

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

GLOBAL HUMANITIES CAMPUS 2017

(WORKSHOP AND SUMMER SCHOOL)

July 24 - August 5, 2017

To enable participation in the 2017 Global Humanities Campus to be held at Freie Universität Berlin, Germany, from July 24 - August 5, 2017, we are pleased to invite applications for:

2 travel stipends for doctoral or advanced M.A. students

1 travel stipend for a professor

per partner institution (see list below).

The Global Humanities Campus (GHC) is part of the activities of the international Thematic Network *Principles of Cultural Dynamics* (PCD); it consists of a two-day workshop and a summer school, the duration of the entire event being the two weeks indicated above.

The themes of the 2017 GHC are the following:

- ***Material Culture and Textual Culture: Different Dynamics or Different Conceptualizations?*** (Workshop)
- ***Digging and Reconstructing vs. Reading/Viewing and Interpreting: How Do Our Research Methods Affect Our Understanding of What Culture Is?*** (Summer School)

Participants and instructors will come from the following institutions:

- Harvard University, Mahindra Humanities Center
- The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Faculty of Humanities
- The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Research Institute for the Humanities
- The Johns Hopkins University, Humanities Center
- The École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), Paris
- Freie Universität Berlin, Department of Humanities

Since its establishment in 2013, the following three associated partner institutions have joined the network:

- The University of California at Davis
- The National Research University / HSE, Moscow
- The Australian National University

For further information pertaining to the activities of the network, interested students and professors may contact the program coordinator at their home institutions (for names and contact details, please refer to the PCD website: <http://www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/principles-cultural-dynamics/index.html>), or the network's Berlin-based general administrator, **Lisa Münzer** (pcd@fu-berlin.de).

Funding Details

Participation in the Global Humanities Campus is free. Travel stipends for doctoral students are conditional on a full participation over the course of the two-week GHC; as to professors, more flexible rules apply, which will be negotiated on an individual basis. Recipients of stipends, including professors, will be granted a lump sum for traveling expenses; the exact amount is contingent upon the respective home institution. In addition, participating doctoral and M.A. students will receive a lump sum of **€300** as a subsidy towards the expenses for accommodation and public transportation. Accordingly, they are required to organize their accommodation independently. Professors will be accommodated in a hotel near campus at the network's expense; alternative accommodation may be negotiated individually. All participants will be invited to an opening dinner (July 24), a closing lunch (August 5), and to meals (lunch and dinner) served during the workshop (July 25 and 26). Refreshments will be provided throughout. The host institute will not cover any further expenses as might occur during the participant's stay in Berlin.

Program of the GHC

The first day of the GHC (**July 24, 2017**) is reserved for administrative aspects and an **introduction of all participants**; the latter are expected to present a short (5 minute) synopsis of their respective research projects; this will help them to establish contacts with participants working in similar fields and on related topics. Professors are welcome to attend; student participation is mandatory. This first get-together will conclude with an informal welcome dinner.

After this first day, the Global Humanities Campus will officially commence with a two-day **workshop (July 25 and 26, 2017, from 10 a.m. to 6 p. m.)**. This will be followed by the **summer school**, taking place from **July 27 to August 5** in the mornings and the early afternoons; there will be two sessions per day, starting at 10:00 a.m. and ending at 3 p.m. (including a lunch break from 12 p.m. - 1 p.m.). – The summer school will be complemented by a cultural program linked to its topic; the latter will take advantage of Berlin's museums and other places of cultural interest, so as to provide a meaningful contribution to the scholarly discussions; the events in this section will take place in the afternoon, and typically begin around 4 p.m.

There will be two **additional components** to the GHC 2017, which are designed to encourage the initiative of all student participants, and to allow them to take advantage of the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the wide range of disciplines and institutions represented at the GHC. During the afternoons without cultural program—beginning at 3:15 p.m. and finishing between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. –student participants will give short presentations of approximately 20 minutes (this includes the discussion) of their current work, or of scholarly questions they wish to discuss with students from other institutions. Instructors will not be present during these time slots. –The second addition to the GHC will take place on Friday afternoons; starting at 1:15 p.m., these sessions will be dedicated to an open

discussion of the summer school's topics among student participants. The respective discussions may either be organized as plenary sessions, or by way of forming several groups, or by any combination of these two methods. Student participants are invited to define the specific topics of these meetings according to their own preferences.

GHC sessions take place from Mondays through Saturdays. Sundays are free.

