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HEIDELBERG
CENTER FOR
IBERO-AMERICAN
STUDIES



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

M.A. Communication and Society in Ibero-America HCIAS-Kursangebot Sommersemester 2023

1. Fundamental Competencies

Seminar: Crises and Transformations: Social Science Debates across World Regions

Prof. Dr. Renata Motta & Jun.-Prof. Dr. Rosa Lehmann

The social sciences have been called for a stronger role in academic and political debates on multiple crises that threatens our civilization and the much needed transition to alternative forms of inhabiting the planet. The goal of the seminar is threefold: a) to discuss various crises diagnostics (crisis of democracy, climate crisis, crisis of capitalism, care crisis, civilizational crisis); b) to look at both discourses surrounding crises and transformation as well as political strategies and societal practices to confront it; and c) to set in dialogue key schools of thought from the Global North, in particular, German debates on socioecological transformation, and the Global South, in particular Latin American decolonial debates on pluriversal alternatives. Although there is enough research and knowledge about crises and transformations, there is a need to deepen dialogues between world regions to address the challenges of our times.

Vorlesung: Environment and Development in Ibero-America

Jun.-Prof. Dr. Rosa Lehmann

The nexus between development and environment has become an integral part of public and academic debates. This is largely due to environmental movements in different parts of the world, to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), launched by the United Nations in 2015, as well as to growing discussions on the impacts of climate change on semi-/peripheral countries, on historical debts related to industrialization and CO₂-emissions. In the meantime, development policies launched by national governments and international organizations alike integrate social, economic, and ecological goals in their agendas, and various political actors relate positively to sustainable development and a holistic understanding of sustainability to underscore claims for social inclusion, political participation, and environmental protection. However, critical research and debates problematize the term (sustainable) 'development' itself for its Eurocentric bias. Further, they question

the assumption that 'development', as it is understood since decades, can solve the contradictions inherent to the capitalist mode of production, that is the contradiction between the depletion of resources and sinks, and the need for economic growth to guarantee current forms of social and political inclusion of different social groups. Additionally, scholarly work has pointed to the importance of the division between dependent and independent countries for the global economy which reproduces multiple inequalities across scales.

In the lecture, we will depart from engaging with a theoretical controversy related to 'development', touching modernization and dependency as well as post-development and decolonial theories. We discuss various diagnosis related to the ecological crisis, the idea of sustainable development, as well as recent strategies for ecological modernization and alternative visions for a socioecological change. For the theoretical debates as well as strategies and controversies we will take into account inputs from actors from the Global South, in particular from Latin America, as well as empirical examples from the region to illustrate topics covered in the seminar.

Seminar: Party Competition and Voting Behaviour in Latin America

Jun.-Prof. Dr. Alejandro Ecker

This course introduces students to empirical research questions in the field of individual voting behaviour and party competition. It explores important concepts in comparative politics from the perspective of Latin America and confront students with prevalent challenges in quantitative empirical-analytical research.

Based on selected recent contributions students examine 1) important electoral institutions in Latin America (e.g., political parties and electoral systems). Students also learn 2) about influential models of voting behaviour and the role of class, gender, and corruption in Latin America. Other key aspects that are discussed in the seminar include 3) the characteristic features of Latin American party systems and the dynamics of party competition.

Throughout the course, students are introduced to the relevant data sources of voting behaviour and party competition in Latin America, providing them with plenty of opportunities to conduct their own preliminary analyses and develop first ideas for their term paper. These include the Americas Barometer, the Latinobarómetro, the PREPPS, the PELA, and the MARPOR data.

By the end of the course, students will have improved their knowledge and skills in the areas of research design, causal inference, and statistical analysis. They will also apply their newly acquired insights through small exercises and hands-on research.

To take full advantage of this course, students should have had some prior exposure to important research questions in the field of comparative politics. They should also have a solid understanding of basic statistical methods and a strong interest both in

the subject matter and empirical-analytical research. Finally, they should be comfortable with reading academic publications in English.

