, which could have almost enabled them to reach the next step of an economic breakthrough. Moreover, much debate has been going on every since about the issue of what so-called late developing nations or regions need to do to catch-up with what has become known as the first world. In the meantime the hopes, expectations or fears are all about Asia taking over world economic leadership and changing the European and even American economic and political hegemony, which seems to be facing a gentle but almost inevitable relative decline. This class will review the classical and current arguments for the occurrence of global economic development in such an asymmetrical but entangled fashion while introducing the perspective of cultural economic history with its emphasis on cultural norms and practices into our interpretation of how economic cultures change over time and place.

8. Einführung in die Koreanische Gesellschaft und Kultur des 20. Jahrhunderts

Stefan Knoob Fr, 9-11 KJC-112



9. Commercial Society and its Enemies

David Mervart Tu, 16-18 KJC-212

The functioning of commercial economies continues to pose us crucial moral and political questions, even as a financial crisis unfolds before our eyes, blamed on speculative greed, even as the pursuit of economic growth appears to disrupt the balance of the biosphere. Prior to the classic formulations by Adam Smith or Karl Marx of what happens to societies and individuals in the course of history of production, exchange and consumption, there already existed a complex and lively debate on the rise of the new type of society defined by commercial exchange of an ever-expanding range of goods and services.

If, on the one hand, the spread of commerce could be said to usher a new stage in the historical development of human society, the critics, on the other hand, would see its negative moral side-effects as the symptom of a cyclical decline which would ultimately bring the inevitable death of every body politic in history. And although from one point of view the pursuit of riches and luxury could be claimed to contribute to the prosperity and economic strength of nations, a contrary diagnosis suggested that the concomitant selfishness and corruption must undermine the very foundations of the social and civil life, fatally weaken the community and render it vulnerable to the geopolitical competition.

Following mainly the fault-lines of this debate in its focal centres in western Europe—England, Scotland and France—the course will draw attention to parallels with similar debates going on in other complex and commercialised early modern societies, namely Japan and China. We will pursue the history of these respective discourses and their occasional Eurasian interconnections up to the point when the new western science of the wealth and power of states is translated into the conceptual language of the greater Sinosphere.

Referring to relevant secondary literature, the seminar will centre on discussion of a selection of primary texts (in translations, where relevant).

The themes addressed will be found relevant by historians of thought and philosophy as well as historians of early modern society and culture in general, but should also be of interest to the students of economics and social sciences keen on understanding the origins of their disciplines.

FOCUS: “VISUAL, MEDIA AND MATERIAL CULTURE”

10. Creating the Orient – Chinoiserie and Japonisme across Europe and Asia, 18th to the 20th Centuries

Monica Juneja, Melanie Trede, Barbara Mittler Th, 11-13 KJC-212

The terms Chinoiserie and Japonisme are used to describe the fascination, which Chinese/Japanese objects or those styled according to European fantasies of these regions exercised in modern European cultures. The seminar will examine the cultural meanings of this phenomenon in the realms of the arts, material culture and music - first in European settings



and then trace its trajectories back again to Asia. The themes covered would include gardens and architectures, articles relegated to domestic interiors (ceramics, lacquer and wallpaper), woodcut prints, oil paintings, instrumental and dramatic music. Rather than view this phenomenon as a form of cultural "diffusion" or artistic "influence", the course will look more closely at the ways in which Chinese, Japanese and European cultural products crossed and mingled to produce complex relationships and multiple transcultural aesthetic registers for which art history still has to find an appropriate analytic language. Through individual case studies we will attempt to read examples of "Chinese taste" or "oriental fantasies" in Europe or "Western-style" art in Japan as more than ephemeral fashions. By following the range of responses the works provoked within a particular setting, be it in Europe or Asia, we will examine the potential of an alien aesthetic to catalyze the imagination and transform the categories and expressive outlook of its "host culture".

The seminar will include a day-excursion to a regional site.

11. Media, Globalization, and the Body in Transcultural Perspective

Cora Bender We, 9-11 KJC-112

Globalisation more than any other recent influence, is responsible for creating a number of far-reaching paradigm shifts in cultural categories of the body. Transformations in what we perceive as our "natural bodies" or our most personal, intimate body experience occur as boundaries of bodily behaviours, concepts, and even boundaries of the body itself are being shifted and reshaped. In this course we examine new theoretical frameworks as well as ethnographic examples from lived worlds, scientific labs, medical clinics, and virtual worlds to gain a new understanding of "body" and "embodiment" in the era of transnationalism, neoliberalism, and global cultural flows. We will explore topics such as biopower, aesthetics, genomics, masculinities, modification, racialization, and virtuality.

