

Conference Program

70 Years American Studies in Austria

“Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?”
The Changing Nature of American Studies

The 44th Annual Conference of the Austrian Association for American Studies
Schloss Leopoldskron, Salzburg, November 3-5, 2017



Organized by

 **UNIVERSITY**
of SALZBURG
Department of English and American Studies

AAAS

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Conference Program Overview

Friday, November 3		
		
14:00 – 16:00	Meierhof Lobby	Registration
14:00 – 15:30	McGowan Room	Board Meeting
14:30 – 16:00	PANEL 1	
	Heller Room	<p>Panel 1: Screening America</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manuela Neuwirth (University of Graz) Is American (Television) Culture Going Where It's Been? Nostalgia, Preservation of Continuity, and the Compulsion to Repeat in Recent Revivals of The X-Files, Gilmore Girls, and Twin Peaks • Bärbel Schlimbach (Saarland University) Imaginary Wests: Transatlantic Appropriations of the Western Formula • Christian Stenico (University of Innsbruck) From "Rip Van Winkle" to The Simpsons: Television Episodes as Audiovisual Short Stories <p>Chair: Michael Rockland</p>
15:45 – 16:15	Meierhof Lobby	Coffee Break
16:15 – 17:30	Parker Hall	<p>Opening of the Conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words of Welcome • Welcome Addresses by Daniel S. Mattern (US Embassy Vienna), and Marty Gecek (Salzburg Global Seminar) • Fulbright Prize 2017 • Talk by Dr. Lonnie R. Johnson (Fulbright Austria) on the "Foundational Years of American Studies in Austria"
17:30 – 18:30	Parker Hall	<p>Keynote Address by Ralph J. Poole (University of Salzburg): "Huck Finn at King Arthur's Court" – F. O. Matthiessen, the Salzburg Seminar and American Studies"</p> <p>Chair: Hanna Wallinger</p>
18:30 - 20:30	Marble Hall	Dinner

Saturday, November 4		
09:00 – 10:00	Parker Hall	Saturday Lecture by Philip McGowan (Queen’s University Belfast): “What We Imagine Knowledge to Be” Chair: Ralph J. Poole
10:00 – 10:30	Meierhof Lobby	Coffee Break, Registration (Meierhof)
10:30 – 12:30	PANELS 2 – 5	
	Heller Room	Panel 2: Where Have We Been? American Studies in the 20th Century <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deborah Cohn (Indiana University, Bloomington) The US Academy and the National Interest: Robert Spiller and American Studies during the Cold War. • Louis Mazzari (City University of New York) <i>The Old World’s New World: A Tale of Europe and American Studies at the End of the Cold War</i> • Jiann-Chyng Tu (Humboldt University of Berlin) An Alliance with the “Other America”: A Genealogy of African American Literature in the German Democratic Republic, 1949-1990 • Philipp Reisner (University of Düsseldorf) “I will be Your Country Soon”: The Cold War and the New Sacred Poetry Chair: Philipp Reisner
10:30 – 12:30	PANELS 2 – 5	
	Campbell Room	Panel 3: Democracy Under Pressure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vassil Anastassov (Sofia) The Narrative of American Democracy • Michael Barton, Charles Kupfer (both Penn State University at Harrisburg), Michael Rockland (Rutgers University) The Increasing Politicization of the American Studies Association in the United States • Cornelia Klecker (University of Innsbruck) ‘Tweet me This’: The Challenges of Teaching American Studies in the Trump Era Chair: Joshua Parker

Saturday, November 4

10:30 – 12:30

PANELS 2 – 5

Elledge Room

Panel 4:

Imagining 'Others,' Negotiating Identities, and Transgressing Borders

- **William L. Chew III** (Vesalius College, Brussels)
Franco-American Images of 'The Other' – An Imagological Approach
- **Christoph Straub** (University of Salzburg)
Reframing Visions of Indigenous Femininity – Film as a Space for Renegotiation?
- **Dean J. Kotlowski** (Salisbury University)
The Road to Self Determination: Aboriginal Policy in the United States and Australia, 1960-1993
- **William Tate** (James Madison University)
on beginning new things, ideas, schools, +such

Chair: **Verena Holztrattner**

10:30 – 12:30

PANELS 2 – 5

Parker Hall

Panel 5:

American Studies and/as Video Game Studies

- **Sascha Pöhlmann** (LMU München)
Whitman and Everything: The Poetics of Scale and Embodied Connectedness
- **Michael Fuchs** (University of Graz)
Playing with the Historical Real: Video-Gaming and Trauma
- **Mashid Mayar** (University of Bielefeld)
The Ultimate Metaphor: Game Studies in/and American Studies
- **Andreas Stadler** (University of Salzburg)
How Video Games Embody the Past and Future of American Studies

Chair: **Michael Fuchs**

12:30 – 14:00

Marble Hall

Lunch

Saturday, November 4

14:00 – 16:00

PANELS 6 – 9

Heller Room

Panel 6:

“President [Enter Name Here] Welcomes You to Washington”: Presidents, Politics, Popular Culture/Media

- **Barbara Bračić** (University of Klagenfurt)
"On this Earth, Every Act is a Political Act" – The American Psyche through the Lenses of Superheroes in the Aftermath of 9/11
- **Esther Košutnik-Striedner** (University of Klagenfurt)
"When (the) Eagle is Down, the Phoenix Rises" – Changing Images of Fictional Presidents since the 1990s and their Cultural Meaning(s)
- **László Bernáth** (University of Klagenfurt)
"... Lest they go on Hating Us" – Presidential Power and the Dismantling of Democracy in the War on/of Terror Era

Chair: **Stefan Rabitsch**

14:00 – 16:00

PANELS 6 – 9

Campbell Room

Panel 7:

**Understanding America:
From Education to Cultural Policy**

- **Stefan Brandt** (University of Graz)
What's in These Names? American Studies, Cultural Politics, and Drama in the Trump Era
- **Karen Patricia Heath** (University of Oxford)
Towards a Trumpian Cultural Policy? The Donald and the Arts
- **Johannes Mahlkecht** (University of Innsbruck)
The Value of US Values: What Austrian American Studies can still Teach Europe
- **Maria Proitsaki** (Gävle University, Sweden)
From Tupac to Heaney via Rosa Parks: Utilizing Nikki Giovanni's Poetry in English Courses in Sweden

