

Media/Violence (summer term 2015)

Department for Media Culture and Theater

Day and time: Tuesday, 5:45 – 7:15/9:00 p.m.

Room: V

Instructor: Dr. Peter Scheinpflug

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(Meister-Ekkehart-Str. 11, 3rd floor)

Do ego-shooters birth killers? Is it ethical to show graphical recordings of executions as news? Why has the story of Hansel and Gretel not been banned due to its many violent scenes? Why does the audience laugh after Groot of the Guardians of the Galaxy having killed several soldiers?

Be it fairy tales, computer games or contemporary blockbuster movies, violence is one of the most persistent issues across different media, cultures and times. Any critical discussion of the various connections between media and violence has to cover a wide range of aspects like empirical findings about the effects of media usage, ethical debates about the representation of violence, violent effects of avant-garde styles, ritual uses of media consumption, ideological implications of representations of violence, or institutional and discursive practices of censorship (like the USK/FSK) and cult phenomena of resistance against cultural hegemony.

Discussing many different topics such as ego-shooters, action movies, sexual violence, or comical representations of violence, students will be introduced to canonical theories and methods for analyzing mediated violence. Studying exemplary texts and phenomena, students will also learn to discuss violence in its cultural richness while grasping a better understanding of controversial nature of this topic.

In preparation for each and every lesson, students will have to watch approximately two hours of film and read an essay! Due to the overall topic of this class, many materials will be controversial or shocking. Even though there will be fairy tales, television shows and comics among the materials, the course will mainly focus onto movies.

It would be preferable, if you reserved the time frame from 5:45 till 9 p.m. for this class. Further information will be provided during the first lesson.

This course, including course materials and class discussions, will be in English language! Some readings may be in German.

I Attendance:

All students are expected to participate actively in each lesson! Furthermore, it is highly recommended that students take notes in class. The success of this course depends primarily on you. Thus, your attendance and participation in class discussions are very important. If you are ill or have an emergency, please inform your instructor prior to class by e-mail that you will not be able to attend.

II Homework:

Homework assignments will consist of readings and preparing the exemplary media texts. These will serve as important preparation for discussions during the subsequent course lessons. Therefore, you need to fulfill your homework assignments!

The readings are available online via ILIAS. For joining the group in order to have access to the materials please register to ILIAS using your email-account, then search for the course and join it. The required password is: catharsis

III academic paper:

In order to successfully complete the course you will need to hand in an academic paper about a **topic of your own choosing** but which should be **related to (1) the overall theme of the course or (2) a specific topic covered by any lesson**. If you wish to discuss your paper with your instructor please see him during his office hours. You are not demanded to discuss the topic with your instructor; but you are advised to do so. The paper shouldn't exceed a length of about **12 pages**. You are free to write your paper **either in German or in English**. Because of the canonical theme of this course and the multitude of printed studies regarding media and violence, **online/internet materials** – except for online journals or materials for a discourse analysis – are considered to be **illegitimate sources for citation!** German language papers have to follow the instructions of the departmental guide lines for academic papers: <http://www.mekuwi.phil-fak.uni-koeln.de/10801.html>. English language papers have to meet the requirements of the MLA handbook/style. Please send the instructor a **digital copy** of your paper and hand him a printed version of the same paper **no later than September 15th 2015!**

III presentation:

If you study the 2Fach BA program and wish to successfully complete this course you also have to do an oral presentation. If a reading is given for your oral presentation, please summarize the key ideas. If you are asked to do additional research, please start early, because many sources might have to be ordered via Fernleihe. Your oral presentation should be held in such a way that any students can follow it without any difficulties, even if s/he has never heard about the topic before. The oral presentation must not exceed the length indicated in the syllabus. You have to provide a **handout** covering the main points of your presentation – the handout shouldn't exceed a length of about 2 pages. You have to **hand in** your handout **two days prior to the date of your oral presentation!** The oral presentation must be held **in English!**

IV Credit Points:

If you are a regular student at the University of Cologne you will receive 5 CP (Verbund-BA), resp. 6 CP (2Fach BA) upon successful completion of the course. If you are an exchange student please talk to the instructor of the course and your Erasmus coordinator in order to discuss the number of credit points.