Concept of the GHC

In keeping with the broad areas of interest and fields of research on the part of the various participating instructors—representing nine different institutions, seven different countries, and diverse humanistic disciplines—the PCD workshops and summer schools are, in effect, conceptual laboratories, providing an open forum for ideas and a source of scholarly inspiration, rather than a school in a pedagogical sense. The topics and proposals for discussion are linked to the PCD's research agenda, which focuses on describing principles of cultural dynamics in a very broad and comprehensive sense. (For more information regarding the diversity of this research agenda, including the topics of the 2014, 2015, and 2016 workshop and summer school, see the network's website). The thematic “openness” of the workshops and summer schools is intentional. Participants should be disposed to experience (very) diverse styles of academic teaching and scholarly discussion; this variety, the same as the ability on the part of the students to adapt to such diverse lecture styles, is a unique characteristic of the Global Humanities Campus, seeing that it introduces students and researchers in the early stages of their career to diverse and multifaceted traditions within the humanities around the globe.

Thematic Outline

I. Workshop

Material Culture and Textual Culture: Different Dynamics or Different Conceptualizations?

From an etymological perspective, the term “culture” derives from the Latin verb “*colere*”, meaning: to engage in agricultural activities; and, indeed, what we commonly refer to as culture appears to have emerged relatively recently in the history of humankind. For a period of approximately 150,000 years, our ancestors lived a non-sedentary life, similar to that of non-human primates. It was only when they developed techniques of cultivating land that “culture” in a modern sense developed: houses, cities, polities, religions, the fine arts, script systems, the systematic exploration of the world, and also (early stages) of what we would come to call science. Agricultural developments facilitated sustaining an ever-growing population, while actually needing less land to do so; at the same time, it necessitated forms of “organizing” this increasingly concentrated population—that is, of replacing the informal and spontaneous patterns of interaction typical of non-sedentary life with various “rules”, “norms”, “structures”, and “hierarchies”.

There is an important juncture in this “culturocene” (a term one might devise to replace the somewhat misconceived “Anthropocene”, a word that has become popular in recent times): the development of written language decidedly divides this age into a “before” and an “after”. At the same time, the following consideration will also have to guide the workshop’s framework: as such, scriptuality is not a replacement for orality, but rather a sort of supplement; for textual culture “adds” new items to a previous material culture, while the latter continues as the indispensable basis of a largely material existence. Houses, cities, (various) systems of water supply, garments, instruments of all kinds (from primitive tools to the most sophisticated robotic machines), decorative objects, including the “fine arts”, ritual objects, etc., continue to be produced and to evolve, long after the introduction of the written word.

Accordingly, this workshop’s main topic of discussion will be the question whether symbolic “cultural” arrangements of matter (that is, texts) follow rationales of evolution that differ (substantially) from the evolutionary rationale(s) of predominantly non-symbolic, literally “material” arrangements of matter. One might hypothesize that the possibility to textually encode the instructions as to how one might produce various items of material culture drastically accelerated the latter’s use value. Regarding the influence of one form of culture on the other, one might raise the question as to whether there is a factual difference between items of material culture and such of textual culture in terms of (their respective) evolution; or whether it is only the current (and mostly unreflected) conceptualizations of these diverse items that might differ. Among other aspects, the sessions might address the following questions:

- Are there expedient ways of systematizing the commonalities and differences between, say, the studies focusing on practices concerning human forms of accommodation (that is, the history of architecture), and those focusing on narrative practices (literary history)?
- Considering comprehensive approaches to items of textual culture—such as the “philosophy of history”, or the “evolution from the epic to the novel”—why is it that there are no similarly all-encompassing interpretive frameworks with regard to material culture?
- What might be the reasons for the fact that one will encounter such comprehensive interpretative approaches also in one section of material culture that is typically defined as “artistic only” (paintings and its discipline, that is, art history)?
- Where and how might the concept of “progress” apply in studies concerned primarily with material culture and such as focus primarily on textual culture; moreover, is there a difference between the two in this regard?
- Might a convincing approach to the problems addressed above be found in the theorems of (the different schools of) semiotics?
- How might the above questions be addressed from the perspective of cultural traditions that, due to their specific profiles (script system, religious substrate, etc.), are less influenced by the dichotomy of “matter” vs. “spirit” (symbol) when compared to the humanities of the West?

The two-day workshop will comprise between 6 and 7 sessions. Each session will be held by a different professor. Presenters will read their respective papers (no

longer than 45 minutes), followed by a discussion of 45 minutes. The workshop adheres to the format of a conference, and will be open to the academic public. The titles of the papers to be presented, short abstracts, as well as the names and institutional affiliations of the respective presenters will be available on the network's website (see above) by June 19, 2017.

II. Summer School

Digging and Reconstructing vs. Reading/Viewing and Interpreting: How Do Our Research Methods Affect Our Understanding of What Culture Is?

