



# ROMA KÉP

## COURSE PORTFOLIO

### “ROMA REPRESENTATION IN THE LIGHT OF CULTURAL THEORIES”

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2010/2011 SPRING TERM<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This course portfolio was written in July 2011 as part of the report on the course development project supported by Central European University, Curriculum Resource Centre.

## Introduction

During the course development process (which in fact started in December 2009 when I decided to apply for the CDC grant after completing an unsatisfactory course of the same topic) I went through several stages in my own development as a teacher. Apart from all the benefits this grant made possible for our department (including its teachers and students) I would highlight in the introduction the development of **my personal teaching philosophy**. I have become increasingly convinced that any innovative change in the traditional teaching and learning practices combined with deepened personal care and intensive contact with students can lead to strong motivation to study and practice skills acquired during the course. Partnership based on a continuous exchange of ideas about teaching methodology and on self-reflection cannot harm the prestige of teachers but rather it makes students more aware of their responsibility in the outcome of the learning process, it also earns their respect and strengthens their ties to the teacher. Thereby they are not so much motivated by the grades but rather by the teacher's personal (and yet professional) views and comments on their achievements. I believe that in higher education partnership encourages students to become initiators and provides them with the necessary self-confidence that is indispensable in classroom activities as well as in their own research. The other fruitful result of course development is that a research into one's own teaching can help a lot in the future: even without a course portfolio one is more conscious of his/her own innovations, the pitfalls they might have and this self-reflection can be built into the everyday teaching practices.

## Course Design Essay

### CONTEXT

#### **How to combine university mission with my background and scholarly interests with the students' backgrounds, needs and interests?**

The mission of ELTE INSTITUTE FOR ART THEORY AND MEDIA STUDIES Media and Communication Department suits very much my scholarly interests and perspectives since in the recent years its curriculum gradually shifted emphasis to an interdisciplinary study of media phenomena and contemporary culture. What is crucial for me, that “the program offers skills in journalism and communication as well as a critical understanding of the mechanisms and changes in media, communication, and contemporary culture, with a social and cultural studies emphasis” (General description, <http://mmi.elte.hu/english/media> ).

Despite my expectations the courses were attended mainly by BA students from the Film Department and some BA students from the Department of MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION. (In addition, some students from other departments also visited the course who study social sciences, pedagogy and there were even students from the ELTE training-school for kindergarten teachers.) Roma representation was the key word which attracted students from all over the university.

I have a very little teaching experience in higher education (a creative media practice at ELTE INSTITUTE FOR ART THEORY AND MEDIA STUDIES, several film history courses at PPKE and a cultural studies course at ELTE INSTITUTE FOR ART THEORY AND MEDIA STUDIES Film Department.) The latter was the most important among these since the course was based on my research and the enthusiasm and openness of the students towards the subject had a great impression on me. Their opinion expressed openly at the end of the semester as well as the ongoing relation with some of them (partly in the form of the continuation of the research they started as a seminar project) motivated me a lot and made me ask several questions about my research and teaching methodology.

My doctoral research is an interdisciplinary study of Roma representation in film and this is a subject terrain that requires basic skills in arts and humanities, communication and film studies, but mainly in social and cultural studies. This complexity means that building a course around this topic has lots of open or hidden pitfalls.

#### **One of the greatest challenges was the alignment in course design: how to choose the right goals and outcomes and, most importantly, what type of knowledge do I intend to deliver?**

During the planning of the course I was worried that the complexity of the subject might make me aspire for “too broad of a coverage” thinking that students are not familiar enough with basic social scientific terms, and in the meantime I wanted to deliver performative and transferable knowledge that they can use in other areas of analytical and interpretative activities or tasks.

My perspective is primarily anthropological and therefore, my analysis of Roma representation in film is centered around terms like (cultural, collective) identity, community, social act, etc.

I argue (as the starting point of my research itself) that the most “spectacular” shift in representational politics after the change of system can be witnessed in “Roma images”, thus for instance, fiction and documentary films become a type of minority representation that gives us a broad insight into power politics. The knowledge gained by analyzing them can be very useful in the examination of groups formed by gender, race and class.

Approaching Roma representation from the perspective of various social scientific and cultural studies I also aimed at bridging a gap in Hungarian film studies, that is, examining films on social issues by using the tools and terms of anthropology and establishing new interpretational frameworks based on visual anthropological film theory.

The course was optional and additive in its function: it aimed at further developing all of the transferable skills students should use in their jobs as journalists, editors, filmmakers, etc. The most closely related course was “The politics of representation” held by Léna Pellandini-Simányi. It was built around three crucial issues connected to and partly overlapping my subject: as a part of the examination of the relation between media and reality they analyze and discuss manipulation/reception; the role of representational processes in formulating reality and the critical approach to representation by highlighting the main issues of “rightful” representation. (I learnt in the first class that only a few students visited these courses earlier.)

## **STUDENTS**

My lack of knowledge about the skills, background knowledge, priorities and the expectations of the students appeared to be a difficult problem to solve. First of all I could rely on my experiences from a previous course with similar content: the participation, motivation of the students and the result of the seminar papers (plus many conversations with some of the most enthusiastic students.)

In order to fill this gap I came up with a solution (that might or might not work): on the very first lecture apart from the usual conversation about their studies, interests, expectations I gave them an exercise. They had to write a short analysis of Roma representation based on a visual text that made great impression on them either in a positive or a negative way. Thus I could reveal the type of their choices (if it comes from their previous studies, out of school experiences or any other sources), the way they describe, analyze or interpret that certain visual material. The result was a mixture of naïve and romantic views and precise, academic argumentation.

