Call for Applications:
33 Scholarships for the
Würzburg Summer School for Cultural and Literary Animal Studies (CLAS)
Sep 23-Sep 28, 2013, at the University of Würzburg

1. Würzburg Summer School for Cultural and Literary Animal Studies, Funded by VolkswagenStiftung

In the Humanities and in Cultural Studies, animals have increasingly become the focus of interest in recent years. In its interdisciplinary approaches, Cultural and Literary Animal Studies (CLAS) assembles research disciplines as different and distinct as Philosophy, History, Art History, Film Studies, Literary Studies, the History of Science, Cultural Studies, Biology, Psychology, Anthropology, Geography, Sociology, and Jurisprudence. The "Würzburg Summer School for Cultural and Literary Animal Studies" brings together the relevant questions from these fields and maps the historical and systematic position of animals in our culture in the form of three consecutive annual themes, designed to build up on one another while still defining their unique and independent focal points. With the first Summer School of 2012, headed "Nature, Culture, Agency," general questions as to an epistemology and methodology of CLAS took center stage. This year’s Summer School will now devote itself to the annual theme of "Political Zoology," to be followed by the annual theme of "Zoological Aesthetics" in 2014. Each year, the respective theme will be investigated in keynote lectures, workshops on animal theory and animal themes, panel discussions, artistic presentations, and open formats on project development and project networking. The Summer Schools predominately aim at providing a platform to junior researchers who are working on projects that address the relevant issues within the context of CLAS and wish to explore and develop the field of CLAS together with the workshop facilitators and the speakers – young academics who have laid the foundations for CLAS.

2. Summer School 2013: Political Zoology

Central for the 2013 Summer School on "Political Zoology" (Sep 23-Sep 28, 2013) will be a political-historical question: What are the political and social functions of animals? What about the interrelations between the politics, the poetics, and the history of animals? Animals are both ordinal signs and regulatory instruments: Tell me in which place you put which animals, and I will tell you how the culture, in which you live, works. Such systems of animal order may be traced within the framework of a political zoology. The analysis of political zoologies does not relate to a given biological, but to a pre-conceived and designed cultural order. Incorporating perspectives from the Natural Sciences, it moves in bio-cultural, respectively cultural-biological spaces. It devotes itself to theories (e.g., Evolution) as well as to institutions (e.g., the Zoo), and practices (e.g., Breeding). A substantial period of time – the Early Modern Age, Modernity, the Present – will be of historical interest. Political Zoology is to be investigated proceeding from exemplary case studies of literary, zoological, philosophical, and legal texts.

With two Keynote Lectures (Susan McHugh, Maine/USA; Tom Tyler, Oxford/UK), the 2013 Summer School will address issues of the representation of animals in our culture and question anthropocentric concepts as to their political regulatory functions. Neurobiologist Christoph Kleineidam from Constance will debate the "social decision-making" of insects and humans with Niels Werber (Siegen), literary scholar and specialist in Cultural Studies. In her performance "My Dog is my Piano," choreographer Antonia Baehr will present impossible possibilities of the cohabitation of animals and humans, discussing them with Berlin dance scholar Gabriele Brandstetter afterwards. On our excursion day, a search for animal tracks will lead participants to a prominent site of Political Zoology. Workshops will address our subject in both a theoretical and example-based fashion. In theory workshops (led by Summer School participants), we will read and discuss texts that introduce fundamental theoretical and methodological positions on Political Zoology. Running in parallel, three example-driven theme workshops will serve to deepen our insights into the subject:

A) "Anomalies/Delinquencies" (Harald Neumeyer, Antonia Eder): This workshop intends to discuss animals as figurations of deviations and exclusions. In this, both the aspect of deviation and the process of exclusion must be subjected to a two-prong differentiation – one with regard to prevailing...
norms, and another one in relation to valid laws. In the first case, therefore, deviations and exclusions will be dealt with that are characteristically determined and performed according to an anthropological, medical-psychological, and/or social order, while, in the second, attention will be given to those in the name of a religious, juridical, and/or political order.

B) "Societies/Colonies/Swarms" (Eva Johach, Martina Munk): Since its beginnings, the study of insect colonies has been closely tied to reflections on human society structures. Always busy and committed to the common weal of the swarm in its entirety, ants and bees have quite often been presented as political and moral role models, yet, in their teeming masses and "totalitarian" organizations, they have also stood as symbols for social leveling and enforced uniformity. The workshop will trace the paradigm of the insect colony in its utopian and dystopian implications from the 18th century up to the advent of the swarm intelligence in recent years.

C) "Hunt/Sovereignty/Dominion" (Roland Borgards, Alexander Kling): In the hunt, two authority relations intersect: first, the one between human and animal, and second, the one between governing bodies and their subjects. The workshop will examine the hunt as a cultural practice, regarding its ambivalent function for the formation of human and non-human collectives and for the legitimization of political orders. Starting points for workshop discussions will be literary texts, treatises on hunting, historical accounts of hunting practices, and hunting pictures, from the Early Modern Period into Modernity.

Looking forward to meeting with junior researchers from a variety of disciplines and countries, we envision the Summer School as a laboratory for our research area. There will be opportunities to present and discuss personal projects, as well as spaces for networking and development.

3. Application

33 fully-funded scholarships, covering travel expenses as well as accommodation, are available for the Summer School of 2013. Young academics (advanced students, doctoral candidates and post-docs) from all relevant fields entertaining projects of their own in CLAS are requested to submit a two-page Letter of Motivation, outlining both their general interest in CLAS (research connections, personal projects) and their specific interest in the workshop selected (first choice). The application must also include the completed application form, available for download on our website (see below), where the program for the 2013 Summer School may also be found. Please do not send any other documents or materials! Applications (via e-mail only) may be submitted until May 15. Invitations will be sent out in early June. Attendance of the first Summer School in 2012 does not constitute a precondition for a successful application. We seek to attract an interdisciplinarily and internationally oriented field of participants. Language skills (at least passive) in both German and English are required. In the interest of intensive collaboration, scholarships can only be awarded to applicants who will be resident in Würzburg for the entire duration of the 2013 Summer School.

Deadline for applications: May 15, 2013. Please e-mail to: netzwerk-clas@germanistik.uni-wuerzburg.de

Application form, program, and further information may be found at: www.summerschool-clas.de

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