

II SPOTLIGHT Seminar

More-than-humans in the semi-peripheries
A SPOTLIGHT Summer School seminar on
ways of seeing and being-seen-as other species

Sept 29, 2025, Bucharest, Romania

Venue: Cinetic, UNATC (I. L. Caragiale National University of Theatre and Film)

Organizers UNATC & University of Opole

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Background

SPOTLIGHT Summer School will be held in Bucharest¹ again, funded by the University of St. Gallen and co-hosted by New Europe College and UNATC (I. L. Caragiale National University of Theatre and Film) on 21 - 28 September 2025. This is the fourth edition of SPOTLIGHT, which deals with audiovisual capturing of social phenomena in urban spaces in Central and Eastern Europe, such as identity of place (Opole, PL in 2022), migration and diversity (Józsefváros, Budapest, HU in 2023) and architecture and city dwelling (Bucharest, RO in 2024) or more-than-human relations (Bucharest, 2025). Co-organized interdisciplinarily between visual anthropology, human geography, sociology and documentary filmmaking, it offers an immersive experience for the participating students from all over Europe.

For the second time, the SPOTLIGHT Summer School will conclude with a **conceptual seminar** held at UNATC on Monday, September 29, 2025. We plan to publish an edited volume as a result of the SPOTLIGHT Seminars. The deadline for submitting chapters is 3rd November 2025.

Partners



University
of St. Gallen



New Europe
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Free University
of Bozen-Bolzano



University
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UNESCO Chair in Interculturality,
Good Governance and Sustainable
Development, University of Bucharest



Catedra UNESCO pentru Intercultural
Bună Guvernare și Dezvoltare Dură
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¹ SPOTLIGHT. Audiovisual capturing of dynamics of place attachment and identity in Central and Eastern Europe. Summer school on documentary filmmaking in social sciences

Call for Papers: More-than-humans in the semi-peripheries. On ways of seeing and being-seen-as other species

Semiperipheral status of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) creates path dependencies and renders knowledge produced in the region in an epistemologically handicapped position, further marginalizing the vulnerable voices, and especially those whose intersectionalities systematically drag them away from public vision or recognition. If humans of the non-dominant genders, races, ethnicities or classes are out of sight, then the non-human actors tend to be rendered invisible, or acutely misrepresented. Similar arguments and distinctions - nature vs culture, humanity vs animality - have been used to dominate others - both human and non-human (Mullin 1999) and can be said to have contributed to the climate crises we find ourselves in (De Castro and Danowski 2018). Other species' relationships to humans, the ultimately dominant group is defined by neglect, coercion or exploitation. Also, their presence is often romanticized or aestheticized, depriving them of agency, let alone dignity.

Scholars argue for a transformative approach to urban studies that incorporates multispecies justice, which acknowledges the rights and needs of both human and non-human residents in the city (Wang 2024). The right to the city, traditionally focused on human residents, is also being reevaluated through a multispecies lens. Current research seeks to explore non-human placemaking in cities enabling the planning of multispecies-friendly urban policies (Van Patter 2022) and address the rights of non-human urban residents, advocating for their access to urban spaces (Singhe 2022).

Some multispecies encounters are undesirable, creating unintended, feral (Tsing 2015) effects of human activity - colonialism, segregation, hyper-inequalities. These agents are making their own agency known in a way that evokes disgust or detest. Another group of non-humans is anthropomorphised and enclosed in apartments whereas others appear only as already processed meat or fur. Proposing that human and more-than-human interests are not at odds, but can benefit from being considered together, through the lens of multispecies justice (Chao et al. 2022), we look for proposals on city dwelling, planning and inhabiting which serve multispecies interests analysis of multispecies marginalisations.

This seminar delves into multilayered epistemological injustice against non-human actors of the social life in the CEE. We seek contributions accounting for the years of neglect of non-human actors who have been under attack in the region, but also those under threat due to the populist backlash throughout the region.

Submission and timeline:

- Abstracts for the seminar are due on **July 21, 2025**
 - Submit 300-500 word abstract to michal.wanke@uni.opole.pl together with keywords and authors' short bio.
- Notification of acceptance by July 28, 2025
- Selected papers (ca 8000 words) are due on **Nov 3, 2025**
- Expected publication in the series Interdisciplinary Studies on Spatial Dynamics and Marginalization in Central and Eastern Europe by Lexington Books is in late 2026.

There is no participation fee. Organizers do not provide catering or other services.

References:

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- Castro, Eduardo Viveiros de and Danowski, Déborah. "6. HUMANS AND TERRANS IN THE GAIA WAR". A World of Many Worlds, edited by Marisol de la Cadena and Mario Blaser, New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2018, pp. 172-204. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781478004318-008>
- Mullin, H. (1999): Mirrors and Windows: Sociocultural Studies of Human-Animal Relationships. Annual Review of Anthropology, 28, 201-224. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.28.1.201>
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- Tsing, A. L. (2015) The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins. 2015. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. 331.
- Van Patter, L. E. (2022). Toward a More-Than-Human Everyday Urbanism: Rhythms and Sensoria in the Multispecies City. Annals of the American Association of Geographers, 113(4), 913-932. <https://doi-org.libproxy.unibz.it/10.1080/24694452.2022.2134838>
- Wang, J. (2024): Reimagining the More-Than-Human City: Stories from Singapore. MIT Press. <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/15189.001.0001>