Rethinking space and power: Regional analyses of Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Arab Gulf

Seminar

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Imprint

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Rethinking space and power:
Regional analyses of Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Arab Gulf

Lecturers: Dr. Claus Bech Hansen and Nelli Nokkala, M.A.

Seminar in the MA-course „Society, Globalisation and Development“ („Gesellschaften, Globalisierung und Entwicklung“) (Modul “Entwicklungsgesellschaften”)

WS 2015/2016


Block seminar date: January 18-20.2016

Location: Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung, Walter-Flex-Str. 3, Room 2.008

Structure: Three-day block seminar, 9-17

Day 1
Introduction 9-12
Eastern Europe 13-15
Eastern Europe 15-17

Day 2
Eastern Europe 9-10.30
Central Asia 10.30-12
Central Asia 13-15
Central Asia 15-17

Day 3
Arab Gulf 10-12
Arab Gulf 13-14.30
Concluding remarks 15-17

Contact information: Please use the eCampus portal for communication. Alternatively you can reach us via Email or phone.
1. Course Description:

A wealth of political changes, ‘turns’ and new disciplines over the past 30 odd years have influenced the way many academic disciplines of the humanities are conducted. One of the disciplines hardest struck by this development has been the Area Studies, which has been subject to severe critique, arguing that it creates ‘fictitious containers’ and ‘territorial, cultural entities’ defined according to foreign epistemic regimes. As a result, several new disciplines and sub-disciplines have emerged that implement different theoretical and methodological approaches, aiming to overcome academic boundaries, redefine spatial understandings and typically focus on questions of movement, interaction, inter-dependencies and power.

Based on recent research and empirical findings, this seminar introduces students to new methods and theoretical assumptions that have marked academic debates informing, broadly speaking, the process of rethinking Area Studies. This includes drawing on diverse disciplines and ‘turns’, including work in Global Studies, Post-Colonial Studies, Gender Studies as well as the cultural and spatial turns to name but a few. The seminar exemplifies these developments by showing how they have influenced the study of the three regions Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Arab Gulf. As a result, students will not only acquire fundamental methodological tools to engage with a broad range research questions but also a sound theoretical background to navigate through a complex set of disciplines.

2. Course requirements:

- active participation in class
- reading of the obligatory texts
- submission of 3 short summaries of the obligatory texts

OR

- one in-class oral presentation (‘Referat’) and one summary of an obligatory text
  - a group presentation is possible as well. Each presentation should last 5-10min with the aim to facilitate the discussion. Please focus on one interesting and relevant (research) question. Creative approaches to presenting are encouraged. Let us know about the exact topic/reading of your presentation at least 2 weeks before the bloc seminar.

Additional requirements for a marked certificate (‘Leistungsnachweis’): seminar paper (20 pages, due March 31st, 2016)
3. Sessions and Literature

Obligatory readings listed here will be provided in the eCampus portal as Pdf-download. Further recommendations for reading, especially for those preparing a presentation or writing a seminar paper on the case, will be provided upon request. Please read at least one reading per topic and check for current events.

Introductory Session: What are we rethinking why, and what does it mean?

Mandatory readings:


Cooper, Stephen, Colonialism in question: theory, knowledge, history: Chapter 5.


Voluntary readings:


Massey, Doreen, A Global Sense Of Place, MARXISM TODAY, JUNE 1991.

Empirical Sessions - Space, Power and People

Eastern Europe

Session I: Space and the construction of Eastern Europe

Mandatory reading:
Larry Wolff: Inventing Eastern Europe, Introduction, chapter 1 and conclusion.
Maria Todorova: Imagining the Balkans, Introduction.

Voluntary readings:

Session II: Power, transition regimes and the legacy of socialism

Mandatory readings:

Voluntary readings:
Friedli, Andrea, Informality as a “Weapon of the Weak”? Public Representation of Tatar Youth Movements in Kazan, Russia, in Giordano, C./Hayoz, N., Informality in Eastern Europe. Structures, Political Cultures and Social Practices, 397-414
Session III: People and Gender in Eastern Europe

Wolff, Larry, Inventing Eastern Europe, chapter 2 and 8


Central Asia

Session I: Eurasia or Aziope? SPACE - Central Asia


Mielke, K./Hornidge, A-K., Crossroads Studies: From Spatial Containers to Interactions in Differentiated Spatialities. ‘Area Studies’-Discussion, 2014 (Download here)

Session II: Borders - Central Asia


Session III: People on the move in Central Asia


Isabaeva, E. (2011): Leaving to enable others to remain: remittances and new moral economies of migration in southern Kyrgyzstan, Central Asian Survey, 30:3-4, 541-554


Olimova, S. (2012): The Role and Status of Women in Migrant-Sending Households of Tajikistan, in: ДИАСПОРЫ № 2, p. 86


The Arab Gulf

Introductory literature


Session I: Space

‘Area constructions’ of the Middle East, the Arab World, the Persian or the Arab Gulf (?)


Is there an “Arab Gulf Moment”?


Possible excursus: Arab Uprisings; media and role of al-Jazeera

Session II: Power

Geopolitics of the Arab Gulf


Political power in the Arab Gulf States


Possible excursus: Yemen & new interventionism

Session III: People

Migration into the Gulf: introduction and legal framework


Migration into the Gulf: political and social context


Possible excursus: refugees; gender