

Call for Papers

Stanford–Leuphana Summer Academy

Open to PhD Candidates

Date: June 20 – 24, 2022

Location: Stanford Berlin, Haus Cramer, Pacelliallee 18, 14195 Berlin

Application Deadline: March 1, 2022

General information

The Stanford-Leuphana Summer Academy addresses the intersection between individual humanities disciplines and studies of media and technology from historical, systematic, and methodological perspectives. As we live in a time when new technologies are emerging at an increasingly rapid pace, the Academy seeks to address vital questions about how different media can drive political and social change, but it also inquires into the assumptions and values that produce technological artifacts. Media studies and media theory intersect with various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences that treat the transmission of information, the formation of social networks, and the embodiment of knowledge in technological artifacts. Therefore, the Academy will bring together faculty and students from various branches of the humanities and social sciences to think about how »mediality« permeates these disciplines in distinct ways; we will approach these issues not only from a robustly interdisciplinary vantage but also by way of comparative cultural and historical perspectives. In this way, the Academy will contribute to our understanding of the fundamental ways that forms of media and technological mediation inform disciplinary knowledge across the humanities, as well as the ways that these disciplinary knowledge formations are an essential precondition to any serious thinking about mediality.

2022 TOPIC: “Scale”

The goal of the Summer Academy is to engage in a cross-disciplinary dialogue about notions, practices and technologies of scale and scalability, and of models and strategies of dealing with scaling problems in relation to different phenomena, epistemologies, and disciplines. How are scale and scalability imagined, conceptualized and effected? How are knowledge and things made scalable? What are the respective scaling problems? When did they occur historically? And how did and do they get dealt with or changed?

There is often an unbridgeable gap between the big and the small. Although there is usually a scale by means of which large and small phenomena can be compared by measuring and counting, considerable difficulties arise as soon as large things must be reduced, and small things enlarged. Then it becomes apparent that different laws prevail in the large and in the small (in the macro, the meso and the micro, to reference a ready-made tri-partite scale of Western thought). In the act of enlarging and reducing, leaps from quantity to quality take place, which in theory and practice let 'the whole' slip away. Often it is not even possible to predict when and where such upheavals will occur, where theories will suddenly lose their explanatory power and applications will fail to function. Circumstances of this kind are known as "scaling problems," which arise when a system is enlarged or reduced in size. A successful change in scale cannot be achieved by just enlarging or reducing all parts in size. Moreover, practices and technologies of frictionless scalability (and their failures) can have damaging environmental, political, economic and sociocultural consequences.

The Summer Academy invites papers and projects that historically, empirically and conceptually engage with scale, scalability and scaling problems. The Academy's basic hypothesis is that large and small phenomena assert their respective stubbornness, are not easily convertible into each other, and

therefore call for different theories, concepts, and methods. Thus, scaling problems are a critique of reductionism: they point out that the properties of the large cannot be assumed from the knowledge of the small and that the properties of the small cannot be deduced from the knowledge of the large. Learning to deal with such symmetry breaks, to particularize theories and to limit the validity of statements is not only one of the central challenges of various disciplines but has also repeatedly produced longings for holistic solutions and approaches.

Inquiries into scale, scalability and scaling problems can for instance address one of the following concerns: First, there is a *systematic* focus on how different sciences (history, literary studies, art history, sociology, but also computer science, physics, law, geography and economics) conceptualize scale and deal with their respective scaling problems. Second, there is a *historical* focus on the question of when and how scaling and its problems became virulent in different fields and disciplines. Third, there is a *methodological* focus on how scales are developed and controlled differently (consider micro/macro histories, economies of scale, social theory's micro/meso/macro approaches, peripheral media and global media infrastructures, or the scales of weather and climate, cell and organism, quantum physics and mechanics). And fourth, the concepts, histories and methods of scaling, its conditions and effects, are entangled with a *politics of scale*.

Core faculty

1. Timon Beyes (Sociology of Organisation and Culture, Leuphana)
2. Shane Denson (Film and Media Studies, Stanford)
3. Marisa Galvez (French, Italian, and German Studies, Stanford)
4. Melissa Gregg (Cultural Studies, Senior Principal Engineer, Intel)
5. Karla Oeler (Film and Media Studies, Stanford)
6. Claus Pias (History and Epistemology of Media, Leuphana)
7. Fred Turner (Communication, Stanford)
8. Mike Ananny (Communication and Journalism, USC)

Guest speaker: Kate Crawford (NYU)

Application

All applications from doctoral candidates must be submitted electronically in PDF format. Please submit your CV (1-2 pages) along with a 500-word abstract of your topic, and a short letter of intent explaining why you would like to attend this Summer Academy.

Please use the following naming convention for your application files: Lastname_CV.pdf, Lastname_Abstract.pdf, Lastname_Letter_of_Intent.pdf.

Please email your applications by March 1, 2022 to mgalvez@stanford.edu and timon.beyes@leuphana.de

The deadline for applications for the summer school is **March 1, 2022**. All applicants will be informed about the selection of participants by end of March 2022. The working language of the Summer Academy will be English. The organizers will cover travel (economy) and accommodation costs for the time of the summer school. No additional fees will be charged.

Contact

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Claus Pias (pias@leuphana.de)