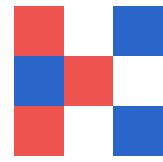


**Universität
Rostock**



Traditio et Innovatio



BritCult

**Weiterbildungsseminar der Universität Rostock und
der Gesellschaft für das Studium britischer Kulturen**

Cultural Studies and the Blue Humanities



**8.-9. May 2025
University of Rostock
Institute for English and American Studies**

**Organisers
Hanne Bolze
Madeline Becker**

**Venue:
Internationales Begegnungszentrum
Bergstraße 7a
18057 Rostock**

Cultural Studies and the Blue Humanities

The Blue Humanities—a term coined by Steve Mentz in 2009—have emerged as a rapidly growing interdisciplinary field dedicated to exploring the cultural, historical, and literary relationships between humans and water. Mentz describes the Blue Humanities as “a form of literary and cultural criticism that puts water at the centre” (2024, 24). Aquatic environments of inquiry include oceans and rivers as well as hybrid spaces such as coastlines, bogs, and marshes. Such environments have played crucial roles in shaping histories of colonialism, slavery, migration, and global trade; they have informed cultural conceptions of territory and the nation-state; and are affected by contemporary challenges such as climate change, rising sea levels, pollution, and overfishing.

The WBS will explore the role and contribution of Cultural Studies to the Blue Humanities. It will introduce participants to current research on watery spaces and their cultural meanings. A particular focus on Great Britain offers a productive point of departure. Surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, Great Britain’s insular geography played a key role in facilitating colonial expansion and maritime trade, while also contributing to a national self-understanding shaped by both connection and separation from continental Europe; the Irish Sea has functioned as a corridor of Irish migration to Britain; water features prominently in contemporary British cultural imaginaries of climate crisis and post-apocalyptic futures, where flooding and submersion figure as recurring anxieties.

Throughout the workshop, participants will engage with water as an object of study as well as a method and mode of thinking. Interactive sessions will include creative writing workshops that explore aquatic perspectives and imaginaries, as well as interdisciplinary exchanges with scholars from non-humanities fields. Participants will have the opportunity to present and discuss ongoing research, exchange ideas about water-related crises and their cultural implications, and attend a presentation on copyright and research practices.

Registration

The workshop will take place in person in Rostock from 8 to 9 May 2026. There is no participation fee. Please register for the workshop by sending an e-mail to hanne.bolze@uni-rostock.de and madeline.becker@uni-rostock.de by 1 April 2026.

We advise you to book a hotel at your earliest convenience, since Rostock is visited by many tourists in the warmer months. If you need hotel recommendations, please reach out to us.

If you have funding issues, you can apply for funding by handing in an informal application to the chair and treasurer of the German Association for the Study of British Cultures.

Programme

Friday, 8 May 2026

13.00-13:30 Welcome and Opening Remarks

13:30-15:00 Workshop

“Water as Method: Thinking Towards Blue Cultural Studies” (Jennifer Leetsch)

15:00-15:30 Coffee Break

15:30-16:30 Roundtable “Ozean, Wissenschaft, Gesellschaft” [in German]

Moderation: Gesa Mackenthun

Teilnehmende: Karsten Wiedmann (Systemingenieur bei Innomar), Marcel Bradtmöller (Archäologe an der Universität Rostock), Hendrik Schubert (Ökologe an der Universität Rostock), Moritz Langhinrichs (Seelotse der Lotsenbrüderschaft Wismar, Rostock, Stralsund, ehem. Kapitän des Forschungsschiffes Polarstern), Madeline Becker (Kulturwissenschaftlerin an der Universität Rostock)

16:30-16:45 Coffee Break

16:45-17:45 Workshop “Message in a Bottle – Creative Writing Strategies for the Blue Humanities” (Andrea Zittlau)

19:00 Dinner (Self-Paid)

Saturday, 9 May 2026

9:00-10:00 Current Research in the Blue Humanities I

“Queer Ecologies/Blue Humanities” (Jacqueline Koshorst)

“A Telling of Egypt’s River’: Rivers as Anti-Colonial Facilitators in *A History of Water in the Middle East*” (Charlotte Manzella)

10:00-10:15 Coffee Break

10:15-11:45 Current Research in the Blue Humanities II

“TBA” (Kylie Crane)

“Caring, Cultivating, Culturing the Land: Gendered Landscape in Popular Irish Media and Imagination” (Victoria Allen)

“Mediations of Water in Contemporary Picturebooks: Critical Literacy Practices in the Blue Humanities” (Hanne Bolze)

11:45-12:00 Coffee Break

12:00-13:00 “Copyright und Publizieren: Ein Überblick zur Verwendung von urheberrechtlich geschützten Materialien” (Fabian Rack, FIZ Karlsruhe)

13:00-13:15 Closing Remarks