Chair: **Sylvia Mieszkowski**

Saturday, November 4		
14:00 – 16:00		
PANELS 6 – 9		
	Elledge Room	<p>Panel 8: Life Writing and Transnational American Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volker Depkat (University of Regensburg) Diaries and Letters as Life Writing • Silvia Schultermandl (University of Graz) Online Life Writing • Klaus Rieser (University of Graz) Auto/Biographical Film • Nassim Balestrini (University of Graz) Transnational Intermedial Hip Hop Life Writing • Katharina Fackler (University of Graz) Transoceanic Mobility and the Senses <p>Chair: Nassim Balestrini, Silvia Schultermandl</p>
14:00 – 16:00		
PANELS 6 – 9		
	Parker Hall	<p>Panel 9: American Selves: Emotions, Affect, and Self-Determination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian Quendler (University of Innsbruck) From Personality to Celebrity: American Cultural Studies of Persona Then and Now • Roberta Hofer (University of Innsbruck) The Land of the Free? Life, Liberty, and Human Puppetry • Marie Dücker (University of Graz) Feeling Literature: Emotions and Affect in the Contemporary Intermedial American Young Adult Suicide Narrative <p>Chair: Hanna Wallinger</p>
16:00 - 16:30	Meierhof Lobby	Coffee Break
16:30 – 18:00	Parker Hall	AAAS General Meeting
18:30 – 20:00	Marble Hall	Dinner
20:00 – 21:00	Great Hall	<p>Evening Lecture by Mark Reinhardt (Williams College, Williamstown): “You know, I used to be a Jew”: Groucho Marx, Max Reinhardt, and the Transformation of American Studies</p> <p>Chairs: Silvia Schultermandl</p>

Sunday, November 5		
09:00 – 10:00	Parker Hall	Sunday Lecture by Julia Leyda (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim): "The Feminist Futures of American Studies" Chair: Leopold Lippert
10:00 – 10:30	Meierhof Lobby	Coffee Break
10:30 – 12:30	PANELS 10 –13	
	Heller Room	<p>Panel 10: Where Are We Going? New Directions in American Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sabine Sielke (University of Bonn) Ecotoning Inter- and Transdisciplinarity – Interrogating the Transitional Habitats of (North) American Studies • Gudrun Grabher (University of Innsbruck) American Studies and Medical Narratives: Challenge or Provocation • Simon Whybrew (University of Graz) The Promise of Tomorrow? Trans-Histories of Becoming in US Contemporary Speculative Fiction • Astrid M. Fellner (Saarland University) Borders and the Making of Trans-Americanity <p>Chair: Ralph J. Poole</p>

Sunday, November 5

10:30 – 12:30

PANELS 10 –13

	Campbell Room	<p>Panel 11: Make American Studies About History Again Post Factual America: Needs and Challenges in American Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stefan Rabitsch (University of Graz) The Return of History; or, Prepare for "American Carnage": Combatting Post-Truth in the American Studies Classroom (Historical Thinking, Popular Culture, Counterfactuals)• Martin Gabriel (University of Klagenfurt) Forging National Identity in the Trans-Mississippi Theater - The US Army, Warfare, Racism, and Nation-Building (c. 1840-1890)• Michael Streif (University of Salzburg) Queering History: New Perspectives on Manliness in the Age of the American Revolution• Margaret Sönsner Breen (University of Connecticut) The Locations of Politics: Highsmith's <i>The Price of Salt</i>, Todd Haynes' Film <i>Carol</i>, and American Cultural Post-War and Post-9/11 Landscapes <p>Chair: Martin Gabriel</p>
	Elledge Room	<p>Panel 12: Across the Ocean and Back: Mobility and Cultural Negotiations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alexandra Ganser (University of Vienna) Maritime Mobilities in American Studies• Leopold Lippert (University of Salzburg) Negotiating the Early United States in the Context of the Atlantic World: Susanna Rowson's Reuben and Rachel• Katharina Wiedlack (University of Vienna) In Search for a Better Future? Narratives in Female Russian-American Writing• Karolina Lovejoy (University of Warsaw) Media Images of the United States in the Russian Weekly Magazines on the Eve and Immediately after Annexation of Crimea (2013-2014) <p>Chair: Roberta Hofer</p>

Sunday, November 5

10:30 – 12:30

PANELS 10 –13

	Parker Hall	Panel 13: Future(s) of Gender Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sylvia Mieszkowski (University of Vienna) Cultural Crossovers: Transmedial Adaptation and Activist Appropriation of The Handmaid's Tale• Elisabeth Kriebler (University of Salzburg) Female Resistance and Re-Signification in Comics: Phoebe Gloeckner's Subversive Feminist Strategies• Matea Lacmanović (University of Graz) From Femininity to Masculinity in "Androgyny": Gender as a Social Construct in Popular Music• Alekzandra Rokvity (University of Graz) The Sign as a Battlefield: Subculture, Fashion and Gender Chair: Stefan Brandt
12:00- 12:30	McGowan Room	Meeting of the New Board
12:30	Marble Hall	Lunch, Closing of Conference

Keynote Lectures

Ralph J. Poole (University of Salzburg)

“Huck Finn at King Arthur’s Court”:

F. O. Matthiessen, the Salzburg Seminar and American Studies

Friday, November 3, 2017 | 17:30 – 18:30 | Parker Hall | Chair: Hanna Wallinger

F. O. Matthiessen was a key player in an event taking place at Schloss Leopoldskron in Salzburg in the summer of 1947, which launched the legendary Salzburg Seminar and can be considered the birth of American studies in Europe. Matthiessen’s reflections on this remarkable session, *From the Heart of Europe*, remains outstanding in its conjuring of a humanist vision amidst ruins. This travelogue, his last major if largely forgotten work published shortly before his suicide, has been variously reassessed as an elegiac document of his tragic failure as a politically deluded scholar and as a groundbreaking foray into sketching out a radically alternate transnational understanding of American studies *avant la lettre*. These highly diverging perspectives on Matthiessen’s final book in particular and on the professional and personal troubles during his last years more generally account for the lasting myth-making fascination with Matthiessen, which has left its mark not only in academic discourses ranging from socialist criticism to queer theory but can also be found in the novels of May Sarton (*Faithful Are the Wounds*) and Mark Merlis (*American Studies*). Therefore, this paper reflects on Matthiessen’s impact on the 1947 seminar and traces the legacy of this controversial founding father of American studies.

Philip McGowan (Queen’s University Belfast)

What we Imagine Knowledge to Be

Saturday, November 4, 2017 | 09:00 – 10:00 | Parker Hall | Chair: Ralph J. Poole

Initially, and to tie in with the 70th anniversary of the Salzburg seminar, I am interested in looking at Wallace Stevens’s 1947 collection *Transport to Summer* (his war poem ‘Esthétique du Mal’ in particular) to trace some lines of connection between Stevens and our contemporary moment. I will then move to another 1947 poem, Elizabeth Bishop’s ‘At the Fishhouses’, to continue a line of enquiry about the issue Bishop’s poem closes with: “what we imagine knowledge to be” and how her poetry, as with Stevens’s, is inflected with a clear philosophical turn that requires that we engage with the poem, its discussions of a Nova Scotian shoreline scene and the production of knowledge in multiple and complex ways. As a poet of ‘Here’ and “elsewhere” Elizabeth Bishop offers scholars today (and since her collections were issued) a set of important lenses through which the North American reality can be analysed: place; family; religion; and history. Issues of transgression and interruption abound in Bishop’s life and in her writing and I return to her as source for a productive discussion that ties in with the conference’s main themes. As she closes the title poem of her 1955 collection *Questions of Travel*, issues of dislocation and belonging and identification were as alive for Bishop 60-70 years ago as they are today:

‘Is it lack of imagination that makes us come to imagined places, not just stay at home? Or could Pascal have been not entirely right about just sitting quietly in one’s room?

