

18. Weiterbildungsseminar der Gesellschaft für das Studium britischer Kulturen

Assessing Illness and Health through Cultural Studies



"Anenurin Bevan, Minister of Health, on the first day of the National Health Service, 5 July 1948 at Park Hospital, Davyhulme", University of Liverpool Faculty of Health & Life Sciences, retrieved from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/liverpoolhls/14465908720/>.

9–10 MAY 2025
UNIVERSITY OF HAMBURG
INSTITUTE OF ENGLISH AND
AMERICAN STUDIES
PHILOSOPHENTURM
VON-MELLE-PARK 6, 20146 HAMBURG

ORGANISERS

JPROF. DR. SANDRA DINTER
PD DR. NATALIE ROXBURGH

Assessing Illness and Health through Cultural Studies

Questions of sickness and wellness, illness and health, typically get defined as oppositions within medical fields of specialisation, whose descriptions as well as prescriptions are anchored in the empirical sciences. Through medical/health humanities and disability studies, these distinctions have become more complex, as scholars have shown that health and illness depend on external factors such as class, gender, race, infrastructure, cultural attitudes, economics, and so on. These fields approach illness and health alongside the political, economic, and cultural systems in which medical subjects find themselves. Events of the past ten years in Britain, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the struggle of the NHS through austerity politics, have made such perspectives all the more insightful for and relevant to cultural studies. An interest in assessing medicine, health and illness along cultural lines is also reflected in contemporary British popular culture, in recent texts such as *Call the Midwife* (BBC, 2013-present), *It's a Sin* (Channel 4, 2021), *This is Going to Hurt* (BBC, 2022), and *Breathtaking* (ITV, 2024).

Our *Weiterbildungsseminar* for early career researchers invites a dialogue on assessing concepts of health and illness in the past and present through cultural studies frameworks. We will discuss current research projects situated at the nexus of cultural studies and the medical/health humanities and explore classroom practices and experiences in this context. One career-development panel will also introduce participants to funding opportunities for postdocs.

Registration and Financial Support

The workshop takes place in person from 9 to 10 May 2025 in the “Philosophenturm” at the University of Hamburg (Von-Melle-Park 6, 20146 Hamburg). There is no conference fee, but participants are kindly asked to organise their own travel and accommodation. For planning purposes, please register for the event by sending an email to sandra.dinter@uni-hamburg.de and natalie.roxburgh@uni-hamburg.de by 1 April 2025.

If you are kept from joining the event by funding issues, you can hand in an informal application for funding to both the chair and the treasurer of the German Association for the Study of British Cultures: <https://www.britcult.de/>.

Programme - Assessing Illness and Health through Cultural Studies

Friday, 9 May 2025: Historical Perspectives

12.30-1.00 Registration and Coffee

1.00-1.30 Welcome and Opening Remarks

1.30-2.30 “The Medical Humanities and British Cultural Studies: Key Convergences”
Natalie Roxburgh (Hamburg), in consultation with Jennifer S. Henke (Bonn)

2.30-3.00 Coffee Break

3.00-4.00 “Teaching Early Modern Melancholy”
Susanne Rupp (Hamburg)

4.00-4.30 Coffee Break

4.30-5.45 **Current Research in the Medical/Health Humanities**
“Beauty Versus Health: The Aesthetics of Tuberculosis in Anglophone Literature of the 19th and 21st Centuries” - Lilli Dahlke, Alina Scheller, Kevin Christopher Wolf (Hamburg)
“The Hidden Dread: Conceptions of Non-Reproduction in the Long Nineteenth Century” - Nina Voigt (Bremen)
“Identity, Disorder, or Disability? Mapping Neurodivergence in Cultural Studies: Between Medical Humanities and Disability Studies” - Dilâra Yilmaz (Kiel)
“B.I.D.: Temporal Coordination and Medical Practice” - Johannes Schlegel (Hamburg)

7.00 Dinner (self-paid)

Saturday, 10 May 2025: Contemporary Texts and Contexts

9.00-10.00 “The NHS, Health and Illness in Contemporary British TV Series”
Sandra Dinter (Hamburg)

10.00-10.15 Comfort Break

10.15-11.15 “‘I Feel Their Pain’: Researching the Mental Health Discourses of Online Literary Communities”
Hannah Pardey (Düsseldorf)

11.15-11.45 Coffee Break

11.45-1.00 “Attaining Funding as a Postdoc: Potentials and Experiences”
Carolin Gebauer (Wuppertal) and Stefanie John (Braunschweig)

1.00-1.15 Workshop-wrap-up, Evaluation & Feedback
