DESCRIPTION AND SYLLABUS

Name of the subject in Hungarian:	Representation Theories
Name of the subject in English:	Representation Theories
Credit value of the subject:	4
The code of the subject in the electronic study system:	MN-REPRTH-04-EA
Classification of the subject:	Obligatory
Language of instruction (in case of non-Hungarian courses):	English
Institute or department responsible for the subject:	Institute of Media Studies
Course type and number of contact hours:	Lecture, class per week: 2, class per semester: 0
Mode of study: (Full-time / Part-time):	Full-time training
The semester in which the subject is open for registration:	2022/2023 1st semester
Prerequisite(s):	-

THE PURPOSE OF THE SUBJECT, LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will understand, discuss and apply theories of social science from the fields of Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Sociology, Communication Studies, Social and Visual Semantics to issues of representation. Students will be able to critically analyze representational practices in their socio-cultural contexts, with regard to politics of representation. Students will be able to apply learnt theories and concepts to everyday phenomena. They will develop their research skills, analytical skills and media literacy.

SUMMARY OF THE CONTENT OF THE SUBJECT

The course introduces students to some key theories of representation from the fields of philosophy, linguistics, media, communication, and cultural studies. Representation theory was originally forged to explain knowledge (acquisition) i.e., epistemology, whereas late-modern and postmodern theories applied it to analyze culture, identity, and their enmeshment with the social order. Signs, symbols, scientific and everyday media texts, fashion, movies, and images that constitute the symbolic universe of representations are loaded with social, political, existential, and emotional meanings that are never fixed and that can provoke awe and a sense of belonging as well as fear in their audience. Mass media have long been one of the most important carriers of (mis)representations of ideas, events and social groups, often resorting to stereotypes, while in the era of immersive digital media, the blurred boundaries between representations and reality are the chief object of social scientific inquiries, as for instance with regard to Deepfake technology. Social media platforms also gave a boost to the proliferation of conscious or unconscious misrepresentations of reality as well as to empowered and resistance-oriented self-representations, rooted in the tradition of identity politics in the second half of the 20th century. Treating the social-political aspects of cultural representations as important starting points, the aim of the course is threefold. First, to equip students with analytical tools with which they can critically examine and analyze images and discourses, second, to enable them to identify new modes of representations that characterize the current communication environment, third, to encourage them to challenge the powerful yet often taken for granted representations that they are surrounded by online and offline and make them attentive to their ideological purposes. The course intends to help students bridge the gap between complex theories and the everyday events by focusing on case studies that analyze popular, high profile representations. Students are highly encouraged to bring in their own examples and puzzling cases of their own to enrich the class discussions.

STUDENT'S TASKS AND PLANNED LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

Students read the assigned texts for each class and participate actively in the discussions, bringing in relevant examples. Each student presents one case to the class (15 minutes) that has spurred public debates or is controversial in any sense. There will be an exam with short essay questions and definitions about key concepts and theories covered in the semester. Students prepare a case study employing one of the learnt theories. They can choose a subject from the fields of fashion/movies/photography/news media//music/art/comic strips/memes/ science (minimum: 2000 words)

EVALUATION OF THE SUBJECT:

In-class presentation about an issue with controversial representations: 20%
Exam: 30%
Case Study: 50%

Offered grade can be given: No.

OBLIGATORY READING LIST:

- *Representation : cultural representations and signifying practices.* Sage in association with the Open University, 2013
- Kawamura, Yuniya,: *Fashion-ology : an introduction to fashion studies.* Bloomsbury Academic, An imprint of Bloomsbury Publ, 2018
- Kress, Gunther R.: *Reading images : the grammar of visual design.* Routledge, 2006

RECOMMENDED READING LIST:

- *On signs.* Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985
- Gwen Bouvier & Lyndon C. S. Way : Revealing the politics in "soft", everyday uses of social media: the challenge for critical discourse studies, Social Semiotics, 31:3, 345-364, 2021, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10350330.2021.1930855?scroll=top&needAccess=true