Continent, city, country, society:
the choice is never wide and never free.
And here, or there... No. Should we have stayed at home,
wherever that may be?’

Mark Reinhardt (Williams College, Williamstown)

“You know, I used to be a Jew”:

Groucho Marx, Max Reinhardt, and the Transformation of American Studies

Saturday, November 4, 2017 | 20:00 – 21:00 | Great Hall | Chair: Silvia Schultermandl

Moving across genres, locations, and time periods—idiosyncratically, at times autobiographically, and yet directly in response to the title, call for papers, occasion, and site of this conference—my talk will juxtapose several narratives in order to take account of the historical trajectory, accomplishments, shortcomings, challenges, and opportunities of the American Studies project, matters that, I suggest, take on renewed urgency under the shadow of the Trump presidency and the aspiration to “Make America Great Again.”

Beginning with the unlikely pairing of Max Reinhardt and Groucho Marx, and the perhaps questionable methodological device of unpacking at length an old, politically dubious Jewish joke, I use certain problems of Jewish assimilation to lay out both the problematic of the talk and some reasons for taking the Trump ascendancy seriously. To take that ascendancy seriously is to think about not only the ruptures and anomalies but also the deep historical continuities that mark the most worrisome aspects of the current political configuration in the US, and one way to think about those continuities, I suggest, is to reflect on how these aspects were engaged by the project of American Studies as it was consolidated, in the US and also places like Salzburg, in the years just after World War II. In particular, I focus on the ways in which the US was understood as democratic and how that understanding cast the nation’s founding and enduring forms of violence and exploitation. Against the backdrop of those reflections, I’ll ask how American Studies does and might engage the continuities differently now, stressing the need to provide a national narrative at once accessible in idiom and searching in its acknowledgment of a settler colonial history. Such a project entails not only moving beyond but also borrowing anew from that early formation of American Studies.

Julia Leyda (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim)

The Feminist Futures of American Studies

Sunday, November 3, 2017 | 09:00 – 10:00 | Parker Hall | Chair: Leopold Lippert

My academic experiences in Japan, Germany, and Norway indicate one clear change over the last decade or so: more students want to talk, read, and write about intersectional feminism. This shifted baseline awareness is visible in the new prominence of feminism in public discourses, a welcome change from the backlash, culture wars, and postfeminism of the 80s and 90s.

After the overt sexism and racism of the 2016 US election, after watching *The Handmaid’s Tale* regain (or surpass) Reagan-era levels of relevance, after a summer when women wept watching the long-overdue female-led superhero movie *Wonder Woman*, I argue that we in academia need to recommit to intersectional feminism. Particularly at a time when feminism is being appropriated in advertising and fashion, and as a buzzword in corporate and conservative rhetorics, the critical thinking skills of the humanities are still sorely needed. The mainstreaming of feminism *as an attitude* is doubtless leading more young people to delve into feminism *as a discipline*. The next step is for us to provide the rigorous academic foundations for the next generations of feminist research.

American Studies prides itself on its engagements with social change movements and the study of inequality, so our discipline is well-positioned to build on the recent feminist momentum outside academia. However, if Americanists take this popularity for granted, we risk lending credibility to specious postfeminist arguments claiming that gender equality is achieved and we needn’t bother anymore. As Sara Ahmed writes, “A significant step for a feminist movement is to recognize what has not ended.” Intersectional feminism is indispensable to the interdisciplinary 21st-century Americanist agenda, and we have a responsibility to provide the critical tools and ethical lenses that these new generations will need.

Workshop Presentations

Workshop 1: Screening America

Friday, November 3, 2017 | 14:30 – 16:00 | Heller Room | Chair: Michael Rockland

Manuela Neuwirth (University of Graz)

Is American (Television) Culture Going Where It's Been? Nostalgia, Preservation of Continuity, and the Compulsion to Repeat in Recent Revivals of *The X-Files*, *Gilmore Girls*, and *Twin Peaks*

In the construction, reflection, and perpetuation of American culture, television as a phenomenon of everyday, global cultural practice has been linked to American Studies since its inception. Throughout TV history, the serial format has directed viewing practices in a way that, as this paper will argue, ties in with Freud's psychoanalytical notion of repetition compulsion and Burke's theory of 'Literature as Equipment for Living.' The former builds on the idea that "[r]epetition, the re-experiencing of something identical, is clearly in itself a source of pleasure",¹ whereas the latter, in Brian Ott's reworking of Burke's theory, asserts that television helps assuage anxieties brought about by social change.

According to Michael K. Saenz, "what appears on television gives unique [...] access to the 'structure of feeling' of a generation, a decade, or a cultural and political moment".² This was considered particularly true for a number of TV shows originally broadcast in the 1990s and 2000s: The benchmark series *The X-Files* (FOX, 1993-2002; 2016–), *Twin Peaks* (ABC, 1990-1991; New Line 2017), and *Gilmore Girls* (Warner, 2000-2007; 2016) were pronounced phenomena of their times – and, until very recently, thought to remain just that.

The present paper will investigate their recent revivals as illustrations of viewers' nostalgic desire to reclaim a particular 'structure of feeling', to preserve a sense of continuity in light of current social and political changes. It thus argues that revivals of American televisual texts point us to where we [as viewers] are going: where we have been.

Bärbel Schlimbach (Saarland University)

Imaginary Wests: Transatlantic Appropriations of the Western Formula

The Western is often seen as "the" typical American film genre dealing with the settling of the West and the creation of an American identity but the fascination for Westerns and the West was never limited to the United States. My paper will investigate how European film productions as well as European audiences appropriated images of the American West and how these changed images in return were influential for U.S. productions. After the declining popularity of the genre in the U.S. during the 1960s, the so-called Spaghetti Western gave the genre new impetus which influenced later "re-appropriations" of the genre in the U.S. These movies present "new Wests" which are "a state of mind, not a geographical place but a mythic space" (Varner VIII) and include voices which were silenced in traditional Westerns. The cultural production of Western movies around the globe with multi-dimensional influences can be seen as "a new world-space of cultural production and national representation which is simultaneously becoming more globalized [...] and more localized" (Rob Wilson /Wimal Dissanayake 1) within various cultural contexts and different production and consumption circles. My analysis will show how the Spaghetti Western profited from previous U.S. Westerns, how the genre was transformed and how the features introduced were taken up by U.S. productions, thereby showing the trans-cultural appropriations not as one-directional influence but as multi-directional discourses which enable criticism of the hegemonic narrative.

Christian Stenico (University of Innsbruck)

From “Rip Van Winkle” to *The Simpsons*: Television Episodes as Audiovisual Short Stories

American Studies is a vast field that encompasses a wide array of disciplines, different media and theoretical approaches. While literary courses are still at the heart of most American Studies programs, there is also a huge interest in film and media studies, as well as television studies most recently. This academic trend mirrors one that is also common in popular culture today, because just as people used to leaf through literary magazines to stumble upon interesting short stories, now they sap through television channels until a show catches their eye. One of the most common and popular forms of television are situational comedies or sitcoms, most of which have well established characters and settings and are more episodic than serial in nature.