On the following lecture I just referred briefly to the papers instead of a detailed analysis.

## **SOURCES**

The decisions I had to make to choose the most appropriate readings were rather difficult. I could not be sure about the language skills of the students, although I hoped they can at least read the required articles in English. The readings very well reflected the interdisciplinary approach of the course: social sciences (sociology and anthropology), communication, film and cultural studies were nearly equally represented.

What was a great help for the course is that we could use a digital course reader (edited at ELTE Studio) that contained all the compulsory and optional readings in pdf files, and lots of visual material (photos and film extracts). The students could watch and analyze them at home before each class so that after watching them together they could actively participate in the discussion about them.

As part of their assessment students either had to make a presentation related to the reading and the visual materials provided for each seminar or prepare and moderate the follow-up discussion at DocuArt, where the seminars took place. But after having read the papers mentioned above I decided to ask them to write a short essay connected to their presentation by the end of the term. (I will come back to student evaluation in details later in the portfolio.)

## **AIMS AND OUTCOMES**

### **Goals**

Among my purposes the first (but least important) was to deliver a certain amount of examples of Roma representation in Hungarian film history in a descriptive/systemizing way. The emphasis was not on film historical description (introducing the students to interesting examples) but on the cultural theoretical / methodological approach of the analyses (discussing the use of Roma characters, attributes). By continuously raising questions about the meaning of certain terms used in the analysis (Roma identity, culture, ethnicity, stereotypes, etc.) I meant to help students identify and compare the representational politics of different areas. With the tools of social sciences they could comprehend the construction of Roma images in a particular visual representation but they also acquired skills in generalizing the representational modes, characterizing other artistic or media products and analyzing the representation of other ethnic, class or gender groups.

### **Learning outcomes**

The most important learning outcomes were the followings:

- students understand of the importance of the identification of the attributes of Roma (cultural) identity and they can to differentiate between the attributes of class identity
- by analyzing several forms of visual representation they can comprehend the way “ethnicity” changes in a certain social-historical environment together with its – open or hidden – discursive elements
- by comparing the representational modes of different periods they can identify the historical changes in representational politics
- they have a better understanding of our contemporary media environment and they are able to perform critical media text analysis
- they can accurately use the terms of social sciences in their research work and write professional articles on related issues
- they gain confidence in public discussions
- they become more innovative in choosing their research topic and applying interdisciplinary approaches.

## **STRUCTURING THE COURSE (CONTENT)**

Structuring the course was one of the most difficult tasks of the planning process.

First of all there were certain circumstances that were not subject to department decisions: a new regulation at ELTE INSTITUTE FOR ART THEORY AND MEDIA STUDIES does not allow professors without a permanent status to offer theoretical courses only practical courses. Therefore both of my courses were offered as “media analysis”. It meant that my structure (lecture and seminar) only worked if the same students visited both parts of the courses. Although it was mentioned in the electronic study system of the university that the two courses are built on each other, and they both should be visited, for some reason the system did not allow students to attend both of them. Consequently, fifteen students attended the lecture-like course at ELTE and only three the seminar-like course at DocuArt. But most of them promised to visit both because as they said they were highly interested in the screenings.

Thus I had to restructure the courses. My original plan was that each lecture would be divided into two parts: a teacher-led introduction with the main theoretical statements and student-centered analysis of certain visual materials where the students can internalize the related terms of the introductory part.

According to the syllabus the seminars held at DocuArt (the only cinema that exclusively runs documentary films in Budapest) functioned as a traditional film club tightly or loosely connected to the topics of the lectures. At the follow-up discussions two guests were to participate: a film scholar or filmmaker and a social scientist. The issues of the discussions were naturally connected to the film but structured previously around certain representational problems.

In the end we had a completely different structure. In the first part of the semester (when the lectures were centered around theoretical issues) I tried to keep this system: combining teacher-led introduction with presentations and discussions of certain issues. In the second part of the semester when the history of representation was the basis of the content, the lectures became seminar-like and we analyzed certain visual materials mainly film extracts. But since the students who visited the screenings and the follow-up discussions at DocuArt regularly were very much interested in their topics and because these events were fascinating, we often had discussions about them at the lectures: analyzing the previous ones or preparing for the following ones.

## Revised Syllabus

**Name of instructor: Andrea Pócsik**

**Course title:**

**Roma Representation in the Light of Cultural Theories / “Roma Image Laboratory”**

**Course type: optional**

**Course level: BA students**

**University/institution: ELTE, INSTITUTE FOR ART THEORY AND MEDIA STUDIES**

**Department: Department of Media and Communication**

**Country: Hungary**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

#### **A/ Locating the course within the discipline**

The course offers a critical understanding of the mechanisms and changes in media, communication, and contemporary culture, with a social and cultural studies emphasis. Examining the cultural representation of the Hungarian Roma from the cultural studies perspective means a certain interdisciplinary approach: the most “spectacular” change in representational politics after the change of system can be witnessed in “Roma images”, thus for instance, fiction and documentary films become a type of minority representation that gives us a broad insight into power politics. The knowledge gained by analyzing them can be very useful in the examination of groups formed by gender, race and class.

Approaching Roma representation from various social scientific and cultural studies we can bridge a gap in Hungarian film studies, that is, examining films on social issues by using the tools and terms of anthropology and establishing new interpretational frameworks based on visual anthropological film theory.