2. Methodological Skills

HCIAS Master's Degree Lecture Series: Approaches, Methods, and Resources in Ibero-American Studies

The HCIAS-Master's Degree Lecture Series presents research projects on, in, and with Ibero-America from diverse perspectives in the fields of the Humanities and Social Sciences. This series aims to provide an overview of current state of the art research and innovative inquiries on issues of particular relevance to Ibero-American societies, setting a special focus on methodological approaches. The lecture series includes speakers from the Heidelberg Center for Ibero-American Studies (HCIAS) as well as from international partner universities and research institutions.

The HCIAS-Master's Degree Lecture Series is open to all interested students, doctoral candidates, and researchers of Heidelberg University.

3. Advanced Competencies

Seminar: Comunicación y Sociedad en Iberoamérica

Prof. Dr. Francisco Moreno-Fernández

El seminario presenta los fundamentos de los procesos comunicativos a partir de la realidad social iberoamericana. La comunicación se descompone en sus diferentes factores, que se interpretan desde una perspectiva sociocognitiva. Los contextos iberoamericanos sirven de marco para comprender cómo interviene cada factor de la comunicación y cómo contribuyen a su adecuación y eficacia. El conocimiento sobre cómo funciona cada factor y sobre cómo todos ellos interactúan entre sí contribuye a una mayor comprensión y a un mejor dominio de las técnicas comunicativas, especialmente en dominios públicos.

Seminar: Cultural Industry and Digital Media Spaces in the Americas

Dr. Héctor Álvarez Mella

The course aims to reflect on the conditions for cultural creation, consumption and participation in the Spanish-speaking Americas against the backdrop of digitalization and globalization. After an overview of the history of the principal cultural fields in the region, the course will present concepts and methods in order to analyze the emersion of cultural spaces from the global, national and local perspective.

By selecting different case studies, the course will critically discuss the tensions between concepts such as identity, hybridity, authenticity, integration, heritage, hegemony and periphery in the context of communication dynamics. Based on different materials from cultural statistics to current cultural manifestations in the fields literature, music, radio, cinema and television, the discussions will examine the conditions for global and local circulation of cultural manifestations, the dialectic of representation and invisibility, the processes of consumption, participation and exclusion, and the impact of platform capitalism and the mediatization of everyday life.

Seminar: Gender Studies: Lessons from Latin American and Decolonial Feminisms

Prof. Dr. Renata Motta

The interlinkages between the coloniality of power and the coloniality of gender (Maria Lugones) constitute one of the main contributions of decolonial feminist theories to Gender Studies. Contemporary Latin American feminisms combine a growing and vibrant mobilization of online and street activism with thought-provoking concepts and prolific theory-building. Communication dynamics across varied streams of feminisms attest to the influence of Latin American and decolonial debates to Gender Studies and activism today. The seminar first offers an introduction in key theories and concepts within Gender Studies and situate important works from Latin American scholars to Gender Studies. In a second part, it discusses contemporary gender and feminist theories from Latin America, as well as examples of feminist activism from the region and explore how these contribute to Gender Studies and to societal gender dynamics more broadly.

Seminar: Media effects and Ibero-America

Jun.-Prof. Dr. Pablo Porten-Cheé

Because of individual limitations, most information about the world outside is assumed to be acquired through the media (Luhmann, 1996). Thus, many of our daily decisions and behaviors may be shaped by what we receive from them. This seminar introduces selected media effects approaches and, thus, into central aspects of communication science. In order to take into account the importance of contexts in research and the changing media system, the seminar selectively deals with media effects in Ibero-America on the one hand and with the impact of digital media content on the other. The seminar helps students understand how media affect our attitudes and behaviors, particularly concerning societal and political issues.

Seminar: Migration, Border Regimes and Language Identity

Human migration, its cultural and linguistic impact and the systems of governance that either impede or prompt such movements are among the most salient conflicts of our time. Past and present migrations from Africa and Asia have combined Latin American and Caribbean migrations across the hemisphere creating new opportunities for understanding how and why humans move and impede the movement of others while producing linguistic, cultural and identity transformations in the spaces where they transit or settle temporarily or permanently. This course examines diverse theories, methodologies, and the most relevant current debates regarding human migration from an interdisciplinary and transnational approach. Students will become familiar with different discipline-based theories and methodologies to investigate human migration and central analytical concepts in migration studies. In addition to canonical and alternative readings from sociology, anthropology, history, demography, socio-legal studies, human geography, sociolinguistics and Latino Studies, throughout the course, we will also examine qualitative and quantitative approaches to the study of this complex and multi-dimensional phenomena. By studying concrete cases from the Americas, the most relevant current debates regarding the cultural and socio-linguistics transformations produced by human migration and the ways through which heterogeneous border regimes operate across the continent to control migrants' mobilities will also be covered and discussed.

