

Archive Futures: Operations, Time Objects, Collectives

Princeton-Weimar Summer School for Media Studies

Internationales Kolleg für Kulturtechnikforschung und Medienphilosophie
(Bauhaus-Universität Weimar)

German Department
(Princeton University)

Weimar, June 14 – 20, 2015

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 Weimar in 2015 for its fifth installment. The topic will be “Archive Futures: Operations, Time Objects, Collectives”.

The Summer School will be directed by Lorenz Engell (Weimar, Media Philosophy) and Thomas Y. Levin (Princeton, German/Program in Media+Modernity). The faculty will include, among others: Gleb Albert and Monika Dommann (Zürich, History; DFG Research Group Media and Mimesis), Eva von Engelberg-Dockal (Weimar, Architectural History; DFG Research Group Media and Mimesis), Stephan Gregory (Weimar, Media of Historiography; DFG Research Group Media and Mimesis), Mark Hansen (Durham, Media Studies – to be confirmed), Michael W. Jennings (Princeton, German), Meredith Martin (Princeton, English & Center for Digital Humanities – to be confirmed) and Lynn Spiegel (Evanston, Screen Cultures – to be confirmed).

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.

All application materials should be sent by email to

ikkm-conference@uni-weimar.de

and must be received by **December 10, 2014**.

Please consult www.ikkm-weimar.de and german.princeton.edu/ssms for a detailed description of the annual topic, required documents, further information and updates.

Coordinators:

Christoph Eggersgluß (Weimar), Mladen Gladic (Princeton)

Please submit all inquiries to:

ikkm-conference@uni-weimar.de

Annual Topic: Archive Futures – Operations, Time Objects, Collectives

We live in an age of feverish archival production: thanks to digitization never before has so much become so readily accessible to so many so easily and so fast. Extant archives are being re-conceptualized and reconfigured, card-catalogues are being replaced by search engines, and entire domains of daily life have become subject to a generalized quotidian archival impulse conducted by individuals (as in the auto-surveillant mimetic narcissism of self-archiving on Facebook or Twitter), corporations (as in the industry of 'data-shadows' produced through the aggregation of databases) and the state (as in the dystopic fantasy of the US 'Total Information Awareness' program). Interestingly, digitization often goes along with a mimesis of the traditional analog archive in terms of user interfaces or addressing procedures. And yet an astonishing percentage of already-digitized collections has already begun to disappear, victims of the often-fatal consequences of hard- and software platform anachronization. Archives today are threatened both if they fail to engage with the digital and – ironically – if they embrace it wholeheartedly without thinking through the material, institutional and economic consequences of digital longevity. "Future-proofing" a digital archive requires extensive financial and technical resources in ways entirely different from previous epistemes of library science. The problem of digitization thus reveals that the archive is not – indeed has never been – defined merely as a collection or a storage room, but is rather a set of procedures, practices, or operations, of rules and protocols. These operations, internal and external as well as gatekeeping ones, such as selection, are not only core processes of the making of history, of memory building, of juridical power and political legitimation, and of collective identity production; at the same time, they create the operational frameworks for defining future(s) as possibilities to break with the past. The opening up of archives in post-1989 Central-Eastern Europe can, for instance, be read in just such a context.

Long dominated by a largely exclusive focus on paper, the conceptualization of archival work and function must today countenance a vast array of heterodox object types ranging from solid and durable things, samples, and other physical phenomena such as the archival function of architecture, to much more fleeting time-based media such as audio recordings, film and television. From a media studies perspective, different materialities demand different practices and operations and foster completely different regimes of time, place, and power distribution through archival functions. Time-based media, for example, stand in a very particular relation to the digital archive: faced by a very real threat of extinction (numerous support media such as magnetic tape have reached the end of their functional lifespan), major televisual archives such as that of the BBC must be migrated to the digital or risk being lost forever. Done properly, such digitization allows time-based media for the first time to be subjected to basic scholarly procedures such as citation, close reading, and comparative analysis. Done poorly, digitization can effectively destroy an archive, migrating it into a dysfunctional codec oblivion. Thus, in light of the particular challenges posed by digital archives, and the poly-materiality of archival objects, we must now re-think the archive as a set of material and mimetic operations no longer based solely on storage and physical stability, but as a constant process, as a process of writing and re-writing rather than as a collection of artefacts, as an organization of time through time and by time rather than as a spatial configuration.

Once understood as dynamic condition, the archive's temporal regimes must also be completely re-conceptualized. Archival assets are not only witnesses to a more or less remote past, but are also conditions of possibility of the production of presents and futures. While archives have often led to new and even sensational discoveries that require us to re-think the past, on a most general level

they project the present into the future as a past. They are complex time machines whose technical and operational infrastructure as well as the materiality of whatever they collect basically lay the ground for an understanding of time both past and future.

The future of the archive as well as the archive's myriad futures will be the focus of the 5th Princeton-Weimar Summer School in June 2015. Hosted once again by the IKKM (International Center for Research into Cultural Technologies and Media Philosophy) at the Bauhaus University in Weimar, this intensive week-long international gathering of advanced graduate students will engage the unparalleled local resources – Weimar being the site of world-class archives devoted not only to Goethe, Schiller and Nietzsche, but also to the Bauhaus and, let us not forget, to the horrors of Buchenwald – as comparative case studies in the material, institutional, and theoretical challenges posed by the 21st-century archival landscape. In a series of intensive seminars, workshops, and lectures the Summer School will take up and push further the by-now classical theorization of the archive undertaken by Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Giorgio Agamben (in their readings of Nietzsche, Bergson and others), not only as an institution or collection, but as a conceptual model for the formation of all discourses, practices and knowledges which regulate and delimitate what is sayable, thinkable, and conceivable at a certain point in history. Given the importance of new operations and materialities connected to the archive today, these concepts must be rethought and re-actualized.

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.

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

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and must be received by **December 10, 2014**.

Applicants who have been admitted will be notified by January 2015.

Once admitted, applicants are required to transfer a participation fee of €600 by February 28, 2015 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.