V Office Hours:

You need to register for the office hours online: http://phil-services.uni-koeln.de/profile/peter_scheinflug. Before using the program you will have to register to it; for doing so you find a link "Registrierung Student" on the right side of the page. Office hours are being held in office 3.09 on the third floor of Meister-Ekkehart-Straße 11 (location: <http://www.uni-koeln.de/bin2/where.pl?parent.geb112>).

Lesson	Date	Topic	Materials	Readings	Oral presentation	
0	07.04.	Introduction				
1	14.04.	watching the pain of others		Roland Barthes: Mythologies. (The complete edition, in an new translation) New York 2012. p. 116-118. Susan Sontag: Regarding the Pain of Others. New York 2003. p. 18-39, 95-103.	<i>none</i>	
2	21.04.	the graphic imperative and snuff	Untraceable (USA 2008, Gregory Hobit) (copy at the department's library)	Joel Black: the Reality Effect. Film Culture and the Graphic Imperative. New York and London 2002. p. 1-32.	The reality effect and snuff (max. 30 minutes): see this lesson's reading	
3	28.04.	effects and dangers of media/violence	Evil Ed (S 1995, Anders Jacobsson) (copy at the department's library)	Michael Kunczik and Astrid Zipfel: Wirkungsforschung I: Ein Bericht zur Forschungslage. In: Thomas Hausmanninger and Thomas Bohrmann (eds.): Mediale Gewalt. Interdisziplinäre and ethische Perspektiven. München 2002. p. 149-159. [This essay is a summary of the essential findings from this canonical study: Michael Kunczik and Astrid Zipfel: Gewalt and Medien. Ein Studienhandbuch. Köln et al. 2006.]	<u>at the beginning of the lesson:</u> Effects of media violence (max. 30 minutes): see this lesson's reading	
					<u>at the end of the lesson:</u> What is fictional violence good for (max. 15 minutes): Gerhard Hroß: Die Funktionen von Gewalt im Film. In: Thomas Hausmanninger and Thomas Bohrmann (eds.): Mediale Gewalt. Interdisziplinäre and ethische Perspektiven. München 2002. p. 136-145.	
4	05.05.	ethics of violence: sympathy for the devil	Natural Born Killers (USA 1994, Oliver Stone) [Director's Cut!] (copy at the department's library)	Roland Barthes: Mythologies. (The complete edition, in an new translation). New York 2012. p. 76-78. Murray Smith: Gangsters, Cannibals, Aesthetes, or Apparently Perverse Allegiances. In: Carl Plantinga and Greg M. Smith (eds.): Passionate Views. Film, Cognition, and Emotion. Baltimore and London 1999. p. 217-238.	Sympathy for the devil, postmodern violence and the NBK controversy (max. 45 minutes)? see this lesson's reading Please, do additional research on this topic!	
5	12.05.	institutions and discourses of censorship	The Texas Chain Saw Massacre (USA 1974, Tobe Hooper) (copy at the department's library)	Christian Bartsch (ed.): Die Akte TCM. Münster 2012. (= Booklet of the Ultimate Collector's Edition by Turbine Classics)	TCM and censorship in Germany (max. 30 minutes): see this lesson's reading	