In my paper, I will argue that these episodic television shows closely resemble short stories and can be seen as a continuation of the form in the medium of television. While these shows develop their overall plot over time as well, the individual episodes mostly stand on their own and can be enjoyed individually. And just as Poe proposed for short literary forms, individual episodes can be enjoyed “in one sitting”, helping them create their own “unity of effect”. My paper will demonstrate the similarities in structure and narrative techniques between episodic television and short stories and compare both forms in regard to their impression on readers/viewers. For my analysis, I will rely on classical narrative theory, as well as film and television technology, combined with theories on short narratives in general and short stories in particular.

Workshop 2: Where Have We Been? American Studies in the 20th Century

Saturday, November 4, 2017 | 10:30 – 12:30 | Heller Room | Chair: Philipp Reisner

Deborah Cohn (Indiana University, Bloomington)

The US Academy and the National Interest: Robert Spiller and American Studies during the Cold War.

In a period of declining resources for the humanities, it is easy to forget that, in the United States, supporting American studies was once viewed as directly serving the national interest (for the same reason, it also received generous funding from public and private sources). This paper is part of a broader research project on the ways that American studies scholars used their teaching, scholarship, and administrative efforts during the Cold War to complement official U.S. efforts to win “hearts and minds” around the world, and on how the field ultimately assumed an ambassadorial role abroad for the nation in its new capacity as a world power. I examine the efforts of Robert Spiller (University of Pennsylvania) to garner institutional respect and funding for American studies, and how these were inflected by—and, in turn, affected—the broader political context. Specifically, I explore how Spiller was motivated both by research interests and a view of the field’s use value as a mode of cultural diplomacy that had the potential to foster international understanding of the United States. I focus on his involvement in international exchange programs such as the Fulbright and his leadership of the American Studies Association into a number of initiatives related to U.S. foreign relations. In particular, I analyze his development of a certificate in American studies for non-U.S. citizens living abroad at the behest of the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), which viewed the certificate as a means of furthering U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Louis Mazzari (City University of New York)

The Old World's New World: A Tale of Europe and American Studies at the End of the Cold War

The Soviet Union was collapsing along Europe’s east while C. Vann Woodward was surveying Europe’s long look to its west. In 1991, at the end of a career that had run through the heart of the Cold War, Woodward looked around him, both east and west, past and present, and he gauged the way Europe had been fundamentally changed not only by the history of the United States but by the Cold War that America had defined. *The Old World's New World* was the way this seminal figure in American Studies looked through a European lens to help understand the Cold War and its end. And from the precipice of that end to began to discern what would come next.

Twenty-five years later, *The Old World New World* now gives us a broad view of the way that Western Europe has regarded the United States, as Woodward intended, but it also shows us how an important aim of the field of American Studies—to convey a profound sense of the U.S.—could be imaginatively and gracefully advanced through a European perspective by a historian whose great works had always been thoroughly American.

Jiann-Chyng Tu (Humboldt University of Berlin)

An Alliance with the "Other America": A Genealogy of African American Literature in the German Democratic Republic, 1949-1990

This paper will attempt to critically trace the genealogy, development, and reception of African American literature in the German Democratic Republic, from its socialist beginnings until the fall of the Berlin Wall and its legacies thereafter. As Astrid Haas writes, "since the late 1940s, American literature, linguistics, and civilization were researched and taught at seven universities in East Germany," in which African American literature played an important role in offering a social critique of the capitalist values of the West (167). Seen as one of the most productive parts of the "other America," East German Americanists championed and highlighted the tradition of African American dissent as a vital link between Black America and the East German state. In an attempt to contextualize African American literature within the constraints of a Marxist-Leninist political and ideological framework that drove scholarship within the former German Democratic Republic, I seek to construct a critical narrative of an alliance with the "other America" by tracing the development and reception of African American literature in the former East German Republic. Through investigating how East German scholarship strategically utilized, analyzed, and interpreted Black America's literary and cultural production vis-à-vis the German Democratic Republic's official antiracist and anticolonial socialist ideology, I will try to build upon an already existing (East)German scholarship of the genealogy, development, and reception of American Studies in Germany. Finally, I will briefly look at the legacies of African American literature and its trajectories in German American Studies after the fall of the Berlin Wall and German reunification.

Philipp Reisner (University of Düsseldorf)

"I will be Your Country Soon": The Cold War and the New Sacred Poetry

Contrary to what one might expect, poets who engage the Cold War do not do so from a primarily political perspective, but often find a voice that partakes of what one might call the new sacred poetry: they weave strands of traumatic individual experience into poetry as a means of spiritual expression conveying mystical experience. Poets such as Li-Young Lee, Suji Kwock Kim, and Kathleen Ossip transcend the boundaries of political poetry and reengage the history of the Cold War with pressing theological questions. In doing so, they do not only innovate poetry, but also contemporary theology.

Rather than bearing witness to personal suffering inflicted by political and societal circumstances, these poets bear witness in a religious sense, in a poetic voice that testifies to human resilience in the face of traumatic experience achieved through faith. Their work is thus insufficiently described by the too frequently invoked *Poetry of Witness*, understood as witness of injustice rather than of faith. It is crucial to investigate the traces of Cold War politics in their poetry as a witnessing of a struggling faith in response to pain elicited by political, societal, or personal circumstances.

Workshop 3: Democracy Under Pressure

Saturday, November 4, 2017 | 10:30 – 12:30 | Campbell Room | Chair: Joshua Parker

Vassil Anastassov (Sofia)

The Narrative of American Democracy

The paper offers a critical stance on the traditional understanding of equality in western democracy as “the voice of the majority”. It is based on Alexis De Toqueville’s *Democracy in America*, as probably the sharpest critique of “popular government by public opinion” ever written about American politics. The claim is (following De Toqueville) that the existence of a “majority” implies non-equality in the share of political power with the “minorities”. The ascribed to the majority “public opinion” and “popular will” usually appear as if expressed by all the people of the nation-state. They function however as myths-narratives, created by the common beliefs, feelings, fears, likes and dislikes, prejudices and even superstitions of the average citizens and are used by interested sides for manipulation and power imposition. The common definition of equality in (American) democracy as “Vox Populi – Vox Dei” can be thus challenged with the question: “Qui Sunt Populus? The follow-up is that the political prevalence of the “majority” still does not imply equality for all the members of the polity. Omnes Cives Populus Sunt!

Michael Barton, Charles Kupfer (both Penn State University at Harrisburg), and Michael Rockland (Rutgers University)

The Changing Nature of the American Studies Association in the United States

For the upcoming AAAS conference in November 2017, I propose a session on the increasing politicization of the American Studies Association in the United States. The presenter, Michael Barton, Professor Emeritus of American Studies and Social Science at the Pennsylvania State University in Harrisburg, is currently a party to a legal suit in the USA directed against the American Studies Association. The suit claims that the ASA violated its charter by voting to boycott Israel from participating in ASA activities. The suit further claims that the ASA did not follow its prescribed procedures in voting for the boycott. The presenter will describe the suit, the experiences of his co-complainants, and his own experience in dealing with the increasing politicization of the ASA. Following Prof. Barton's presentation, the audience will be invited to comment on the issues that the suit presents.

