

Practices, Procedures, Recursions: The Reality of Media?

Fourth Annual Princeton-Weimar Summer School for Media Studies Princeton, June 15 – 21, 2014

The Princeton-Weimar Summer School for Media Studies – a collaboration between the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar (Internationales Kolleg für Kulturtechnikforschung und Medienphilosophie, IKKM) and Princeton University (German Department) – returns to Princeton in 2014 for its fourth installment. The 2014 topic will be “Practices, Procedures, Recursions: The Reality of Media?”. The weeklong program will be hosted by Princeton’s German Department. It will be directed by Bernhard Siegert (Weimar) and Nikolaus Wegmann (Princeton).

Besides the directors the faculty will include renowned film maker Harun Farocki as well as scholars of media and literature such as Petra McGillen (Dartmouth), Grant Wythoff (Columbia), and Harun Maye (Weimar).

The Princeton-Weimar Summer School for Media Studies invites applications from outstanding doctoral candidates throughout the world in media studies and related fields such as film studies, literary studies, philosophy, art history, architecture, sociology, politics, the history of science and visual culture.

Coordinators:

Mladen Gladić (Princeton), Olga Moskatova (Weimar)

All application materials should be sent by email to

ssms@Princeton.EDU

and must be received by **November 25, 2013**.

Please submit all inquiries to: ssms@Princeton.EDU

About the Summer School

The Princeton-Weimar Summer School for Media Studies provides advanced training in the study of media and cultural techniques. Focusing on one special topic annually, it affords a select group of fourteen graduate students the opportunity to work with distinguished international scholars from all fields of media studies in an intimate and highly focused context and provides a platform for participants to engage in dialogue with other doctoral students from around the world working in similar or related fields. In addition to the seminar sessions, workshops, and lectures, the summer school program includes slots every day that are reserved for extended one-on-one consultations with the faculty.

The directors of the summer school lead five morning seminars. Afternoon sessions taught by the summer school faculty provide further opportunities for interaction and participation. A series of evening events such as invited lectures and film screenings explore other facets of the annual summer school topic.

Participants will receive a reader with texts and material for the seminars. The working language of the Summer School is English.

Annual Topic 2014: “Practices, Procedures, Recursions: The Reality of Media?”

The 2014 session of the Princeton-Weimar Summer School for Media Studies is devoted to approaches in media analysis whose focus are the operations, procedures, and practices that constitute cultures. In distinction to approaches whose goal is a comprehensive media *theory*, the fourth Princeton-Weimar Summer School for Media Studies will map out what can be called the “practical turn” in media analysis.

This “practical turn” is documented first and foremost by the rapid expansion of the new field of Cultural Techniques, the study of symbolic or symbol-generating practices and operations that are the very basis of cultures. These include techniques and media of reading, writing, and calculating, but also entail practices and methods of representation (e.g. linear perspective, but also masks, personae, effigies, votives), navigation, and technical or technological operations such as constructing, designing, collecting, modelling, drawing, note-taking, map-making, bookkeeping, filing, and the like. With the operational logic of cultural technologies as its goal, this strand of analysis focuses on the relation of technology, media, and culture and the operational production of networks between these.

It can be argued that the study of cultural techniques intersects with a version of philology, one that returns to (but also reinvents) the operations and practices that make it possible to analyse texts as media, and which therefore can be called “media philology.” Philology and media studies have been entangled from the beginning, of course: a number of media scholars, including Marshall McLuhan, Eric A. Havelock, Walter J. Ong, or Friedrich Kittler were trained as philologists and literary critics. But more importantly (and perhaps unsurprisingly), media studies owe a considerable part of their methodological approaches to the field of literary studies. The most prominent examples here are the study of the transition from oral poetry to written and printed literature by the Toronto School of Communication and Kittler’s analysis of *Aufschreibesysteme* (discourse networks).

Media philology is on the one hand dedicated to practices such as (re-)reading, collective reading, note-taking, compiling, collecting, or searching and finding, and on the other hand to operations and operators like spatialization, titles, paragraphs, page numbers, blanks, quotation marks, ellipses and so forth. Media philology thus de-centers the transcendental signified of hermeneutics and its cultural semantics, and situates at the core of the discipline operations, practices, and materialities which are, far from being mere auxiliary means, crucial conditions for the constitution of entities like the author, the reader, the work, and the process of meaning production.

Beyond the study of cultural techniques and (media) philology, recent developments in sociology and anthropology demonstrate an increasing emphasis on practices, operations, and procedures. Examples here are Bruno Latour’s studies of laboratory practice and of chains of operations especially in the production of scientific facts; Tim Ingold’s theory of making and especially the “textility” of making; Niklas Luhmann’s sociological systems theory as well as Michel de Certeau’s inquiries into the *Practices of Everyday Life*.

In all of these approaches, the knowledge produced is not a theoretical one but one that depends on the very operations and procedures of its own production. Media philology, for instance, emphasizes both the technical character of philological knowledge and its dependence on specific technologies of writing. The fourth Princeton-Weimar summer school will therefore place special emphasis on the relevance of philological practices and operations for a “computerized society.” If,

as media scholar Lev Manovich claims, the database has become the symbolic form of our culture, what role do philological practices play? How does the database differ from traditional collections of documents, e.g. archives and libraries, and which operations of access does the database instantiate?

The summer school will explore how these approaches can advance the methodological framework for an analysis of cultures that is based on media operations, procedures, practices.

The 2014 summer school will be directed by Bernhard Siegert (Weimar) and Nikolaus Wegmann (Princeton).

How to Apply

All applications should be submitted electronically in PDF format and should include the following:

1. Letter of Intent indicating academic experience and interest in the summer school's annual topic (max. 300 words);
2. Curriculum Vitae (max. 2 pages);
3. Abstract of a possible presentation at the Princeton-Weimar Summer School for Media Studies of no more than 2000 words, double spaced, with standard margins;
4. Contact information (name, institutional address, email) of two potential references.

Please use the following naming convention for your application files:

Lastname_Letter_of_Intent.pdf

Lastname_Curriculum_Vitae.pdf

Lastname_Abstract.pdf

Lastname_Contact_Info.pdf

All application materials should be sent by email to

ssms@princeton.edu

and must be **received** by **November 25, 2013**.

Applicants who have been admitted will be notified by December 2013.

Once admitted, applicants are required to transfer a participation fee of \$750 by February 28, 2014 to guarantee their spot.

The fee covers tuition, full accommodation, meals, and all study materials during the entire week of the summer school.

A limited amount of travel funding will be available upon application.