6	19.05.	video nasties and (fun)splatter as cultural practice	<p>Braindead (NZ 1992, Peter Jackson)</p> <p>(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9SJP27mR1g)</p> <p>Mama, Papa, Zombie - Horror für den Hausgebrauch (BRD 1984, Claud Bienfait)</p> <p>(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMy-NryQN2c)</p>	<p>Johanna Margrethe Ammitzböll: Funktion and Wirkung von Video-Gewalt bei Jugendlichen. Ergebnisse aus der neueren Forschung. In: Daniel Ammann and Christian Doelker (eds.): Tatort Brutalo. Gewaltdarstellungen and ihr Publikum. Zürich 1995. p. 98-113.</p>	<p>Horror and splatter as cultural practice (max. 30 minutes):</p> <p>see this lesson's reading</p> <p>Arno Meteling: Monster. Zur Körperlichkeit and Medialität im modernen Horrorfilm. Bielefeld 2006. P. 88-107.</p> <p>Gerhard Hroß: Horror: Friday 13th and der Schrecken des Erwachsenwerdens. In: In: Thomas Hausmanninger and Thomas (eds.): Mediale Gewalt. Interdisziplinäre and ethische Perspektiven. München 2002. p. 81-95.</p>
No lesson due to Whitsun holidays.					
7	02.06.	ego-shooters and school-shootings	<p><i>Teacher might bring his PS3 to class to allow students to play violent games</i></p>	<p>BPjM: "Counter Strike". Entscheidung Nr. 5116 vom 16.05.2002. In: BPjM-Aktuell 2/2002, p. 11-18.</p> <p>Stefan Kremepf: Mord ist Sport im Spiel. Interview mit dem Spieleforscher Jürgen Fritz, der eine alleinige Kausalität zwischen Ego-Shootern and Amokläufern als verfehlt betrachtet. In: Florian Rötzer (ed.): Virtuelle Welten – reale Gewalt. Hannover 2003. p. 105-111.</p> <p>Hartmut Gieselmann: Aktion "Sauberer Bildschirm". Wie der Krieg hinter seinem virtuellen Abbild verschwindet. In: Florian Rötzer (ed.): Virtuelle Welten – reale Gewalt. Hannover 2003. p. 50-58.</p>	<p>Media usage and school shootings (max. 30 minutes):</p> <p>Christina Bartz: Der "Mike Mendez Killers-Coolness-Faktor". Warum Robert Steinhäuser Amok läuft. In: dies. and Irmela Schneider (eds.): Formationen der Mediennutzung I: Medienereignisse. Transcript. Bielefeld 2007. p. 229-243.</p> <p>Please, do additional research on this topic!</p>
No lesson this week.					
8	16.06.	comic violence	<p>Batman: The Dark Knight, Vol. 2, Nr. 16-21.</p> <p>Sensational She-Hulk Vol. 2, Nr. 4.</p>	<p>Fredric Wertham: Seduction of the Innocent. (New introduction by James E. Reibman, Ph.D.). Laurel 2004. p. 83-118.</p>	<p>Wertham's criticism of comics (max. 30 minutes):</p> <p>Fredric Wertham: Seduction of the Innocent. (New introduction by James E. Reibman, Ph.D.). Laurel 2004.</p>
9	23.06.	cartoon violence	<p>Hokuto no Ken (engl. Fist of the North Star, J 1986, Toyoo Ashida)</p> <p>(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sy8w94qI5YU)</p>	<p>Markus von Hagen: Zeichentrick: "Doch nur Farb' and Pinselstrich...". In: Thomas Hausmanninger and Thomas Bohrmann (eds.): Mediale Gewalt. Interdisziplinäre and ethische Perspektiven. München 2002. p. 126-135.</p>	<p>Animation and violence (max. 30 minutes):</p> <p>see this lesson's reading</p> <p>Please, do additional research on this topic!</p>

10	30.06.	camp and excess in convergence culture	Spartacus, USA 2010-2013, The Red Serpent, S01E01, Creators: Steven S. DeKnight, first airing: 15.12.2010. Spartacus, USA 2010-2013, Kill Them All, S01E13, Creators: Steven S. DeKnight, first airing: 09.03.2011.	David Simmons: "By Jupiter's Cock!" Spartacus: Blood and Sand, Video Games, and Camp Excess. In: Michael G. Cornelius (ed.): Of Muscles and Men. Essays on the Sword & Sandal Film. Jefferson and London 2011. p. 144-153.	Camp (max. 30 minutes): see this lesson's reading Susan Sontag: Against Interpretation. And Other Essays. London et al. 2009. p. 275-292.
11	07.07.	religion, sexuality and violence	Jungfrukällan (engl. The Virgin Spring, S 1960, Ingmar Bergman)	none	Sympathy for the devil, postmodern violence and the NBK controversy (max. 45 minutes)? Part II
<i>During the last 20 minutes, students will evaluate the course!</i>					
12	14.07.	propaganda and violence	<i>students bring material related to ISIS propaganda videos to class</i>	none	none