

Introduction to British Cultural Studies
(Einführung in die britische Landeskunde und Kulturwissenschaft)

Time: TUE, 10-12 // Room: Philosophie-Gebäude, Hörsaal 1

My office hrs: Thu 12.30-13.30 // Room 5/U/13

(Please ring the secretariat to make an appointment: Ms Kernahan, 0931 / 31-86587.)

23/10 **Introduction**

- a) Scope and objectives of the course
- b) Organizational issues and general principles
- c) The resonance of 'Culture'

30/10 **Cultural studies**

A first outline of the history, objectives, and objects of (British) cultural studies

06/11 **Cultural sign systems and cultural spaces**

Communication, representation, convention

13/11 **Mapping Britain**

'Real' and 'imaginary' geographies

20/11 **History (part I)**

- a) 'History' and the cultural work of narratives
- b) From 'Stonehenge' to 'the Tudors' – Key structures and key constructions of pre-modern history

27/11 **Discourse, power and subjectivity**

Masters, servants and slaves in early-modern culture and literature

04/12 **History (part II)**

Making modern Britain and making the British Empire

11/12 **War and memory**

War culture and the cultural management of violence

18/12 **Popular culture and the media**

Practices and theories in Britain after the Second World War

08/01 **Politics**

The political system and political culture in contemporary Britain

15/01 **(Im)migration, identity, and the politics of representation**

Discourses of nationality and ethnicity

22/01 **Cultural studies and popular music**

Performance, subjectivity and media culture

29/01 **Wrap-up / revision**

12/02, 10-12, room TBA — **Final test**

General classification of the course ('Hinweise'):

Diese Veranstaltung richtet sich an alle Studierenden der Anglistik aus den unteren Semestern (1. bis 4. Fachsemester). Sie führt in zentrale Gegenstandsbereiche, Begrifflichkeiten und Herangehensweisen der anglistischen Kulturwissenschaft ein. Darüber hinaus vermittelt sie Basiswissen zu Geschichte und Gegenwart Großbritanniens und seiner ehemaligen Kolonien. Damit legt sie entscheidende Grundlagen für das weitere Studium der Anglistik.

Course description:

"Culture is the software that determines our lives" (Rainer Winter). British cultural studies want to understand how this 'software' shapes us and our social environment. However, cultural studies are just as interested in how we – as cultural, social and political *agents* – shape the 'software.' The goal is to throw fresh light on ways of representing, feeling and acting that are usually taken for granted. In consequence, cultural studies are practical and theoretical at the same time.

The lecture will provide an introduction to both the specific 'project' of British cultural studies *and* to the study of British history, society and culture more generally. On the one hand, we will discuss key concepts in cultural theory and discuss a selection of exemplary cultural phenomena. On the other hand, we will not fail to address the geographic, historical, political and institutional basics of life in Britain and some of its former colonies.

Assessment will be through a written exam.

Preparing for the course:

This introduction to cultural studies should not be considered simply as lecture but as a **lecture course** in the full sense of the term. In order to achieve good results in the final test – and, perhaps still more importantly, in order to lay the foundations for your further course of study in relation to the history, societies and cultures of the Anglophone world – it will be necessary to **constantly prepare for lectures all through the course of the semester** (by going back to the last lecture and by doing the assigned reading for upcoming lectures).

As pointed out in the original course description, it is also vital that participants will have done some **preparatory work even before the first meeting takes place on 23 October**:

→ In preparation for the lecture course, students are asked to **obtain and read Aleida Assmann's *Introduction to Cultural Studies: Topics, Concepts, Issues* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2012) [c. €18,-]**.

Another valuable resource to be used in preparation for the course and in preparation for individual course meetings is **Chris Barker, *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*** – now available in the 5th edition (Los Angeles: Sage, 2016), but earlier editions may also be consulted.

For a brief 'graphic' introduction to the topic see: **Ziauddin Sardar and Borin Van Loon, *Introducing Cultural Studies: A Graphic Guide* (2010; London: Icon Books, 2013) [c. €9,-]**.

For information on British history, institutions and life see especially **Jürgen Kamm and Bernd Lenz, *Großbritannien verstehen* (Darmstadt: Primus, 2004)**, and **Jody Skinner, *Anglo-American Cultural Studies*, 2nd ed. (Tübingen: Francke / UTB, 2016)**.