Seminar: Transición, Agro-ecología y creatividad: nuevos imaginarios para el cambio social - Transition, Agrarökologie und Kreativität: neue Vorstellungswelten für den sozialen Wandel

PD Dr. Fernando Nina Rada

El tema de la transición está al orden del día. ¿Cuál es el rol de la alimentación y la agricultura?

La vulnerabilidad del sistema agroalimentario dominante se ha profundizado con las múltiples crisis que se refuerzan mutuamente en el siglo XXI, como el cambio climático, el ascenso de las nuevas derechas, las guerras y, más recientemente, la pandemia de Covid-19. El aumento del hambre -en un mundo donde la producción existente sería suficiente si no fuera por cuestiones de distribución y los impactos ambientales de la agricultura comercial- deja cada vez más claro que el desafío no es productivo o tecnológico, sino que lo que está en juego es un cambio social. Ya se sabe mucho sobre las causas y efectos de la crisis climática y otras crisis, y sin embargo, la transición no se realiza. Más que información para el cambio, también es necesario visibilizar prácticas y saberes basados en relaciones respetuosas entre sociedad-naturaleza y cultivar nuevos imaginarios para futuros agrarios y alimenticios más justos y ecológicos.

Este curso quiere volver la vista a prácticas prometedoras de futuro (la agroecología) que vienen de un mundo desdeñado (el campo) y de sus gentes menospreciadas (Pueblos Originarios y campesinos).

Este curso es una suerte de diálogo creativo entre los estudiantes de agroecología y los estudiantes de literatura y sociología y de las humanidades en general, que quieren imaginar y construir nuevos mundos.

4. Key Transversal Skills

Seminar: Applying qualitative methods: The challenges of the ethnographic practice

Jun.-Prof. Dr. Yaatsil Guevara González

Übung: Brazilian cinema: society and culture / Cinema brasileiro: sociedade e cultura

Marília Pinheiro Pereira, M.A.

This course aims to present, from cultural aspects, current issues that affect, to some extent, a large part of society. As a main didactic instrument, Brazilian cinema will illustrate contents that address psychological, philosophical, social and political subject, stimulating debate and knowledge of Brazilian culture from the seventh art, since films reconstruct, to a certain extent, a reality. The goal of the course is to promote discussions that broaden the range of knowledge about various social issues, and establish discussions in the light of research developed by the students. The methodology of the course intends to use translinguism as a strategic way for all the available plurilinguistic repertoire to be used to express ideas, opinions and feelings, bringing possibilities of reflection and learning. As course evaluation, the students will have to present an analysis of one of the issues discussed, correlating it to their ongoing research.

Übung: Competência intercultural a partir da cultura brasileira / Intercultural competence from the Brazilian culture

Marília Pinheiro Pereira, M.A.

This course aims to develop intercultural competence in the Portuguese language, taking into account effective communication with people from other cultures, covering affective, cognitive, behavioral and social skills. Thus, the objective of this course is to recognize the cultural differences between Brazil and other countries, especially

European and Ibero-American countries; respect and understand that there is no better or worse culture, but different ways of acting in the world, finding points of contact where cultural differences can be integrated and take advantage of the benefits of each culture. Cultural differences directly influence personal and work relationships, since each culture deals with its stories and emotions differently, understanding these differences can contribute to the reconstruction of a new way of seeing the world, creating a space in which realities that did not exist before, can give life to the realization of new projects. The methodology to develop this competence will be through working with literary works, with Brazilian popular music, with audiovisual texts, in addition to the support of the “Português Tropical” coursebook, among other possibilities that discuss Brazilian culture in different aspects. Thus, this course should enable experiences of new ways of seeing the world, recognizing different realities, given that understanding other habits and how to act in other cultures is a fundamental skill for anyone who wants to succeed in a globalized world.