#### **B/ Locating the course within the curriculum**

This course adds some important new elements to the curriculum of Media Department. It provides students with a more well-informed anthropological perspective thereby completing the insights offered by existing courses on social psychology, sociology, communication studies etc. It arms them with terms and theories which make them able to gain access to and interpret social processes which deeply influence cultural representation.

The course should be optional and additive in its function: it should further develop all of the transferable skills students should use in their jobs as journalists, editors, filmmakers, etc. The most closely related course is “The politics of representation” held by Léna Pellandini-Simányi. It is built around three crucial issues connected and partly overlapping my subject: as a part of the examination of the relation between media and reality they analyze and discuss manipulation/reception; the role of representational processes in formulating reality and the critical approach to representation by highlighting the main issues of “rightful” representation.

### **C/ Students’ assumed knowledge**

The students possess basic knowledge and terminology connected to the disciplines of communication and media in general which should be enlarged and completed with those of filmic representation and visual anthropology.

Their command of English is generally sufficient.

### **D/ Number of participating students**

15 BA students (mainly from the Film Department, some of them from the Media, Sociology and Pedagogy Departments).

## **II. AIMS OF THE COURSE**

- To familiarize the students with a certain amount of examples of Roma representation in Hungarian film history in a descriptive/systemizing way.
- To describe certain film historical periods from cultural studies perspective (discussing the use of Roma characters, attributes).
- Questioning all the time the meaning of certain terms used in analysis (Roma identity, culture, ethnicity, stereotypes, etc.) thus to help the students identify and compare the representational politics of different eras.
- With the tools of social sciences to help the students comprehend the construction of Roma images in that certain visual representation.
- To help them to generalize the representational modes, characterize other artistic or media products and analyze the representation of other ethnic, class or gender groups.
- To motivate them to look for new paths in their media / film studies.
- To equip students with theoretical tools for the critical analysis of Roma representation avoiding exoticism or orientalism which often accompany studies on the Roma.
- Through critical approach of the corpus of the chosen visual material and the class discussions to arm the students with tools that can help them to create outlines of a theoretically informed research agenda.

## **III. LEARNING OUTCOMES (OBJECTIVES)**

- Students can identify the attributes of Roma (cultural) identity and differentiate between the attributes of class identity.



- By analyzing several forms of visual representation they can comprehend the way “ethnicity” changes in a certain social-historical environment together with its – open or hidden – discursive elements.
- By comparing the representational modes of several periods they can identify the historical changes in representational politics.
- They have a better understanding of our contemporary media environment they are able to perform critical media text analysis
- They can accurately use the terms of social sciences in their research work and write professional articles on related issues.

#### **IV. STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE**

##### **Lectures (A)**

The course consists of large-scale panels which include smaller units. These panels reflect two perspectives from which we approach Roma representation:

1. visual communication and anthropological perspective,
2. cultural studies and film theories.

The split between the two large panels reflects a change in perspective: in the first part of the course (1-6.) theoretical terms and assumptions will be clarified, the main anthropological approaches will be illustrated with crucial filmic examples.

In the second part of the course (7-12.) film historical periods will be examined in order to learn about, through the usage of the medium, the particular social and cultural historical context they were born in.

Thus from the epistemological and political perspective of representation in general, through the observation, description and interpretation of otherness, we get to the problem of visibility, namely to its role in our cultural environment.

##### **Seminars (B)**

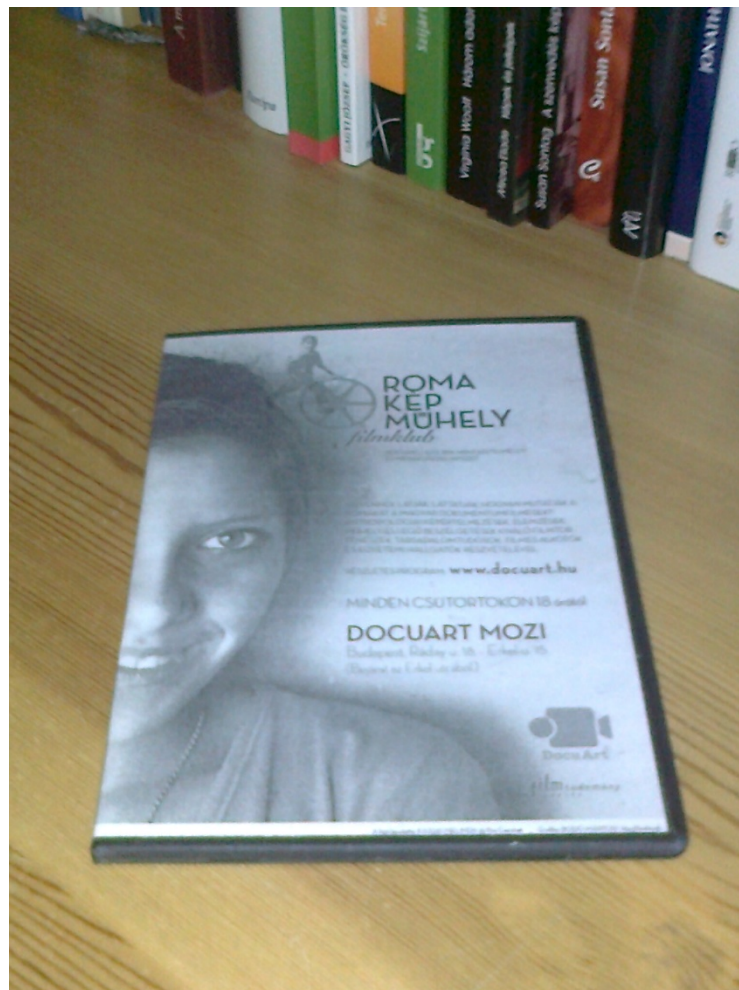
On the lectures theoretical background will be provided, and concrete case studies on Roma representation will be carried out during the seminars by applying the relevant theoretical tools.

