



36th international Wolfenbüttel Summer Course

Communication and the culture of the body in early modern Europe

Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, 15th – 26th August 2011

Convenors:

Prof. Dr. Mara R. Wade (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)
and Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Behringer (Universität des Saarlandes, Saarbrücken)

Application deadline: 31st March 2011

Topic

The aim of this Summer Course is to deepen and broaden discussions of the theme of „the body“ in the early modern period which have been ongoing over the last few years. It will treat questions basic to cultural studies, given that human communication takes place with and via the body and that the human body always has a communicative dimension: it is perceived, displayed and disciplined in diverse ways and manners. The inscription and visualization of the body in text and image has numerous aspects – symbolic, aesthetic, religious, political, gender - which ascribe to it a series of functions, and thus we must differentiate between the everyday, erotic, standardized, diseased, tortured, dismembered or other bodies.



Georg Philipp Harsdörffer: Stamm- und Stechbüchlein. Nürnberg 1654 (HAB: 165.19 Eth.)

Gender norms also are the focus of medical, legal, artistic, social and literary discourses. The human body is exercised, measured and interpreted by work, sporting and courtly activities, or by rest and relaxation. The ideal, the deviant, the healthy, and the male, female or androgynous body are some possible models of interpretation.

The topic provides possibilities for examining the various connections between the body and communication in the early modern era. An introduction to current research in the field will open up various methodological approaches. Our main focus will be on the question how communication with the human body functions.

The summer course will thus be concerned with the central questions of research in historical and cultural studies: the relationship between the body and communication steers the perception and development of the individual, of society and of the environment. By using conduct literature, administrative documents (e.g. interrogation records) and other textual and visual media of the early modern period, we hope to develop new questions and paradigms for research in the field. Our main focus – owing to the nature of the rich source material available in the holdings of the Herzog August Bibliothek – will be on early modern Europe, but other civilizations will also be considered for comparative purposes.

Mornings will be given over to presentations by selected experts in the field which will then be discussed with all participants. In the afternoons participants will be able to use the library holdings for their own work. There will, of course, also be opportunities for further individual and group discussions with those teaching on the course. Participants will also have the opportunity to present on aspects of their own research topics.

Possible fields for discussion:

- the everyday body: eating, drinking, clothing, hygiene
- the erotic body: sex, movement, appearance, codification, sensuality
- the narrated body: novel, drama, lyric poetry, news media, ego documents
- the violent body: violence, crime, war, tournament, fencing, weapons
- the diseased and tortured body: sickness, plague, torture, murder, execution
- the standardized body: conduct, conversation, gender norms, drill
- the performing body: music, festival, theatre, opera, gesture, dance, sport
- the symbolic body: painting, graphic art, broadsheets, emblems
- the dismembered body: anatomy, vivisection

Preliminary Programme

WEEK I

Arrival: 14th August 2011

Monday

Initial meeting of all participants, introduction to the course, tours through the library

Tuesday

Artistic bodies, embodied art: the human (and animal) figure as constituents of identity in the pictorial culture of the early modern period (Pia Cuneo, Tucson)

Wednesday

Head over heels, left and right — Interpreting informal gestures and motions beyond the ritual (Rebekka von Mallinckrodt, Berlin)

Thursday

Sport (Wolfgang Behringer, Saarbrücken)

Friday

Presentations by participants

WEEK II

Monday

Healthy bodies, sick bodies. Body perception and life-writings in the 17th Century (Helga Meise, Reims)

Tuesday

Interior Views — from handbooks on embalming to the anatomical treatise (Mariacarla Gadebusch-Bondio, München)

Wednesday

Inscribed Bodies –literature, emblems, and performance texts (Mara Wade, Urbana)

Thursday

Presentations by participants

Friday

Final discussion

Departure: 27th August 2011

Course tutors:

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Behringer (Universität des Saarlandes, Saarbrücken)

Prof. Dr. Pia F. Cuneo (University of Arizona, Tucson/Arizona, USA)

Prof. Dr. Mariacarla Gadebusch-Bondio (Technische Universität München)

Juniorprof. Dr. Rebekka von Mallinckrodt (Freie Universität, Berlin)

Prof. Dr. Helga Meise (Université de Reims, Frankreich)

Prof. Dr. Mara Wade (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA)

Applications

The call for applications is addressed to masters or doctoral students from Germany and abroad. The languages used in the course will be German and English.

The library offers up to fifteen places for participants and will cover their expenses for accommodation and breakfast. Each participant will receive a subsidy of 350 Euros to cover living costs. Participants are expected to pay their own travel expenses. In special cases applications may be made for assistance in covering travel costs from abroad.

There are no application forms. Applicants should state their reasons for wishing to participate in the course and send a c.v. which describes their academic career and their current research. Please also supply the address of an academic referee who may be contacted to supply a reference if needed. The deadline is **31st March 2011**.

Applications should be submitted, preferably by email, to:

forschung@hab.de

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