Cornelia Klecker (University of Innsbruck)

Tweet me This': The Challenges of Teaching American Studies in the Trump Era

“Frederick Douglass is an example of somebody who’s done an amazing job and is getting recognized more and more, I notice.” This bizarre statement was made by the President of the United States during a Black History Month event and led journalists to ask his press secretary Sean Spicer about it. “I think [Trump] wants to highlight the contributions that [Douglass] has made. [...] I think the contributions of Frederick Douglass will become more and more,” was his odd reply that made people in the media wonder whether Trump as well as Spicer believe that Frederick Douglass, a famous 19th-century abolitionist, is still alive.

Teaching American Studies has always faced many challenges but expecting students to know more about American history and politics than the president of the United States is new. So is the White House’s use of “alternative facts,” their delegitimization of the press not just by calling them “fake news” but the “enemy of the American people,” as well as the stark rise of actual fake news on partisan media outlets. Therefore, this paper seeks to discuss these and other challenges of teaching American Studies that are specific to the Trump era and will attempt to offer some possible strategies.

Workshop 4: Imagining 'Others,' Negotiating Identities, and Transgressing Borders

Saturday, November 4, 2017 | 10:30 – 12:30 | Elledge Room | Chair: Verena Holztrattner

William L. Chew III (Vesalius College, Brussels)

Franco-American Images of 'The Other' - An Imagological Approach

Image studies research has been revealing as regards the origins, character, and function of Franco-American national stereotypes. While “national character” has long been defined in essentialist terms, image studies explore the construction of “national images” as discourse. Originating in 1950s French comparative literature, the field now draws on history, literature, art history, psychology, sociology and anthropology. Studies of Franco-American stereotypization since the 1770s reveal several key parameters as constitutive of each nation’s image of the other and the resulting dynamic with its own self-image. These are ‘race,’ ‘materialism’ and ‘democracy’ in conjunction with the opposing pairs ‘spiritualism - idealism,’ ‘aristocracy – despotism,’ ‘gender and sexuality.’ It was through these lenses that Americans and Frenchmen tended to assess each other during the two centuries examined. All parameters are active during the whole period, while some are of course more strongly activated than others at given moments in time. Finally, most discussions of the other tend to be very self-serving, often either painting a dystopic picture of the *culture regardée* in an effort to validate one’s own culture or, conversely, painting a utopian picture of the other in an effort to advance a particular domestic political agenda.

Christoph Straub (University of Salzburg)

Reframing Visions of Indigenous Femininity - Film as a Space for Renegotiation?

For a long time, cinema has shown Indigeneity exclusively through the lens of colonialism. If Indigenous characters were not entirely omitted from the film plots, they were usually constructed along the lines of certain recurring types: wild and uncivilized savages, mystic creatures, submissive servants, or silly figures for comic relief. The portrayal of Indigenous women generally followed such stereotypical depictions, but these female characters were often ‘othered’ even further by the racism and sexism of the colonial imagination.

However, the past decades have witnessed some changes. While exclusively Indigenous productions remain the exception, a quite productive Indigenous film scene is on the rise: Today, various Indigenous filmmakers take cinematic visions of Indigeneity into their own hands and put forward portrayals that differ considerably from those of their non-Indigenous colleagues. In doing so, they often also show Indigenous femininity from a new angle; an angle that has moved beyond the colonial imagination and appears to have an empowering potential.

This talk aims to explore some of the ways in which such new, self-controlled visions challenge colonialist constructions of Indigenous femininity. Examples from North America, Australia, and New Zealand will illustrate how contemporary Indigenous film avails itself of narrative and/or visual strategies, how it plays with and subverts known ‘Western’ constructions of Indigeneity, and how it may open-up spaces for self-determined renegotiations of Indigeneity and Indigenous femininity.

William Tate (James Madison University)

on beginning new things, ideas, schools, +such

The Salzburg Seminar was about beginning. The beginning led to a phenomenon that proved to be influential and unique. It was a model for welcoming ideas into the new. The beginning was an authentic quest, thus the legacy of its alumni, and the ongoing Salzburg Global Seminar.

The Salzburg Seminar continues to ask the question of how we begin, re-invent, discover. A new school can draw many lessons and ideals from what began in Salzburg. We are doing just that.

Umbau is a new form of learning. We are an exploratory laboratory in architecture + culture. Currently we run summer studios in Vienna and Krakow. We are going to expand our reach into the creation of a new hybrid school-studio-practice. Umbau will learn/cultivate/practice an architecture that heals, that challenges the long-haul, that will breed a new level of generosity, that will grow a sensitivity to the land and to nature. We will practice architecture as a homeopathic act. It is to practice design as an act of subversion [once again], to learn to persevere, to flank, and to shift the paradigms. We will train alchemists.

Obviously, Umbau will offer a counterpoint to the current American dilemma. Thus, modern American Studies. This paper will be an opportunity to extract lessons of the original Salzburg Seminar, and to expose the new Umbau-ian ideas for the re-invention of architecture + education. Also, a brief look into similar school beginnings would be helpful, such as Kaospilots [in Denmark], the University of the Underground [just starting], and the Actors' Studio [which has numerous offspring]. It is intended that this paper will bring current waves into the discussion. Waves that are resonant with things Salzburg-ian. And thus, ways into Hope for the future.

Dean J. Kotlowski (Salisbury University)

The Road to Self Determination:

Aboriginal Policy in the United States and Australia, 1960-1993

Transnational, comparative approaches have great promise to enrich American Studies though they have not always been used. The intriguing topic of recent Aboriginal policy in the United States and Australia is a case in point. This paper offers a brief overview of the many similarities between these two Pacific partners in an important area of race relations, minority rights, and identity politics.

Between 1970 and 1988, US policy became favorable toward self-determination for American Indians. Beginning in 1970, the federal government ceased its effort to “terminate” Indian tribes and to assimilate Indians into non-Indian society. Instead, under the banner of “self-determination without termination,” the government turned to respecting, even enhancing, tribal authority and American Indian cultural distinctiveness. This change did not occur in a vacuum. American Indian activists, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, used a variety of tactics—lobbying, civil disobedience, and litigation—to reclaim Indian land, fishing, and water rights. The revolution they helped wrought had enormous implications. Writing in 1988, the historian Lawrence C. Kelly observed that US Indian policy had evolved over a century from “virtual denial of tribal sovereignty to almost full recognition.”