Disciplines within the humanities are most diverse and all-encompassing. One might even be tempted to use the term “human studies / *studia humanitatis*” for the systematic exploration of the “world” in general—since such exploration (including a strictly scientific one) is inevitably conducted by human beings. In this sense, the natural sciences are also part of the human and humanistic endeavor to understand, conceptualize, and shape the world we live in. Yet such an approach might be too simplistic. For it is reasonable indeed, to distinguish between the various human attempts at satisfying their (insatiable) curiosity—a differentiation that was introduced during the Early Modern Age—and to reserve the term and concept of “science” for those fields of exploration where an empirical methodology in fact applies. The distinctive characteristic of empiricism is the possibility of repeatedly reproducing an identical constellation of phenomena, in order to submit it to varying external impulses; the results of these “tests” enable the researcher conducting this experiment to (provisionally) formulate causal “laws”, which are considered viable descriptions until the point in time when an “exception” to this “law” emerges. The disciplines within the humanities (including the social sciences) have to do without this method of experimenting, since there is no way of producing a situation of identical initial conditions (indispensable to the experimental method) for the case of human beings qua primary “phenomena” of the humanities. We change continually: neither materially nor intellectually are human beings exactly identical to what they had been one or two minutes earlier. Statistical analyses are not able to bridge the gap between these “two cultures”; while they are able to conceptualize a quantitative preponderance, they cannot formulate dependable “laws” for the case of human beings. As already Aristotle stated, the concept of probability requires that events contradicting all probabilities indeed occur; otherwise, one would be dealing with (natural) laws.

This commonality between the disciplines within the humanities notwithstanding, they seem to be distinct as regards the “objectivity” (the status) of their findings; in other words, there seems to be a significant difference between studies that focus on the discovery, reconstruction, and systematization of objects pertaining to material culture, and such as focus on conferring “sense” upon objects from the past. The first group, with archeology as its most prominent example, is certainly not scientific in the above (empiricist) sense. Even so, the fact that it limits its endeavors to description, and that it tends to refrain from “interpreting” its findings in a more speculative fashion, certainly distances this group from disciplines such as historiography (including the history of religions), and even more so from literary studies. Seeing that symbolic systems—including linguistic ones—

are basically arbitrary, it is particularly the latter discipline that has continually worked toward establishing a quasi-unlimited form of speculation as a legitimate principle of interpretation (as a particularly extreme and thus instructive example, one might adduce the theoretical paradigm of Deconstruction).

Against this backdrop, the summer school will explore how the objects scholars deal with influence their methodology, line of argument, and conception of the “objective” and “use value” of their studies. The questions to be addressed might include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Faced with their material findings, why will archeologists typically refrain from comprehensive speculative explanations, and particularly from such regarding world views, philosophemes, and societal structures? Is there a disciplinary tradition at work, or is this reluctancerestraint grounded in methodological reflections?
- With regard to particularly those disciplines as have always had a decidedly hermeneutic profile (theology, philosophy, historiography, literary studies), and increasingly so in the second half of the twentieth century: what may have been the reasons for their tendency to gradually relegate the descriptive part of their endeavors (“philology”, numismatics, diplomatics, etc.) to the background, while privileging the activity of “interpreting”—that is, of conferring sense upon their respective material?
- As regards the relation between description and interpretation: is there a difference between disciplines that rely predominantly on texts (such as the abovementioned), and those that rely on non-textual, iconic material (such as art history)? Moreover, how might one assess musicology, whose material is “notationally encoded” (N. Goodman)—as is the case for any kind of textual study—while its acoustic effects are immediate rather than mediate, hence neither symbolic (not invested with a particular meaning) nor mimetic (the problem of potential exceptions such as 19th century program music notwithstanding)?
- Might one observe a “gradation” within the field of textual studies, meaning that disciplines analyzing referential texts (such as historiography) are more reluctant towards more speculative forms of interpretation when compared to those as primarily rely on non-referential texts (such as philosophy, theology, literary studies)?
- Is there a “return to philology” in contemporary textual studies? If so, might there be an increasing openness in the more “material” disciplines within the humanities (such as archeology) to become more speculative with regard to their findings—albeit in a tentative way?
- Finally, is the obsession with hermeneutics, with interpretation, a specific feature of the Occidental humanities? Are non-Western human studies more “descriptive” and less speculative?

Each summer school session will have a duration of 120 minutes. At the beginning of each session, instructors will present case studies and concrete materials from their field of research. According to their preference, they may pre-circulate reading material. The topics of these sessions, including short abstracts, as well as the names of the instructors and their institutional affiliation, will be circulated via

email by June 26, 2017.

The respective presentations are expected not to exceed 60 minutes, the standard length being 45 minutes. The second hour of each session is reserved for questions, clarification, discussion, and debate. In addition to addressing the presentation and topic of the session, this Q&A section should also deal with methodology, so as to give participants not working in the instructor's field an opportunity to engage in the discussion in a meaningful way. Accordingly, instructors are encouraged to include a brief outline of their research approaches and methods in their presentations, to comment on the types of source material they utilize, as well as on their manner of doing so.