The seminars will take place in a documentary film cinema near the university in the form of a traditional film club.

#### **V. TEACHING METHODOLOGY**

According to the structure of the course which is based on lectures and seminars the teaching methodology basically combines frontal lecturing with discussions and other interactive

activities. I will stress the importance of the compulsory and optional readings. The digital course reader will be of great help in the lectures: using it at home students can do homework assignments, deepen their knowledge.



## VI. COURSE CONTENT, ASSIGNED READINGS AND FILMS

### Lectures A: “Roma Representation in the Light of Cultural Theories”

1. Ethnicity. Basic terms and theories from an anthropological perspective.

Readings (**compulsory** and optional):

**Thomas Hylland Eriksen: *Etnicitás és nacionalizmus – antropológiai perspektívák*, Gondolat Kiadó – PTE Kommunikáció- és Médiatudományi Tanszék, Budapest-Pécs, 2008. pp. 13-35.**

Kende Anna: “Értelmiségként leszek roma és romaként leszek értelmiségi”. Vizsgálat roma egyetemisták életútjáról In: *Kisebbségek kisebbsége* Neményi Mária - Szalai Júlia (szerk.), Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, 2005, pp. 376-409.

Neményi Mária: A kisebbségi identitás kialakulása. Roma származású gyerekek identitásstratégiái In: *Etnicitás – Különbségteremtő társadalom*

Feischmidt Margit (szerk.) MTA Etnikai és Kisebbségkutató Intézet, 2010 , pp. 48-56.

Film extracts:

Kékesi Attila-Nyári Oszkár: *A kor szelleme* (1998)

2. Ethnicity studies in Hungary. Theoretical and methodological issues in general and in Romani studies.

Readings:

**Feischmidt Margit: Megismerés és elismerés: elméletek, módszerek, politikák az etnicitás kutatásában In: *Etnicitás – Különbségteremtő társadalom***

**Feischmidt Margit (szerk.) MTA Etnikai és Kisebbségkutató Intézet, 2010 pp. 7-32.**

Zsigó Jenő: "Feltárni és megnevezni az elnyomások direkt rendszerét" In: *Kisebbségek kisebbsége* Neményi Mária - Szalai Júlia (szerk.), Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, 2005, pp. 7- 42.

Feischmidt Margit- Szuhay Péter: Sűrű leírás, in Kovács Éva szerk.: *Közösségtanulmányok – Módszertani jegyzet*. Néprajzi Múzeum – PTE BTK Kommunikáció- és Médiatudományi Tanszék, 2007, pp. 243-259.

Film extracts:

Kőszegi Edit-Szuhay Péter: *Mesterségem címere* (2002)

Szalay Péter: *Nomád Plaza – A három vándor* (2008)

3. Cultural identity, cultural representation and ethnicity.

**Hall, Stuart: A kulturális identitásról In: *Multikulturalizmus*, szerk. Feischmidt Margit, Osiris Kiadó, Láthatatlan Kollégium, 1997, pp. 47-59.**

*Amaro Drom* interviews

Hall, Stuart: New Ethnicities In: *Race, Culture, Difference*, ed. James Donald and Ali Rattansi pp. 252-259.

Fanon, Frantz: *Black Skin, White Masks*, Grove Press, New York, 2008. magyarul In: *A posztmodern irodalomtudomány kialakulása – A posztstrukturalizmustól a posztkolonialitásig*, Szöveggyűjtemény, Szerk.: Bókay Antal, Osiris Kiadó, 2002

Film extracts:

Silló Sándor: *Ünnepek és hétköznapiak – Parno Graszt* (2004)

Gát Balázs: *Gipsy Side* (2006)

4. Cultural memory / film memory.

**Jan Assmann: A kulturális emlékezet – Írás, emlékezés és politikai identitás a korai magaskultúrákban, Atlantisz Kiadó, 2004, pp. 15-49., 129-159.**

Pócsik Andrea: A mi pharrajimosunk, *Amaro Drom*, 2008/08.

Film extracts:

Leni Riefenstahl: *Tiefland* (1952)

Sára Sándor: *Cigányok* (1962)

Sára Sándor: *Feldobott kő* (1968)

5. Traditions and methods in Hungarian film history writing. New paradigms and challenges.

**Francesco Casetti: Történelem, történetek, történetírás In: *Filmelméletek 1945-1990*. Osiris, Budapest 1998. pp. 264-285.**

Filmtörténet-elmélet. *Metropolis* 1997. tavasz pp. 5-46.

Erőss Gábor: Idegenek filmképei, *Regio*, 15. évf. (2005/4.) pp. 77-130.

Pócsik Andrea: Válogatott cigányképek – Cigányábrázolás a magyar játékfilmekben a hatvanas évektől napjainkig *Tabula*, 2007.10. (1)

Pócsik Andrea: A romák ábrázolása a rendszerváltás utáni magyar dokumentumfilmekben *Metropolis*, 2004. tavasz

Film extracts:

Schiffer Pál: *Cséplő Gyuri* (1978)

6. A detour into film archeology. Cultural imperialism, the birth of modern social sciences and the visual cult at the turn of the century.

**MacDougall: The Visual as Metaphor In: *The Corporeal Image*, pp. 213-225.**

Allison Griffiths: *Wondrous Difference*, Columbia University Press, 2001, pp. 3-125.