Fascinatingly, Australian policy moved toward self-determination for Aborigines during the same period. The governments of Gough Whitlam and Malcolm Fraser, not unlike the administrations of Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and Jimmy Carter, called for a halt to assimilationist policies and embraced self-determination or self-management. They transferred specific tracts of land to Aboriginal groups, passed legislation allowing the return of land to Aborigines in the Northern Territory (1976), and enacted a law to permit incorporation of aboriginal groups and the transfer of public services to them—an idea present in the US Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975. To be sure, the major breakthrough in rights for Aborigines occurred with the High Court’s decision in *Mabo v. Queensland No. 2* (1992) which upheld the common law doctrine of Aboriginal title. Nevertheless, Commonwealth governments had moved to enhance the land rights of Aborigines since the mid-1970s.

Workshop 5: American Studies and/as Video Game Studies

Saturday, November 4, 2017 | 10:30 – 12:30 | Parker Hall | Chair: Michael Fuchs

Sascha Pöhlmann (LMU München)

Whitman and Everything: The Poetics of Scale and Embodied Connectedness

This paper will discuss the video game *Everything* (2017) by David O'Reilly alongside the poem "Song of Myself" (1855) by Walt Whitman, arguing that they share an aesthetics of scale that confronts the player and reader, respectively, with the very small, the very large, and everything in-between. In this way, both the video game and the poem seek to convey a sense of universal connectedness. As I will demonstrate, the means of communicating this idea are at the same time similar and very different. On the one hand, both "Song of Myself" and *Everything* are non-narrative, as both video games and poems are formally independent of that category. On the other hand, they are also very different, as the reader reads while the player plays. I will explore how this difference affects notions of agency, embodiment, environment, and mediality.

Michael Fuchs (University of Graz)

Playing with the Historical Real: Video-Gaming and Trauma

In "Simulation vs. Narrative: An Introduction to Ludology," leading ludologist Gonzalo Frasca stresses that games are simulations. As such, they employ an "alternative semiotical structure" which offers "distinct rhetorical possibilities" and may "provide authors with essentially different tools for conveying their opinions." A "simulation," he continues, "does not simply retain the—generally audiovisual—characteristics of the object but it also includes a model of its behaviors." Accordingly, whereas movies, for example, primarily represent their storyworlds audiovisually, video games add to this audiovisual dimension what Marcus Schulzke has called "participatory interaction," which is governed by specific rules.

In my presentation, I will discuss three video games in which players are tasked to re-enact traumatic moments in American history: *9-11 Survivor* (2003), *JFK: Reloaded* (2004), and *Super Columbine Massacre RPG!* (2005). *9-11 Survivor* puts players in control of an employee caught in the World Trade Center that fateful morning in the fall of 2001. The game contains several scenarios; in some, escape is possible (albeit very difficult), in others, there is simply no escape, while in some, the only escape route is through the windows. *JFK: Reloaded* asks players to re-enact the John F. Kennedy assassination. After completing a try, the re-enactment is compared with the Zapruder film in order to measure the re-enactment's historical accuracy. *Super Columbine Massacre RPG!*, finally, is a role-playing game in which players act out the Columbine Massacre. In my presentation, I will suggest that the three video games address the question of historical reality in different ways. What the three video games have in common, however, is their visual authenticity, which is, paradoxically, based on the games' lack of photorealism. This visual tension introduces a degree of indeterminacy, of uncertainty, which, in the end, not only highlights that media shape our understanding of history, but also suggests that the Historical Real is inaccessible—at least in narrative form.

Mahshid Mayar (University of Bielefeld)

The Ultimate Metaphor: Game Studies in/and American Studies

American studies has rarely failed to demonstrate readiness to continually refocus and remain open to the critical examination of new texts, expressions, and metaphors. Americanists on both sides of the Atlantic have shown sensitivity to new questions, to new turns in the humanities and the social sciences, and, most importantly, to the vicissitudes of the ever-changing sociocultural scene in the United States (and more recently in the Americas in general). One such recent turn is what game studies scholars like Brian Sutton-Smith have referred to as the “ludic turn” in the humanities. Reflected in the works of game theorists, even game reviewers and designers, the ludic turn has the potential to influence the ways we practice American studies.

As my paper will demonstrate, the ludic turn has already impacted the ways Americans archive, has affected what various museums put on display, and has even changed how American politicians make foreign policy arguments. The guiding objective of my presentation will be to examine video games not as individual commercial titles that compete against older cultural forms or as pioneers of the so-called “militainment,” but as a metaphor for American life in the new millennium, an archive of sociocultural changes in the United States—the very place where Americanists look for questions and answers.

Andreas Stadler (University of Salzburg)

How Video Games Embody the Past and Future of American Studies

Video games are an immensely interesting cultural product in and of themselves. They reflect the culture of the people who make them. Moreover, they allow us to experience other cultures in an unprecedented way. However, video games also create culture. 42% of people in the US play video games regularly. Most of these people are spending a considerable amount of their free time with them. Naturally, sub-cultures have formed around games, which are not only interesting study subjects but also influence mainstream culture. The popularity of video games has also made their development a serious business. Today, they represent the 3rd biggest entertainment complex in the US, and trends suggest that video games will only gain more prominence. Consequently, they have to be part of the future of American studies. However, video games are also relevant for American studies because they revisit and provide new perspectives on already well-discussed topics. Additionally, they make them accessible to new audiences. The educational game *The Oregon Trail* immediately comes to mind. Another example would be *BioShock*, which is one of the most discussed video games. It is set in the underwater city of Rapture. Built as a liberal utopia inspired by Randian Objectivism in the 1940s, it has turned into a hellscape by the time the player arrives there in 1960.

Workshop 6: "President [Enter Name Here] Welcomes you to Washington" – Presidents, Politics, Popular Culture/Media
Saturday, November 4, 2017 | 14:00 – 16:00 | Heller Room | Chair: Stefan Rabitsch

Barbara Bračić (University of Klagenfurt)

"On this Earth, Every Act is a Political Act" - The American Psyche through the Lenses of Superheroes in the Aftermath of 9/11

"On this Earth, every act is a political act", reported Andrew Sullivan in *Batman v Superman: The Dawn of Justice* (2016). Ever since the 1930s, superhero stories have reflected political issues of their respective times. The destruction of the World Trade Center marked the beginning of a paradigm shift, and superheroes needed to adapt to different issues in a post-9/11 world. It is not difficult to see that Spider-Man, released in May 2002, was an immediate response to the tragedy. Despite America's fresh wounds, the film was a huge cinematic success, attracting a record of 1.64 billion moviegoers. More than a 1 decade later, the superhero movie delirium shows no signs of decrease. While many thought this would be a short-lived trend, the audience still does not seem to be fed up with caped and masked heroes. Once the immediate effects of the trauma incurred by 9/11 had been processed by the national American psyche, a visible pattern in superhero movies started to emerge. Superheroes began to adapt to the post-9/11 political landscape and its hot button issues such as foreign policy, civil liberties, illegal immigration, centralization of power, war on terror, government oversight, etc. This new wave of superhero movies arguably culminated in the epic fight between two of the biggest icons in American popular culture – Batman and Superman – just in time for the presidential elections and the battle for the White House. With the movie showing the clash of the red- and blue-eyed titans, an eccentric xenophobic billionaire, senate hearings, bombings and anti-immigrant references, it is hard not to think about the 2016 presidential elections. In the age of Trump and the "whitelash" (Jones 2016) it represents, *Batman v Superman* provided a fully-fledged sociopolitical commentary on one of the dirtiest presidential campaigns in American history. It also reflected on the two halves of the American psyche that increasingly diverged in the aftermath of 9/11 – one that pain and personal tragedy turned dark and cruel, and the other one that used pain to create resilience and fight for a better tomorrow. *Batman v Superman* is not the only superhero movie to reflect the anger and fear of living in a post-9/11 world. The pattern of such reflections is clearly repeated: the constant invocation of the War on Terror (*The Dark Knight* (2008)), counter-terrorism (*Captain America: The Winter Soldier* (2014)), or civil rights and government oversight (*Captain America: Civil War* (2016)). Devastated by one of the most terrifying acts of terror, and scared to their bones, Americans turned to their government for protection. Instead of comfort, they experienced only the shortcomings: the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the relief efforts after Hurricane Katrina, the Great Recession to name but a few. As faith in their government started to fade, they turned to superheroes for salvation. My paper will discuss how the American people have begun to channel their post-9/11 trauma through superhero narratives, and to reflect on the current political discourse and its hot-button issues.

