



University of St. Gallen

Center for Governance
and Culture in Europe

Universität St. Gallen

School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Center for Governance and Culture in
Europe

Audio-visual capturing of dynamics of place attachment and identity in Central and Eastern Europe.

Summer school on documentary filmmaking in social sciences

Location: Bucharest, Romania

Date and time: 8th September to 15th September 2024

Organisers: Center for Governance and Culture in Europe, University of St. Gallen; New Europe College; UNATC – National University of Theatre and Cinematography names after I.L. Caragiale; FORTHEM Diversity and Migration Lab UO; University of Opole; HUN-REN RCAES Geographical Institute; Moving.Lab.

Project description

The one-week-long, on-site summer school is dedicated to exploring the potential of documentary filmmaking for social science research and dissemination. It offers an intensive, practice-based learning process which will acquaint the participants with audio-visual research methods and collaborative ethnographic filmmaking.

Audiovisual media and the attention to sensoriality help overcome text-centric approaches in research by including sound, rhythm, composition, performance, texture and nonverbal communication, which can reveal a knowledge arguably different to text: ways of dwelling concern bodily perceptions in space, emotions, and sensory experience which may all be better represented making use of the unique tools offered by working with film. Videography moreover allows for establishing an alternative communication platform during the fieldwork, later with the audience, and with time as a (re)presentation of the historical, ideological period it belongs to. Visual methods are one of the possible instruments to overcome obstacles related to one-dimensional mono-rhetorical narratives, as they can bring back “muted” histories.

Bucharest

The architecture of Bucharest, Romania’s capital city, bears witness to its turbulent history over the past few centuries. The city has been growing since the mid-nineteenth century, as the capital of modern Romania. The city centre boasts both grandiose buildings imitating Western architectural trends and those specific to the Neo-Romanian style, the result of attempts to define a specific national Romanian architectural style. At the same time, the Jewish and Armenian quarters illustrate the cosmopolitan character of the city. Bucharest, which prides itself on being the “Paris of the East”, was hit hard by natural disasters, such as the earthquakes of 1940 and 1977, and by military and political crises.

Beyond the bombing of the Second World War, it was the Communist regime that transformed the urban structure of Bucharest, which grew at an accelerated pace as an industrial centre. The need for workers' housing brought with it several challenges, but also several experiments. In the 1970s and 1980s, communist leader Nicolae Ceaușescu's plan to systematise the central part of Bucharest resulted in the destruction of an entire district (Uranus-Izvor) to make way for the modernist neoclassical People's Palace (now the seat of the Romanian Parliament). Bucharest is a fascinating urban and

architectural patchwork, with a central area where mediaeval and pre-modern churches and Belle Epoque residences coexist with apartment blocks and trendy post-communist corporate offices.

In addition to teaching filmmaking in practice, the mission of this summer school is to employ audiovisual methods to bring to light the social and historical aspects of the everyday experience of a city with a multifaceted memory. Doing so from the perspective of architecture and its users, the spotlight shows how city dwellers and those in power shape, re-purpose and re-define Bucharest micro-spaces.

What do we offer?

During one-week students will get acquainted with some aspects of the theory and practice of documentary filmmaking, and importantly, they can test/use the new skill during summer school. The main topics covered:

1. the theoretical background of film in social sciences
2. a brief introduction to "Language of Cinema" (the storytelling, shots, takes (the technical and artistic side) and film editing, music/sound, time/rhythm, colours)
3. the practice of production:
 - from planning the project to arriving at the site
 - from shooting until the premiere

Students will work in small groups and develop their own project with 5-10 minutes long audiovisual material. The final product will be screened in a public event on 15th September 2024, followed by a discussion with the audience.

Deadlines

Proposals in English should be submitted by e-mail to 2022spotlight@gmail.com by 30th April 2024. Participants will be notified of the selection results by 15th May 2024.

Eligibility

Who can apply?

Masters' and PhD students from Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

What to submit?

- CV (1 page).
- a motivation letter, explaining (1) what drives your interest in participating in the summer school, (2) where (if) you feel rooted and what your origins mean to you (max. 600 words).

Selection criteria

No previous experience in movie production is required. Preference will be given to students who have pursued studies and/or research on ethnic/linguistic/symbolic boundaries, place attachment and identity, transculturality, and urban studies.

For selected applicants, the cost of participation (accommodation and a contribution to travel costs) will be covered by organisers.