Film extracts:

Eyal Sivan: *Jaffa – The orange's clockwork* (2009)

7. Cultural representation of Hungarian Gypsies at the turn of the Century I.

**Dupcsik Csaba: A magyarországi cigányság története. Osiris Kiadó, 2009 pp.63-83.**

Kovács Éva: "Fekete testek, fehér testek – A 'cigány' képe az 1850-es évektől a XX. század első feléig". *Beszélő*, 2009. január, XIV. évf. 1. szám, pp. 74-92.

Szabó Levente: Csupán zene? Liszt Ferenc *A cigányokról és a cigány zenéről Magyarországon* című könyve és kontextusai. In: Biczó Gábor – Kiss Noémi szerk. *Antropológia és irodalom. Egy új paradigma útkeresése*. 252-269. (Editor Gábor Biczó, series published by Csokonai Kiadó and the Visual Anthropology Department of Miskolc University.) Debrecen: Csokonai Kiadó.

Szuhay Péter: Az egzotikus vadembertől a hatalom önnön legitimálásáig, *Beszélő*, 2002. július-augusztus.

Révész Emese: A népeletkép szerepe a nemzeti jellem kidolgozásában az 1850-1870 közötti sajtóillusztráció alapján. (Unpublished dissertation, 2006)

Film extracts:

Mihályfy Sándor: *Átok és szerelem* (1985)

8. Cultural representation of Hungarian Gypsies at the turn of the Century II.

**Gaál György: A dánosi gyilkosság – és ami mögötte van, *Médiakutató*, 2008. ősz**

Mátay Mónika: Agycentizők a századfordulón, *Budapesti Negyed*, 47-48.sz. 2005/1-2.

9. Roma representation in the scientific and artistic border zones between the two world wars in Hungary (social photography, folk sociology).

**Dupcsik Csaba: A magyarországi cigányság története. Osiris Kiadó, 2009 pp. 85-137.**

Bernáth Péter: A távolságtartó megközelítés, *Beszélő*, 2002. július-augusztus.

Film extracts:

*A "csentei geder népe"* (archív felvétel, 1943-44?)

Kalmár István: *Dankó Pista* (1941)

10. Representation of poverty and documentarist trends in the Kádár-era.

**Pócsik Andrea: „Az emberhez méltatlan élet kereteiről – közös indulattal (A szegénység és a társadalmi távolság ábrázolása a hatvanas-hetvenes évek BBS -dokumentumfilmjeiben)” In: *A Balázs Béla Stúdió ötven éve* Ed.: Gelencsér Gábor, Budapest, Múcsarnok 2009., pp. 287-301.**

**Bernáth Gábor-Polyák Laura: Kényszermosdatások Magyarországon, In: *Kényszermosdatások a cigánytelepeken (1940-1985)*, ed.: Bernáth Gábor, RSK, 2002. pp. 7-27.**

Hammer Ferenc: A megismerés szerkezetei, stratégiái és poétikái (Szocio-doku a BBS-ben) In: *A Balázs Béla Stúdió ötven éve* Szerk.: Gelencsér Gábor, Budapest, Múcsarnok 2009. pp. 263-275.

K. Horváth Zsolt: A valóság metapolitikája (Kognitív realizmus a magyar társadalomkutatásban: szociográfia és a dokumentumfilm) In: *A Balázs Béla Stúdió ötven éve* Szerk.: Gelencsér Gábor, Budapest, Múcsarnok 2009. pp. 275-287.

Film extracts:

Schiffer Pál: Fekete vonat, *Faluszéli házak, Mit csinálnak a cigánygyerekek?* (1972, 1973, 1974)

Csóke József: *Pedig...!*

Grunwalsky Ferenc: *Anyaság* (1974)

Gulyás Gyula-Gulyás János: *Vannak változások* (1978)

Macskássy Katalin: *Nekem az élet teccik nagyon* (1975)

11. Roma representation in contemporary media.

**Bernáth Gábor-Messing Vera: “Vágóképként, csak némában” - Romák a magyarországi médiában, Nemzeti Etnikai és Kisebbségi Hivatal, 1998.**

Pócsik Andrea: Közszolgálatosság és diskurzus – Az olaszliszkai tragédia a médiában. *Beszélő*, 2007. május

Kriza Borbála-Vidra Zsuzsanna: A többség fogságában – kisebbségek médiareprezentációja, In: *Etnicitás – Különbségteremtő társadalom*, Feischmidt Margit (szerk.) MTA Etnikai és Kisebbségkutató Intézet, 2010 pp. 392-407.

12. Roma representation and postcoloniality.

**Posztkoloniális filmelmélet, *Metropolis*, 2005/02.**

Kóczé Angéla: “Aki érti a világ hangját, annak muszáj szólania” Roma nők a politikai érvényesülés útján In: *Etnicitás – Különbségteremtő társadalom* Feischmidt Margit (szerk.) MTA Etnikai és Kisebbségkutató Intézet, 2010 pp. 208-227.

Trinh T. Minh-ha: The Totalizing Quest of Meaning In: *Theorizing Documentary*, New York: Routledge. pp. 90-107.

Trumpener, Katie: A cigányok ideje: “egy történelem nélküli nép” a Nyugat narratíváiban. *Replika*, 1991. február

Film extracts:

Pölcz Róbert-Pölcz Boglárka: *Szafari* (2002)

Vincent Monnikendam: *Mother Dao the Turtlelike* (1995)

Marlon E. Fuentes: *Bontoc Eulogy* (1995)

Trinh T. Minh-ha: *Reassemblage* (1983)

**At the lectures I managed to save the content but in some cases I had to tighten the coverage which seemed to be too broad. For example at our last lecture “Roma representation and postcoloniality” we were focusing only on Roma fine arts and did not discuss postcoloniality in film.**

**Seminars B – „Roma Image Laboratory”, DocuArt Cinema**

02. 24. 2011.