Übung: Digital disinformation research and Ibero-America

Jun.-Prof. Dr. Pablo Porten-Cheé

The Covid pandemic has demonstrated an increased public debate about so-called ‘fake news’. As disinformation can harm individual-level behavior and society-level decisions based on false premises, a comprehensive understanding of what ‘fake news’ is essential. This seminar first aims to advance the understanding of this communication phenomenon from the perspective of communication science. The seminar secondly wants to introduce practical research on digital disinformation. Therefore, after an introduction phase, the students work together on self-derived questions about disinformation in Ibero-America. In this second phase, the practical will link with the contents of the Master seminar “Communication and public spheres in Ibero-America” and will take into consideration selected theoretical approaches to understand the features and effects of disinformation (e.g., narratives, news values) aiming to identify them. Therefore, students will extensively practice defining appropriate categories for quantitative content analysis. The practical helps students to foster interest in collecting and analyzing their own media content data to study questions of communication research in Ibero-American digital media environments.

Übung: HCIAS Writing Workshop

Prof. Dr. Renata Motta

Seminar: Open Science and Replication

Jun.-Prof. Dr. Alejandro Ecker

This course introduces students to the concepts of replication and open science in the social sciences. It promotes the active learning of quantitative research skills and complements standard courses on quantitative methods by replicating published studies on important research questions in political science, economics and communication research on Latin America. Students benefit from step-by-step instructions how to conduct quantitative research, they get a first-hand perspective on the entire research inquiry cycle, and actively contribute to the process of knowledge accumulation. To this end, students work on a replication project.

The main learning outcome is improving participants' quantitative literacy, which is ensured by three complementary measures. First, replication allows to learn from prominent scholars as students follow them step-by-step in designing and conducting a quantitative study. Second, replication gives participants a more realistic perspective of the research process, involving numerous practical problems that are solved behind the scenes and cannot be observed in a published paper. Third, students can form a vital link in the replication chain, contributing to the accumulation of knowledge in a discipline by testing the robustness of important empirical findings.

This course is divided into four parts. An introductory section discusses the concepts and practice of replication and open science against the backdrop of the “replication crisis” in many scientific fields. The second part discusses important criteria for choosing a study for replication and supports students in picking a published article for their replication project. Subsequently, the participants prepare and execute their replication projects. Specifically, they access and investigate the original data, perform the actual replication analysis and add analytical value to the original study by performing additional analyses. In the fourth and final part, students summarise the results of their replication analysis and assess to what extent they were able to replicate the results of the published article.

To take full advantage of this course, students should have a solid understanding of quantitative methods and basic knowledge of multivariate analyses including linear (OLS) and ideally non-linear models (logit, probit). Extensive support for students working with R or Stata will be provided by the instructor. Finally, participants should be comfortable with reading academic publications in English.

Seminar: Gestión de la comunicación social e intercultural

Prof. Dr. Óscar Loureda Lamas

Vanesa Rodríguez Tembrás, M.A.

El curso ofrece los fundamentos teóricos y las aplicaciones prácticas de la comunicación social e intercultural. El objetivo del curso es entender cómo se

gestiona la comunicación en la sociedad actual y qué profesiones están asociadas a la comunicación social e intercultural. Su concepción metódico-didáctica promueve el perfil de investigación de los estudiantes mediante la realización de un proyecto final. Se les enseñará a desarrollar métodos de investigación y estrategias de resolución de problemas en un entorno virtual colaborativo.

Practical: Poverty and inequality in Latin America

Latin America is one of the most unequal regions in the world, and for this reason, despite the fact that most of the countries are upper middle-income, almost one third of its population (201 millions) is poor and 82 millions are extremely poor. The course will first present the definitions and methods for measuring poverty and inequality, and then provide a quantification of the data and the main explanatory factors for the persistence of these phenomena and their socio-economic implications. Finally, it addresses the debate on the policies needed to tackle these problems.

5. Graduation Modules

HCIAS Master's Degree Colloquium

Prof. Dr. Renata Motta