Esther Košutnik-Striedner (University of Klagenfurt)

"When (the) Eagle is Down, the Phoenix Rises" - Changing Images of Fictional Presidents since the 1990s and their Cultural Meaning(s)

Since World War II, fictional representations of the American presidency, especially in mainstream cinema and TV, have contributed to an extraordinary perception of the American president as the most powerful man on Earth. Despite one-dimensional depictions and unrealistic portrayals, it was primarily popular culture that has shaped this hyperbolic image of the presidency. In recent years, we have witnessed a proliferation of movies and TV shows that deal with fictional U.S. presidents. Movies of the 1990s, such as *Independence Day* (1996) or *Air*

Force One (1997), feature fictional presidents who embody the nation's post-Cold War triumphalism. These films have created the image of an action hero president who is combatproven and who single-handedly saves the nation from various threats. Ever since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the conception of the 'most powerful man in the world' has been subject to notable permutations, and the film industry's depiction of the executive office has undergone drastic changes. In contrast to the powerful action hero presidents of the 1990s, *White House Down* (2013) and *Olympus Has Fallen* (2013), for example, paint a starkly different image of the presidency. They suggest that the Commander-in-Chief is no longer in control of events. Their fictional presidents need assistance when in peril and have become impotent political figures who are unable to exercise their presumed power. Nevertheless, while *White House Down* and *Olympus Has Fallen* insinuate that the presidency is in crisis, the American values of liberty and democracy each of these presidents personifies are still worth rescuing. The latest TV series featuring a fictional president, *Designated Survivor* (2016—present), illustrates yet another radical shift in the representation of the U.S president on screen. Unlike the former fictional presidents who complied with a fantastic image rather than with reality, in *Designated Survivor* Tom Kirkman is a down-to-earth kind of guy. He is a political outsider who has unwillingly been assigned the sheer impossible task of leading the country out of severest crisis it has ever seen. Set against the backdrop of the 2016 presidential election and its aftermath, Tom Kirkman functions as the fictional mirror image of President Donald Trump. The TV show reflects public sentiments and repeatedly calls into question the entire office of president.

I argue that the series marks the endpoint in the process of deconstructing the post-Cold War fictional president, who has finally been stripped of his power. The series' nostalgic approach articulates the general wish for the restoration of the presidency, which has suffered both on screen and in reality, and indicates the nation's longing for a president who acts deliberately and is able to solve the country's problems.

László Bernáth (University of Klagenfurt)

"... Lest they go on Hating Us" - Presidential Power and the Dismantling of Democracy in the War on/of Terror Era

Recent popular cultural artifacts, such as the movies *White House Down* (2013) or *Olympus Has Fallen* (2013), and the TV series *Designated Survivor* (2016-present), have expressed increasing concern about the powerlessness and vulnerability of the President. The position of the supposedly 'most powerful person in the world' is shown to have degraded to a state, where the President is no longer able to even enact his policies, while, on the other hand, he is a constant target due to his high – though, in effect, powerless and thus rather symbolic – position. Such a significantly different approach to depicting presidential powers, or the lack of them, is immensely interesting to observe in the post-9/11 era. Following the attacks on September 11, 2001, presidential authority was in fact extended – and remains so – and some constitutional restrictions of power, such as the prohibition of unilaterally decided, unauthorized involvement in foreign affairs, the citizenry's right to privacy, or the non-negotiable right to habeas corpus, have been circumvented, if not outright disregarded, in the name of 'counterterrorism'.

The emphasis on limitations imposed on the power of political leaders in the period of their extension can become profoundly dangerous. The perception of 'powerless leadership' offers itself for an interpretation that there is a causal relationship between the apparent impotence of central authorities and the various crises they ought to handle but are unable to. Thus, the rational solution, at least in part, appears to be the loosening of the already loose restrictions on political power factions. The aim of this paper is to explore the potential dangers of this narrative within the current War on Terror framework. I will argue that a widespread belief in weakened presidential power, in a time when democratic values and civil liberties have already been drastically severed, is bound to further increase popular acceptance of the gradual dismantling of democracy with the pretext of saving it.

Workshop 7: Understanding America: From Education to Cultural Policy

Saturday, November 4, 2017 | 14:00 – 16:00 | Campbell Room | Chair: Sylvia Mieszkowski

Stefan Brandt (University of Graz)

What's in These Names? American Studies, Cultural Politics, and Drama in the Trump Era.

The springboard for my essay is Janice Radway's well-known ASA address "What's in a Name?" in which she explored the implications of putting 'America' into the name of an academic organization. Is the word 'America,' Radway asked in 2004 – in the midst of the Bush Era –, not already filled with problematic assumptions regarding the nation's imperialist and exceptionalist politics? One year later, John Carlos Rowe raised very similar questions regarding the role of American Studies, describing the Bush administration as a "frightening mixture of nationalism, militarism, and religious fundamentalism" and stating that "history is 'repeating itself' simply because we have not imagined how to transcend the national form." For many observers, the Trump Era offers, indeed, a *déjà vu* experience – not only because of the uncanny resemblance of the election outcomes in 2000 and 2016, but most importantly, due to the way the current U.S. administration seems to deal with matters of cultural history and national self-awareness. Similar to the 'New Americanists' of the 2000s, scholars today are beginning to raise questions regarding the direction and function of U.S. political and cultural practice. How do Trump's rhetoric of "America First" (borrowed from Reagan's 1980 presidential campaign) and his policy of building new walls affect the discourses of immigration and national identity? How does a nation so proud of its tradition of 'diversity within unity' get to grips with this new exceptionalism? My talk focuses on the multiple challenges that scholars of American Cultural Studies have to face in an era marked by 'alternative facts' and 'post-truth.' The dramaturgy (and liturgy) of Trump's speeches and writings, I will argue, is representative of a whole series of highly dramatic performances and utterances in which radical images of 'life in the extreme' are employed to evoke a state of constant exception. Trump's politics, often resorting to decrees and executive orders to overrule court regulations, is accurately mirrored in his own speeches and essays which delineate a "crippled America" that has to be cured by a powerful warrior who knows "how to fix it." This doom-filled imagery is reminiscent of Giorgio Agamben's description of the "fictitious state of exception" that seemed to permeate U.S. cultural politics after 9/11. Marked by constant evocations of a "fancied emergency" (Agamben), a predicament is invoked in which the media seem "fake" and elections "rigged" (unless won by the right person). As I will show in my talk, images of this 'emotional exceptionalism' (perpetual crisis, war, terrorism, etc.) have not only become an integral part of Trump's own rhetoric, but have equally entered a public discourse that portrays the U.S. President alternatively as a "mutating virus" (V. Jones) or the reason for the American people "to live in fear" (A. Rye).