### 1. „Ciné-Ethnography”

Jean Rouch: *Én, egy néger* (1958)

Guests: Zoltán Füredi anthropologist, filmmaker. Introduced and moderated by Attila Szalmás, BA student

03. 03. 2011.

### 2. Community studies and “action anthropology”

Kőszegi Edit - Szuhay Péter: *Három nővér* (2008)

Kovács Kristóf: *Malaccal teljes* (2008)

Guests: Kristóf Kovács anthropologist, filmmaker, Edit Kőszegi, filmmaker and Péter Szuhay anthropologist

03. 10. 2011.

### 3. “Identity films” I.

Révész János-Szirmai Norbert: *Jobb mint a Fradi!* (2002)

Gát Balázs: *Gipsy Side* (2006)

Guests: Borbála Kriza sociologist and Balázs Antos anthropologist

03. 17. 2011.

### 4. “Identity films” II.

Mészáros Antónia: *Megtagadva* (2009)

Mészáros Antónia: *Darkness at the edge of town* (2009)

Guests: Árpád Bogdán filmmaker and Anna Szász sociologist

03. 24. 2011.

### 5. “Film memory”

Sára Sándor: *Cigányok* (1962)

Schiffer Pál: *Cséplő Gyuri* (1978)

Guests: Mária Neményi sociologist and Balázs Varga filmhistorian, Moderated by Kovács Bálint BA student

03. 31. 2011.



## **6. Roma images and performative documentary filmmaking**

Galyas Gyula: *Fagyűjtés délelőtt* (2002)

Pölcz Róbert – Pölcz Boglárka: *Szafari* (2004), 12'

Szederkényi Júlia: *Barlang* (2009)

Guests: Kata Horváth anthropologist and Júlia Szederkényi filmmaker

04. 07. 2011.

## **7. Roma images and formal experiments**

Jeles András: *Párhuzamos halálrajzok* (2008)

Guests: Ferenc Erős psychologist and Gábor Gelencsér filmhistorian, moderated by Clara Farkas BA student

04. 14. 2011.





### **8. Roma images, power and representation – cancelled because of the producer/filmmaker's denial of screening rights**

Kálomista Gábor: *Szíven szúrt ország* (2009)

Guests: Lóránt Bódi MA student (Dept. of Media and Communication) and Csaba Dupcsik sociologist

Instead: Dimitru Budrala: *A sündisznó átká* (2006)

04. 28. 2011.

### **9. Community filming**

Kővári Borz József: *Vándormozi* (2000-)

The Új Néző Közösségi Színház project and its filmic documents (Káva Színház, Krétakör, AnBlok)

Guests: Márton Gulyás theatre director, Kata Horváth anthropologist és József Kővári Borz filmmaker, moderated by Hedvig Winkler BA student

05. 05. 2011.



#### **10. "Metapolitics of Reality"**

Csóke József: *Pedig...!* (1975)

Schiffer Pál: *Faluszéli házak* (1972)

Grunwalsky Ferenc: *Anyaság* (1974)

Guests: Ferenc Hammer media researcher, Cecília Kovai and Ágnes Gagyí anthropologists

05. 12. 2011.

#### **11. Self-representation in contemporary media**

Baranyi Mária: *Pogácsás Julcsi* (2010)

Hétes-projekt: *Pavlovi Ióvi* (2011)

Guests: Mária Baranyi journalist and János Joka Daróczi journalist

05. 19. 2011.



## 12. Contemporary Roma art

Sugár János: *Omara* (2010)

Guests: Tímea Junghaus art historian, curator and Éva Kovács sociologist, János Sugár video artist,

According to my plan, the discussions were all recorded by Róbert Bordás cameraman and put on the website of Docuart after the ending of the film club so that it could be documented and gain broader publicity.

## **ASSESSMENT**

### **A/B. Lecture and seminar assessment**

Final paper and midterm presentation

Students had to prepare a final paper in 6.000 - 8.000 characters in which they analyze a chosen film of the topic and they make a short presentation (10-15 minutes) about a certain topic connected to the course content. They could also moderate a discussion at DocuArt: it was an optional, additive task.

## Course Implementation

### Lectures A: “Roma Representation in the Light of Cultural Theories”

Before our first lecture I gave a detailed description of our course content together with a short summary of each lecture and explained the concept of the DocuArt screenings. I also told students about the CDC project, my plans and expectations concerning the course.

#### 1. Ethnicity. Basic terms and theories from an anthropological perspective.

It was a frontal, teacher-led lecture where I explained basic terms and theories related to ethnicity. In the second part of the lecture we discussed film extracts included in the digital course reader. Most of the students took an active part in the discussion; one of them borrowed the whole documentary we were talking about.

#### 2. Ethnicity studies in Hungary. Theoretical and methodological issues in general and in Romani studies.

It was also a frontal, teacher-led lecture where I told about ethnicity research in Hungary (based on a new volume the introduction of which was included in the compulsory readings). In the second part of the lecture we had some problems with the discussion because only a few students had watched the film extracts. I pointed out the importance of watching the film extracts and asked them to do so for the next lecture.

