Course Title

Introduction to Transcultural Studies

Instructor’s affiliation, department, job title and name

Björn-Ole KAMM, Program Specific Senior Lecturer
Center for the Promotion of Interdisciplinary Education and Research (CPIER)

Wako ASÁTO, Associate Professor
Graduate School of Letters

Jennifer COATES, Program Specific Assistant Professor
Hakubi Center for Advanced Research

Andrey KLEBANOV, Program Specific Foreign Language Lecturer
Graduate School of Letters

Academic semester that the course is offered
Spring 2017

Outline and purpose of the course

The concept of transculturality can be used both as a heuristic device (e.g. multi-perspectivity and multi-locality) and focus of study (e.g. cultural entanglements). It is embedded in a large and very heterogeneous landscape of theoretical and methodological approaches that come from various disciplines and cover different thematic, historical and geographic areas. Jointly conducted by four researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds, this lecture class will discuss the contributions and limitations of inherited and current notions of transculturality. Focusing on three study areas, “Society, Economy and Governance,” “Knowledge, Belief and Religion” and “Visual, Media and Material Culture,” and the respective fields of research of the lecturers, theories and methods will be tested, e.g. in explorations of Japanese cinema, global “art” cinema and transcultural filmmaking practices, circular movements in the development of “Modern Postural Yoga,” and the relationship between patterns of migration and modes of institutionalization. The goal of the course is to introduce students to diverse disciplinary perspectives enabling them to frame their own studies of transcultural phenomena and perspectives.

Course goals

Students will gain insights into the historical development of theories of transculturality and their application in practical research in the humanities and social sciences. This will allow them to formulate own study projects and prepare them for research dealing with the creation and crossing of cultural borders, entangled histories and forms of circulation.

Course schedule and contents

The course will be offered in accordance with the following general structure. A detailed plan for each class will be announced in the introduction.

(1) Introduction [1 week]

The Introduction to the course covers the aims, methods, requirements and overall organisation of the class, including self-introductions by the lecturers and first examples from the three study foci, “Society, Economy and Governance” (SEG), “Visual, Media and Material Culture” (VMC), and “Knowledge, Belief and Religion” (KBR).
(2) Foundations [3 weeks] - (lecturer: Bjorn-Ole KAMM)

The first three-week section of lectures discusses transculturality within the matrix of associated terms and metaphors, such as hybridity, as well as related-but-different perspectives, postcolonialism for example, followed by an introduction into transculturality as heuristic principle and its methodological consequences.

(3) Society, Economy and Governance [3 weeks] - (lecturer: ASATO Wako)

The following three weeks will deal with how cultural contact zones are institutionalized within social policy in the nation-state system, for example, through immigration policies, minority policies, social integration policies or citizenship, particularly in Asian countries. Recent Asian trends shift towards social integration policy to overcome demographic challenges, showing a “new Asian transculturality” in the contemporary setting.

(4) Visual, Media and Material Culture [3 weeks] - (lecturer: Jennifer COATES)

This section addresses transculturality through the study of film, television and other forms of media. In the first two classes, we examine how Japanese cinema as a form of art, propaganda and entertainment has continuously struggled to consolidate its international roots with a stylistically pronounced “national” identity. In the third class, we consider how filmmaking and distribution practices in East Asia and the world have altered with the rise of the Internet and globalism.

(5) Knowledge, Belief and Religion [3 weeks] - (lecturer: Andrey KLEBANOV)

In the final section, we examine the various circular movements underlying the development of what came to be called “Modern Postural Yoga.” In the first lecture, we investigate historical precursors of the relevant phenomena, explore influences of British and Scandinavian physical culture on the development of postural yoga in India in the second lecture, and consider the ways in which the latter was received (back) in Britain and globally in the final class of this section.

(6) Review and Feedback

The lecture class will be accompanied by a weekly discussion class (“tutorium,” Code: 9825046), in which students discuss the content of the lectures and the readings, and clarify their understanding of transculturality. Participation in this class is not mandatory but highly recommended.

Prerequisites

3rd year and above.

Evaluation

Readings and weekly essays (40%), written final report (40%), participation (20%).

Studies to be done outside of class

The participants are expected to attend every class and spend a certain amount of time outside of this class for this course. Regular homework for this lecture class (readings and short comprehension essays) as well as discussion in the tutorium (if taken) will play an important role in this course, so preparation and review out of the class requires at least about an hour.

Further readings

The course materials as well as lecture slides will be made available via the course webpage.

Introductory readings:


https://www.cats.bun.kyoto-u.ac.jp/ (see KULASIS for details and the enrolment key)
The course will be offered in accordance with the following general structure. A detailed plan for each class will be determined and will be announced in the introduction.

Focusing on three study cases conducted by four researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds, this lecture class will discuss the concepts of transculturality (including but not limited to the term “Transcultural Material Culture,” and the respective fields of research of the lecturers, theories and methods will be tested, contributions and limitations of inherited and current notions of transculturality. Participating in this class is not mandatory but highly recommended.

Consultation (office hours) by appointment. The course webpage will be available to download the course material. Please contact Björn-Ole Kamm <kamm@cats.bun.kyoto-u.ac.jp> for any questions regarding this course syllabus.

**Others**

Consultation (office hours) by appointment. The course webpage will be available to download the course material. Please contact Björn-Ole Kamm <kamm@cats.bun.kyoto-u.ac.jp> for any questions regarding this course syllabus.

**Picture**: Various Forms of Transculturality.

**About the instructor**

**Björn-Ole KAMM**
Ph.D. in Japanese Studies, Heidelberg University  
M.A. in Japanese Studies and Communication & Media Studies, Leipzig University  
Areas of Specialization: Practice theory, transculturality, uses and gratifications of Japanese popular media, role-playing theory and practice.

**Wako ASATO**
Ph.D. in Economics, Ryukoku University (2006)  
Presidential Award of the Philippines (2014)  
Committee Member of Care Enterprise Off Shore Development under the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2014-)

**Jennifer COATES**
Ph.D. in Film and Media Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London  
M.A. in History of Art, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London  
M.A. (undergrad) Double Honours in English Literature and History of Art, University of Glasgow.

**Andrey KLEBANOV**
Ph.D. in Classical Indology, University of Hamburg  
M.A. in Classical Indology, University of Hamburg  
Area of Specialization: Classical Sanskrit Literature, traditional Sanskrit grammar and poetics, traditional Sanskrit education, Sanskrit education in Early Modern and Modern India, Sanskrit speaking scholarly communities in modern India.