Institute of Cultural Theory and History

Part of the Faculty Cultural, Social and Educational Sciences

Humboldt University in Berlin

History of the Institute

Before 1993

At the Philosophical Faculty [Philosophische Fakultät] of Humboldt University of Berlin, Cultural History and Theory [Kulturwissenschaft] was first introduced as a subject of study in the year 1963. The contents of the GDR-diploma program in Cultural History and Theory ranged from the theory and history of aesthetics to cultural sociology and sociology of literature, as well as Marxist cultural theory.

In the course of the reorganisation efforts of 1968, the section “Aesthetics and Cultural History and Theory” [Ästhetik und Kulturwissenschaft] was formed, which was subdivided into “Cultural Theory” and “Aesthetics”. Alongside, a section dedicated to the cultural theory and aesthetics of mass communications was introduced.

Through Wolfgang Heise’s seminal studies about Hölderlin and Heine, Renate Reschke’s critical reception of Nietzsche, Irene Dölling’s work on gender issues and Dietrich Mühlberg’s research in cultural history, it was possible to open up new thematic areas and discourses that didn’t bow to dogmatic interpretative patterns.

In 1991, after the German Reunification, this contributed to the positive evaluation of the sections “Aesthetics” and “Cultural Theory”, which were threatened with closure. Thanks to the initiative of renowned academics from East and West, the Berlin Senate could be persuaded to revoke its initial decision to discontinue these sections.

The “Commission for Employees and Structure” [Personal- und Strukturkommission] underlined the unique cross-disciplinary profile that had been developed within the Department of Cultural History and Theory in Berlin, and attested to its potential to counteract the fragmentation of disciplinary fields and to withstand the cultural challenges of modernity and postmodernity, respectively.
After 1993

The remaining professorships were newly appointed to four researchers, who, since the 1990s, have contributed greatly to the systematic profiling of Cultural History and Theory as a field of study, in a national as well as international context.

In addition to his research on the cultural history of nature and of the elements, on the anthropology of the senses and of emotions, as well as on the afterlife of antiquity, Hartmut Böhme has developed “a different theory of modernity” through his pioneering studies on the history and theory of fetishism. Time and again, Böhme’s publications have contributed to the debates around the status of Cultural History and Theory within the range of disciplines.

Christina von Braun has made a name for herself not only as a writer and film maker, but also with her research on gender theory in the context of Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions, as well as with her contributions to feminist media theory.

With his programmatic claim of “driving the human out of the humanities” [“die Austreibung des Geistes aus den Geisteswissenschaften”], Friedrich A. Kittler set out to prove the mediotechnological a priori of the humanities. His aim was accordingly to write a history of media that proceeded from technical media. Kittler, who is considered to be one of the most influential German media theorists, helped establish media theory and media history as academic fields of study.

In turn, Thomas Macho has shaped the profile of Cultural History and Theory in Berlin with his influential studies on cultural techniques, on the history of chronology, on the cultural, visual and media history of death and on the history of cultural-technical modelling of the relationship between humans and animals.

With each of their individual research emphases and by establishing the same focus areas in both the Seminar of Aesthetics and the Seminar of Cultural History and Theory (Systematic Theory, History and Application), these professors shaped the study program of Magister Artium, which continued to attract more prospective students thanks to the breadth of its historical and systematic approach.

BA and MA in Cultural Theory and History

1964. Since September 1st, HU offers Cultural History and Theory as a full-time diploma program. The education is directed toward practical and reflexive skills for professionals in cultural institutions, companies and administrations of the GDR.

2006. Cultural History and Theory is offered for the first time as a Bachelor of Arts program. In addition, a cooperation with the Archaeology Department helps established the cooperative BA-programs Archaeology and Cultural History and Theory.

2008. The first students are enrolled for the Master of Arts in Cultural History and Theory.
Content

Cultural Studies at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin focuses on the historical and material-oriented analysis of European cultures from classical antiquity to the present. It builds from the position that cultures are formed through knowledge and knowledge practices. The processes of adoption and change within cultures take place over long periods of time. Within this framework, Cultural Studies deals with systems of perception and evaluation, symbolic orders, cultural, media and body techniques, gender hierarchies, myths and religious cults, and art.