#### 3. Cultural identity, cultural representation and ethnicity

First we listened to a student presentation connected to the documentary extract on the reader (a film we planned to screen the same day in DocuArt). It was a complex, detailed analysis of the film but also of the rap and hip-hop subculture together with its origins and connections to Roma rap. The presentation was followed by a very interesting discussion. There was a group of students who were very active in expressing their views, giving all sorts of examples of cultural identity from their own experiences.

#### 4. Cultural memory / film memory

This time I had to restructure the lecture, since the discussion at DocuArt was incredibly interesting and yet, one of the films we screened remained unclear to some and gave rise to what I believed was misinterpretation. Since for me it was a crucial point I came up with an interactive method to discuss the issue. First we watched the film for the sake of those who did not visit the screening. I collected several terms connected to identity from our readings (e.g. personal and group identity, subculture, social status, representational politics, new, hybrid identity, double consciousness/relativism, etc.) and projected them on the screen while asking the students to pick one and talk about it in connection with the film. It was one of the best lectures for two reasons: all of the students had to talk (not just the active ones) and they used precise, academic argumentation based on social scientific terms in a film analysis.

We had to postpone the discussion of our original topic (cultural memory) to the next lecture.

## 5. Traditions and methods in Hungarian film history writing. New paradigms and challenges.

I also started this lecture by a frontal explanation of basic theories about cultural memory. Then I talked shortly about the Gypsy Holocaust, Pharrajimos and its representations. After that we listened to a presentation that was not very convincing. (It was somewhat too long and the speaker did not focus on important issues but rather got lost in the details.) At the end of the lecture we had no time to fix this problem, only to postpone the topic again, not to the next lecture, but to another one (which I could connect the topic to).

## 6. Film archeological detour. Cultural imperialism, the birth of modern social sciences and the visual cult at the turn of the century

Two students offered excellent presentations based on two readings but connected to the same film. In the discussion we had the same problem: some of the students did not watch the film extract at home so I had difficulties in conducting the analysis. In the end we changed the topic and focused on the politics of representation instead of our starting point.

## 7. Cultural representation of Hungarian Gypsies at the turn of the century I.

It started again as a frontal lecture where I summarized some of our readings. Then we watched and analyzed some of the visual materials on the course reader and tried to connect them to the readings. The students were very active and gave evidence of their competencies by applying cultural theories on a high level and building an academic argumentation.

## 8. Cultural representation of Hungarian Gypsies at the turn of the century II.

Based on a student presentation it was a lecture where we had the opportunity to examine a case study – a turn-of-the-century crime and its media coverage – and focused on several types of texts and the role of visibility. In the (teacher-led) discussion the students were able to give a thorough analysis of the phenomenon as well as the functioning of several (scientific, mass cultural, etc.) discourses and representational politics.

## 9. Roma representation in the scientific and artistic border zones between the two World Wars in Hungary (social photography, folk sociology)

We started this lecture again with a presentation which I completed by giving summaries of our readings and sharing details of my own research. At the end we analyzed the relevant visual material of the course reader.

## 10. Representation of poverty and documentarist trends in the Kádár-era

This lecture was structured similarly to the previous one and it also worked as a preparation for the following DocuArt screening and discussion. We also had a chance to briefly refer to a previous topic (new challenges in film history writing) which we had to neglect a couple of lectures before.

## 11. Roma representation in contemporary media

This lecture was entirely led by one of our students who chose to analyze several actual media products. Before showing the news extracts he offered an interactive presentation about social

psychological theories on prejudice and stereotypes. Then we discussed the news extracts and the social, political phenomena behind them.

#### 12. Roma representation and postcoloniality.

Our last lecture was based on two presentations: one of them gave a summary of a cultural studies reading, the other one offered a correct overview of contemporary Roma art together with its new social functions, such as transnationalism, and the role of new critical theories, like postcolonialism, in its reception.

#### **Seminars B – “Roma Image Laboratory”, DocuArt Cinema**

As I mentioned above, visiting the screenings was not compulsory but I stressed its importance many times and asked students to participate. About half of the group visited the film club and joined the follow-up discussions regularly. Most of them were very active, they clearly expressed their views, raised meaningful questions to the guests and initiated conversation with the audience. In a few cases they also moderated the discussion. I will not describe the follow-up discussions in details since they are all recorded and made available on the website of DocuArt but I will return to their description in the closing part of the portfolio.

## Course Outcomes

As I mentioned before, apart from the final papers I had a lot of student feedbacks on course implementation in several forms. We had the opportunity to talk before and after the lectures but the screenings provided a more informal setting for the discussions. Several times (especially in the second part of the semester) we wrote e-mails to each other where students openly expressed their thoughts, opinions. Thus I could see how much they understand the concept of the course and how they develop. Although I have very little teaching experience I think that sort of student-teacher interaction is unusual and yet, incredibly useful. It provides space for spontaneous rather than formalized feedbacks (unlike in a questionnaire) and makes the teacher rethink the concept many times or even restructure it when needed. My impression was that most of the students were highly motivated and they came to the lectures and screenings not only because they found them useful but because they enjoyed these occasions.

The only thing which surprised me was that one of my most important innovations did not work out at all: I intended to create a blog about the DocuArt screenings with a post after each program. I thought of creating a virtual space for further public debate mainly for my students where I can provocatively add my reflections about the films and the discussions. Although some of them claimed they read it regularly and enjoyed it, no one wrote comments and therefore, I think it did not fulfill its task. It remained only a form of documentation.

The other thing which I could not exploit properly was the digital course reader. Although it was a great opportunity (and an enduring product) to collect and systemize for further reference visual material and readings essential for the examination of Roma representation, I expected students to be more motivated and to use it regularly. Even if it did not happen, in some cases they asked for the films after watching extracts from them included in the reader.