12. Of Class and Taste: Imaginaries of the Good Life in China

Tina Schilbach Mo, 11-14 KJC-002

This seminar introduces students to the changing dynamics of class and social aspiration in contemporary China. Since the onset of market reform, Chinese society has been undergoing immense transformation in the fabric of social relationships. The rise of a consumer society and fast urban lifestyles offer new opportunities to become upwardly mobile and to acquire visible symbols of status, achievement and prestige. At the same time, these changes have produced profound new social divides affecting millions of the new urban poor, rural peasants and rural-urban migrants. But these developments have also been accompanied by much confusion and uncertainty over the semiotics of class, as capitalist markers of class practice co-exist with the lingering presence of socialist form. Using a variety of case studies, the seminar seeks to make sense of these contradictions. "Conspicuous consumption", for example, has provoked much



critical response, and has invited controversies about the moral ir/responsibility of China's "new rich" - even as the "middle classes" themselves understand their privilege against an "innate" moral and cultural deficit among the poor. Concerned that flaunting wealth presages political conflict, the state has been careful to play down social divisiveness also - while aggressively promoting competitive social relationships in the new market economy. The new middle class becomes a "safe" label that justifies unequal access to tangible and real mobility. Yet, for many Chinese, the cultural experiences in the "new" China of global-city life, travel or overseas adventures, are also offering richer material for "imagining" alternatives beyond a highly aspirational mainstream class culture.

The seminar fosters an appreciation of class as a transcultural phenomenon that is embedded in historical and local context even as it travels across cultural boundaries. Students will critically evaluate the impact of globalised imaginaries of the "good life", and explore their value for understanding aspiration in urban China. In addition to a brief detour to socialist ideals and practices of the good life, the class will cover post-reform topics, including e.g. consumer lifestyles, leisure and tourism, eco-trends, creative cultures, education, single lifestyles and the "new" family, as well as the question of social responsibility and ethics.

13. The Art of Art Criticism: Explored through an exhibition of reportage drawing and caricature

Franziska Koch Th, 11-13 KJC-002

The Heidelberger Kunstverein invites us to "Vogelman Diaries - the Melton Prior Institute presents "special artists" (November 16, 2012 to January 27, 2013): The MPI (founded in 2005) collects graphics that capture the early history of illustrated press and reportage drawing. Accordingly, the exhibition highlights "the historical figure of the 'special artist', as early professional reportage illustrators were called (...). In contrast to their colleagues from the academies they mostly did not work within restricted media and themes, but covered a wide range of practices, encompassing life reportage, fictional illustration, and political caricature, in addition to literary, academic and performative features or art and artists parodies", the exhibition concepts explains. The display includes more than ten "special artists" (e.a. Robert Weaver, Paul Hogarth, Thomas Nast). The curators stress that their works show affinities with contemporary context-related art practices, since reportage illustrators and journalists historically dominated the fin-de siècle circles, which become laboratories of the early experimental artistic avant-gardes.

This seminar will provide an exercise in art critical writing in connection with this exhibition. In the first part, we will analyze text formats such as the feuilleton exhibition review or the catalogue essay. In the second part, we will research the exhibition's contents in art historical perspective and explore how it is mediated by the institution of the Kunstverein. We will meet with the Director of the Kunstverein, attend the press preview, interview the founder of the MPI - the artist Alexander Roob - , and learn about their curatorial concept. The final part will comprise of a writing workshop to produce art critical texts that elaborate on various aspects of



the exhibition. The aim is to publish the best results in form of a brochure or an online publication.

14. Ethnographic Photography in Asia and Europe – A Transcultural Approach Part 1

Cathrine Bublatzky Tu, 13-15 KJC-112

Schlüsselbegriffe des Seminars: Fotografie, Ethnografie, Kultur, das Visuelle in der Ethnologie, kolonialer Blick, ethnografischer Blick, fotografischer Blick, Authentizität, Faszination (des Anderen), Materielle Kulturen, Repräsentation, Museen, Feldforschungsmethode
Durchführung einer ethnographischen Arbeit unter einer spezifischen Fragestellung (z.B. Interviews und Transkription, Dokumentation und Objekt Diskussion auf MOODLE, Teilnehmende Beobachtung, Feldtagebuch).