The Berlin Cultural Studies course is primarily a cultural theory discipline in the tradition of German-language cultural studies (Freud, Simmel, Weber, Cassirer, Warburg and Benjamin). It also integrates the stimuli of post-structuralism, gender research and media theory. The focus of research and teaching includes historical anthropology, the theory and history of cultural techniques, cultural studies of aesthetic and the history of knowledge. As an interdisciplinary subject, the Cultural Studies course is open to the innovations of English-language cultural studies, although the former differs significantly through greater emphasis on the historical dimension of cultures.

Course Catalogue

https://agnes.hu-berlin.de/

Go to:

1. Vorlesungsverzeichnis
2. Kultur-, Sozial- und Bildungswissenschaftliche Fakultät
3. Institut für Kulturwissenschaft

The Institute for Cultural Theory and History is part of the Faculty of Cultural, Social and Educational Sciences. This faculty hosts the following institutes:

1. Kultur-, Sozial- und Bildungswissenschaftliche Fakultät
   - Bachelorstudiengang Archäologie und Kulturwissenschaft (Monostudiengang: Haupt, Profilbereich Griechisch-Römische Antike, Kulturwissenschaft, Archäologie und Kulturgeschichte Nordostafrikas)
   - Berufsfeldbezogene Zusatzqualifikationen
   - Institut für Archäologie
   - Institut für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften
   - Institut für Erziehungswissenschaften
   - Institut für Kulturwissenschaft
Institut für Kunst- und Bildgeschichte
Institut für Musikwissenschaft und Medienwissenschaft
Institut für Rehabilitationswissenschaften
Institut für Sozialwissenschaften
Institut für Sportwissenschaft
Zentrum für transdisziplinäre Geschlechterstudien

The Courses for BA’s and MA’s can be found if you go to the Institute of Cultural Theory and History [Institut für Kulturwissenschaft]:
Kultur-, Sozial- und Bildungswissenschaftliche Fakultät
Institut für Kulturwissenschaft

Einführungsveranstaltungen
BA Kulturwissenschaft (Kernfach) Studienordnung 2006
BA Kulturwissenschaft (Zweitfach) Studienordnung 2006
BA Kulturwissenschaft (Beifach) Studienordnung 2006
BA Kulturwissenschaft (Kernfach) Studienordnung 2014
BA Kulturwissenschaft (Zweitfach) Studienordnung 2014
Master Kulturwissenschaft Studienordnung 2008
Master Kulturwissenschaft Studienordnung 2014
Master Psychoanalytische Kulturwissenschaft
Fakultative Lehrveranstaltungen

Due to structural arrangements in the past, the BA and the MA have different year dates. Current courses can be found under the BA and MA programme of 2014:
BA Kulturwissenschaft (Kernfach) Studienordnung 2014
And
Master Kulturwissenschaft Studienordnung 2014.
Familiar disciplines can be found at the Faculty of Philosophy:

- Philosophische Fakultät
  - Institut für Philosophie
  - Institut für Geschichtswissenschaften
  - Institut für Europäische Ethnologie
  - Institut für Bibliotheks- und Informationswissenschaft

And at the Bologna. Lab:

Berlin Perspectives Module – International Study Programme

https://agnes.hu-berlin.de/

Go to:

1. Vorlesungsverzeichnis
2. bologna. lab: Neue Lehre, neues Lernen
3. Berlin Perspectives – International Study Programme

**Course Selection**

Incoming students are free to choose from a range of courses at Humboldt University, thus they should visit at least 1-3 courses at our Institute for Cultural Theory and History.

Content wise familiar disciplines can be found in the Faculty of Cultural, Social and Educational Sciences and in the Faculty of Philosophy.

Incoming students may choose up to 3 courses from the Berlin perspectives – International Study Programme. For these courses, the incoming students have to register online, before the new term starts.

Most of the courses at the Institute of Cultural Theory and History or taught in German; there are only 2-3 English Courses offered per term.

**ECTS regulation at Institute of Cultural Theory and History**

Every participation in a course yields 3 ECTS, every exam adds an other 4 ECTS. The Incoming student will select for one course either 3 ECTS (only participation which may include essays/ presentations during the term) or 7 ECTS (exam/ oral exam/ written paper at the end of the term).

For more information, please go to our website:
https://www.culture.hu-berlin.de/de/studium/erasmus

Or write a mail to erasmus.culture@hu-berlin.de or s.jany@culture.hu-berl20/11/2017in.de