

## **Course 1**

### **The Visuality of Society**

Johannes Bruder, Il-Tschung Lim and Tobias Schlechtriemen with Christa Karpenstein-Essbach

While concepts such as the “iconic” or “pictorial turn” by now shape a vivid field of interdisciplinary research, the pictorial dimension still marks a void in socio-theoretical approaches. Against the backdrop of an analytic embedding of the iconic/visual, this workshop is primarily interested in the visual construction of society. Images and, quite in general, all kinds of visibility display key structures in generating social and cultural meaning. Their meanings do not merely amount to nothing more than a visual representation and depiction of socially relevant data; rather, images have to be understood as pivotal to the operative proceeding of sociality. In this respect, they convey a peculiar social efficacy that is not to be reduced to plain visual presence.

We are particularly interested in papers which examine the specific contribution of images to the differentiation of societal realms of significance: for instance, the importance of images/icons could be argued in educational settings; in politics, on the other hand, the question becomes crucial because of the current globalization, not only touching upon how to represent the political community, but also, first and foremost, the way in which the visual performance engenders this political community. Inextricably linked with this issue is the question, whether or not corporate images are still appropriate within a representation of political order. We think politics has undergone a fundamental change, which indispensably leads to a corresponding shift relating to proper metaphors to represent society (streams, networks, swarms, mobs, etc.); and finally, the complex reality of a mere, immaterial economic sphere requires a simplification and illustration through images. What kind of mediacy, visualization and, last but not least, control of an invisible and peculiarly shapeless globalized economy is on hand?

In presentations and workshops, various aspects pertaining to the visuality of society will be brought into focus. Particularly interesting are suggestions for presentations examining the ambivalent status of images caught between reproduction and production in a social context (see suggested subject areas for presentations below).

Young colleagues (graduates, post-graduates), particularly from the fields of Sociology, Media Studies, Cultural Studies, Philosophy as well as anyone interested in the topic as outlined are encouraged to apply with suggestions for presentations. Following the submission and evaluation of applications, a detailed program will be drawn up. Course languages will be German and English. Therefore, at least a passive knowledge of these two languages is expected.

Suggested topics of presentations:

- Iconography of the Political: Visualizations of Inclusion and Exclusion
- Cash Flows – Economies in Images, on Screen, and on Display
- On-Screen Society – Cinematographic Reflections of Social Processes
- Metaphors of Society – Organism, Network, Mass, Swarm?
- Textual Images: the Imaginary Dimension in Describing Society

- Visuality of Religious Communities

The above list of possible topics is only for orientation's sake. Additional suggestions are welcome any time.

**Course Languages:** German and English

**Concept and direction:** Johannes Bruder, Il-Tschung Lim and Tobias Schlechtriemen

**Guest Lecturer:** Christa Karpenstein-Eßbach