According to the short paper they wrote on our last lecture as a final feedback, they found the innovations of this course fruitful and exemplar. They claimed it was “the most interactive and least frontal” course they had ever visited and I think the course equipped them with a sort of thorough, “experience-like” knowledge that strengthens their competencies in transferring their newly acquired skills to other areas. Their (often) emotional bonds and interest to Roma culture were taken to a new level of understanding and interpretation and as a result, they learnt how to examine Roma representation in a much more conscious way by using their academic skills.

One of the most interesting feedbacks I got from one of the kindergarten students of the teacher-training college of ELTE who took active part in the DocuArt discussions and moderated one discussion about community filming. In her final paper she summarized the projects we learnt about but failed to include her own analysis. I asked her to complete the task whenever she felt like it during the summer. Not long ago she sent me the completed paper with a short but complex analysis of the films we screened by placing them in the context of “Roma Image Laboratory” and connecting them to films screened previously. I find it a great success that a student without any film or media background was able to analyze filmmaking methods in a sophisticated way. She proved her skills in deciphering various media phenomena that offer interpretations of certain social phenomena that she would meet in her work and everyday life.



I would highlight one more crucial thing that many students referred to in their formal or informal course evaluation: they found incredibly useful and inspiring those public debates where they had the opportunity to meet and ask Roma intellectuals especially filmmakers or journalists.

## Conclusions

As I see now in some ways the project did not fulfill my initial expectations but in other ways it performed far beyond them.

The original structure of dividing the course into lectures/seminars was a very good idea, and I probably should have insisted on it more consistently even if the conditions provided by ELTE Media Department did not make it possible. I should have worked out a more strict assessment system to motivate the students to use the digital course reader at home for instance, I could have checked their familiarity with the assigned material by a one-minute paper at the beginning of each lecture. (Of course they admitted when they did not watch the film extracts or read the literature, but I should have given them extra tasks when they failed to prepare for the lecture.)

This way their competencies could have been developed more, rather than “spontaneously” as it actually happened. I am convinced that during the classroom and film club discussions all sorts of competencies were developed (especially analysis, synthesis and evaluation) but it did not affect all of the students equally, some were outstanding contributors while others did not perform as well. I could have used methods to evoke more active class participation and encourage those who did not find it essential to visit the film clubs. (As I mentioned above: for instance the projection of social scientific terms in order to build an argumentation with regard to the analysis of the documentary was a great success, I could have applied similar methods to a greater extent.)

I have to underline again that the CDC project made it possible to create several enduring products that may be (and I am convinced will be) used in future courses at ELTE Media Department:

- digital course readers are available at ELTE Studio for future courses on Roma representation (or documentary film history, media analysis, representational politics etc.);
- an excellent collection of books on visual anthropology, documentary film theory, cultural studies, postcoloniality, etc. is available for teachers and students;
- students and teachers can also borrow and research a number of documentaries on Roma representation and some crucial examples of documentary film history in ELTE Studio and DocuArt Archive;
- all of the follow-up discussions at DocuArt were recorded and are made available on their website [www.docuart.hu](http://www.docuart.hu) (it also serves as an important feedback for the participants, including the guests, the moderators and the audience, and a valuable documentation for the purposes of further research);
- the blog functioned as a subjective and reflexive documentation of the screenings and the discussions and it might be viewed as an interesting innovation in higher education methodology (available at <http://romakepmuhely.blogspot.com/>).

To sum up, I have to emphasize that the film screenings and the follow-up discussions at DocuArt proved to be an innovative method for several reasons. The concept was based on the idea of combining academic teaching (to connect important documentaries to the course content) with educational and community building purposes. The approach was named “anthropological image

interpretation” in which the focus was not so much on the analysis of the represented Roma communities or their related cultural and social phenomena but rather, the relationships between the communities and the professionals (filmmakers, anthropologists) who represented them as well as their approaches and filmmaking devices. The guests invited to all of the discussions were social scientists and film and media professionals. In addition to a number of students from the Media Department and other departments there were also film professionals and other experts in the audience who could add their experiences (from fieldwork, research or everyday life) and views about the particular topic. The solid theoretical background allowed us to maintain an analytic approach which is often neglected when discussing documentaries in public. And yet, the conversations were characterized by an open spirit and a good atmosphere where the students were encouraged to express their thoughts, raise questions and generate disputes.

We had an excellent cooperation with the staff of DocuArt, they are strongly devoted to the dissemination of documentaries and anthropological films.

The film club had a considerable media coverage: the “Roma Magazin” of the Hungarian Radio aired several interviews in order to advertise the screenings, and they also broadcasted a longer program with recordings of the films and interviews. This latter program was also significant because the way the film club was introduced made it appear like an instance of cultural resistance.

In another case we had to find a delicate balance between activism and cultural resistance when the screening of one of the documentaries (Kálmista Gábor: *Szíven szúrt ország*) was banned just a few hours before the program. Right then we decided to show and discuss an anthropological film instead but after the end of the course and the film club the students and some of our guests gathered at ELTE Studio to screen the film and discuss it in a nearby café.

I had several positive feedbacks from film professionals and my colleagues at ELTE Media Department: one of the most positive remarks came from the head of the department who claimed that the course should be exemplar in many ways.

We are still in contact with some of the most devoted students and a filmmaker. They were excellent contributors to the class and the film club and now they are planning to continue the latter but this time, with more emphasis on student research and participation, that is, in a form that may be yet another important innovation to be worked out in higher education.