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Call for Applications | Deadline: 24 April 2022

Inter- and Transdisciplinary International Summer School 2022

When: 12–16 September 2022

Where: Hotel Schloss Wartegg, Bodensee (Switzerland)

Language: English

ECTS: 6

Costs: 400 Swiss francs (travel and accommodation [double room] covered by organizer). Members of the GSAH and the Bernese Faculty of Humanities as well as members of our partner institutions and supporters (f.e. GCSC Justus-Liebig-Universität Giessen, FDI Université de Lausanne) are free of charge.

The Ecological Imperative

Past and Contemporary Perspectives and Practices

The Summer School takes the notion of an "ecological imperative" of cultural products as its starting point. We ask how specific formats of intermedial cultural production work to engender an ethical and political stance towards human resource management. A general ecological paradigm is part of a growing awareness of the image politics of climate change and the role of cultural sustainability, examined according to the principles of contemporary eco-aesthetics, literatures, and new documentary ecologies, but also as revisions of premodern ecological potentials.

Recent approaches to ecological temporalities and spatialization have blurred the boundaries between human and non-human life worlds as well as material, technological, socio-cultural, local/global, literary, visual, auditive and virtual spheres. An intermedial blurring of boundaries between the material and conceptual opens up time and space for an "ecological imperative", a promising heuristic device.

In face of an escalating environmental crisis, ecological imperatives have transformed the ways we perceive human interaction with the non-human environment and have nudged all disciplines towards an Environmental Humanities. A humanities-based ecological mode of thinking offers a complicating, connecting, vibrant, processual and open way to make sense of the world, undermining an all too monolithic conception of systems, structures, or fields.
And, by starting from a point of entanglement, we recognize that we researchers do not preexist our relationships with our research objects and subjects, colleagues or institutions. Drawing attention to past and present ecological relationships might help us position our research and its objects and subjects, as well as ourselves as researchers, and thus invite us to take an ethical and political stance in a time of planetary crisis. We are in need of critical (re)readings, new self-definitions, and inter- and transdisciplinary dialogue – in short, what an Environmental Humanities seeks to kindle.

The 2022 Summer School discusses present, past and future ecologies, both as research topics and as modes of thinking from historical, sociological, cultural, anthropological, philosophical, literary, and artistic perspectives. It reflects, particularly, on the temporalities and spatialization of material and media within which "ecological imperative(s)" are already inscribed.

- How do time and space structure ecological imperatives? How are temporalities and spatializations manifested in concrete matter, artefacts, textures or performative bodies? How do temporal notions (Postapocalyptic, Eschatological, Deep Time, Anachronism, Chronotopos, Linear and Circular Time etc.) correspond to spatial concepts (Oikos, Heterotopia, Biosphere, Human Geographies etc.) and ecological scenarios of concrete environments?
- Given that the "ecological imperative", as a concept, largely decentralizes and destabilizes the human subject and turns towards non-human performativity, how can we reasonably reconcile the material and conceptual, body/matter and sign?
- If the "ecological imperative" expands the spatio-temporal relationality of our research fields, how can we still reasonably delimit our research, keep it focused and avoid arbitrariness?
- In what ways might performative, experiential, artistic or sensorial research methodologies help us to study ecological imperatives? For example, how can we account for sensual and performative aspects of material culture and media in our own research output—in textual, visual, verbal or auditive forms?
- How can ecological modes of thinking interrogate our own disciplinary positions and lead us towards engaged and future-oriented scholarship?

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES
www.gsah.unibe.ch

Partner:
Mediating the Ecological Imperative
SNSF Sinergia 2021–2024
www.ecological-imperative.ch

GCSC
International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture
Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen
www.uni-giessen.de/faculties/gcsc

UNIVERSITÄT BERN

Invited keynote speakers and possible foci of their lectures

Prof. Dr. Macarena Gómez-Barris (Professor and Chairperson of Social Science and Cultural Studies at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York)
Prof. Dr. Caroline A. Jones (Professor in the History, Theory, and Criticism section, Department of Architecture, MIT)
Prof. Dr. Hubert Zapf (Professor and Chair of American Literature at the University of Augsburg, Germany)

Program

Each morning session begins with a lecture given by one of our three keynote speakers, followed by responses and plenary discussions. These sessions prepare the ground for the parallel workshops in the afternoon, which focus on key concepts/problems and core texts that are particularly relevant for the research projects of the participants. Posters visualize the participants' projects and foster informal exchange throughout the week.

Week	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Mon	Arrival (or afternoon)	Arrival / Welcome	Introduction / Poster Exhibition
Tue	Lecture, response, discussion	Parallel workshops	
Wed	Lecture, response, discussion	Excursion	Special Dinner
Thu	Lecture, response, discussion	Parallel workshops	Film
Fri	Parallel workshops	Reports and lessons learned	Departure (or Sat)

How to apply?

The Summer School offers doctoral and postdoctoral scholars a unique opportunity to contribute to a broader discussion with their own research and ideas. We encourage applications from researchers from the humanities and the social sciences with a strong interest in theoretical debates in an interdisciplinary setting.

Please provide us with the following application material:

- a letter of motivation, indicating how you expect to benefit from participating in this Summer School and how you can contribute, in turn, to the discussions (mentioning your specific interest in the topic)
- a CV of max. two pages
- an abstract (500 words) of your current research project with some keywords

What do we offer?

The GSAH will cover your travel expenses as well as accommodation (double room) and meals at the Hotel Schloss Wartegg. You will receive an e-reader with preparatory material and have the opportunity to present your research on the Summer School homepage and blog (http://blog.wbkolleg.unibe.ch). Most importantly, you are offered an intellectually stimulating, lively and friendly atmosphere conducive to fruitful exchange with both senior scholars and peers.

Contact

Please apply electronically (single PDF) to Dr. Eva Bader who is happy to answer questions regarding the application: eva.bader@unibe.ch. For all further questions please contact mike.toggweiler@unibe.ch.

The Summer School project team

Prof. Dr. Urte Krass (Director IFN and GSAH, Head of TransHumanities, Co-lead Summer School)
Prof. Dr. Peter J. Schneemann (Coordinating Principal Investigator / Lead of the SNSF Sinergia project, Co-lead Summer School)
Dr. Toni Hildebrandt (Coordinator of the SNSF Sinergia project, Co-coordinator and Contact Summer School)
Dr. Mike Toggweiler (Coordinator IFN and GSAH, Coordinator TransHumanities & Summer School)
Dr. Eva Bader (Assistant Summer School)