Karen Patricia Heath (University of Oxford)

Towards a Trumpian Cultural Policy? The Donald and the Arts

In December 2016 President-Elect Donald Trump offered movie star Sylvester Stallone the chairmanship of the National Endowment for the Arts (the federal agency created by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965 to provide grants to artists and arts organisations in the United States). Stallone declined, but it seemed that the Endowment might be spared the fiscal chop: that was until Trump announced in March 2017 that he would seek to defund and ultimately eliminate the agency.

The President's proposals provoked considerable controversy – and not just from the agency's beneficiaries, but from key elements within the Trump voter coalition itself. The final decision, however, is not Trump's to make, for it is Congress that sets the federal budget, and although Republicans control both houses, it is far from certain that members will simply follow the President's lead.

This paper offers an early examination of the battles taking place between various interests who all offer competing visions of what a Trumpian cultural policy for the 2010s might look like. In so doing, it contributes to growing bodies of literature that emphasise the middle ground in the so-called Culture Wars, the path dependent nature of much public policy, and the power of agents of political continuity.

Johannes Mahlknrecht (University of Innsbruck)

The Value of US Values: What Austrian American Studies can still Teach Europe

It has never been difficult for Europeans to somehow feel superior to Americans, and Donald Trump's presidency has now, if anything, made it easier still. Not only are the clichés (or, in part, truths) of us having the longer history, greater intellectual sophistication, and better cuisine hard to kill, but also the core American values and ideals, noble as they sound, are easy to unmask as mere hypocrisy. The institution of slavery, the treatment of Native Americans, and the discrimination against women run counter to the oh-so-American concept of equality, and the side-effects of the capitalist system apparently reduce the American Dream to nothing more than a fantasy.

In this largely critical view of a country that has nevertheless so heavily contributed to shaping the self-image of Europe, where do American Studies in Austria, as an academic discipline, position themselves? Do we feel compelled to defend America, not least in order defend and legitimize our own field of study as well? Do we contribute to the trend of US-bashing by wrapping unfavorable opinions in more academic language? Or do we avoid "taking sides" altogether by jumping on the bandwagon of interdisciplinarity which, more often than not, ends up leaving little if any room for actual observations about America? My paper deals with these questions by looking at some of the recent trends and directions of American Studies in Austria.

Maria Proitsaki (Gävle University, Sweden)

From Tupac to Heaney via Rosa Parks: Utilizing Nikki Giovanni's Poetry in English Courses in Sweden

Nikki Giovanni is a celebrated contemporary African American poet whose poems can be used to help students appreciate poetry and eventually write their own texts. The orality of Giovanni's poetic language and the jazz quality of her lyric have proven popular and the straightforwardness and clarity that characterize her approach of her subject matter make her verse accessible. Moreover, the poems have an appeal because of the actuality of their poetic themes; they touch upon common daily concerns and hence they can engage even readers unaccustomed to poetry. For these reasons, utilizing approaches on Giovanni's poems involving aspects of American Literature and Culture at large is a fine way to infuse to the students a better understanding of and further interest in poetry. I am primarily interested in strategies that facilitate the introduction of poems. I consider the most common way of introducing poetry, via song lyrics, a discussion which is now to be informed by Bob Dylan's new status as Nobel laureate. Thereafter, I browse other ways of bringing verse into focus in connection to more popular cultural forms of expression. I narrow down to Giovanni's work via a short autobiographical poem, which offers a first person account of the poet's cultural background and the potential to proceed towards diverse cultural directions.

Workshop 8: Life Writing and Transnational American Studies

Saturday, November 4, 2017 | 14:00 – 16:00 | Elledge Room | Chairs: Nassim Balestrini, Silvia Schultermandl

Volker Depkat (University of Regensburg)

Diaries and Letters as Life Writing

Sylvia Schultermandl (University of Graz)

Online Life Writing

Klaus Rieser (University of Graz)

Auto/Biographical Film

Nassim Balestrini (University of Graz)

Transnational Intermedial Hip Hop Life Writing

Katharina Fackler (University of Graz)

Transoceanic Mobility and the Senses

This panel will present short programmatic statements intended to propose how recent developments in life writing theory can productively dialogue with the trajectories of transnational American Studies. For instance, the movement away from life writing in conventional book format and towards multimedial and/or online forms of representation raises new questions about authorship, audience, and medium. The production, dissemination, and reception of autobiographical self-expression in liminal genres, such as diaries and letters, which waver between private and public consumption, furthermore require contextual analysis of individual texts and a reconsideration of genre as a social contract between reader and writer. In a transnational American Studies context in particular, this calls attention to the trans- and intercultural features based on practices defined by language, cultural expectations, and aesthetic concepts. In their contributions, the speakers will negotiate several decades of research and theory on relational, positional, and performative life writing within the often unexplored intermediate ground between multiple poles of American Studies concerns such as citizenship and nationhood versus individuality, mobility versus rootedness, and progressive historiography versus nostalgic attachment to tradition.

Workshop 9: American Selves: Emotions, Affect, and Self-Determination

Saturday, November 4, 2017 | 14:00 – 16:00 | Parker Hall | Chair: Hanna Wallinger

Christian Quendler (University of Innsbruck)

From Personality to Celebrity: American Cultural Studies of Persona Then and Now

In 1908, the congregational minister and long-term president of Bowdoin College (Maine, USA) William de Hyde published his commercially most-successful book: *Self-Measurement: A Scale of Human Values with Directions for Personal Application*. Founded in Hyde's moral philosophy and systematic theology, the book marks an early religious foray into scientific and socio-economic conceptions of personality. It promised to measure and visualize character in the form of a numerical index and an ostensibly scientific psychograph. Although *Self-Measurement* found only little resonance in the emerging field of personality psychology, it was – in modified form – fully integrated in the field of business and management science. In 1928, Hyde's "scale of human values" was introduced in a university program on "Human Engineering" offered by MIT's newly founded Department of Humanics. The curious history of Hyde's book, which changed from a popular application of his *Social Theology* (1895) and *Practical Ethics* (1892) to a management tool of human resources, sheds light on the interdiscursive matrix that shaped new conceptions of personality in US culture during the first decade of the twentieth century. It also allows us to revise orthodox history of this development as a one-dimensional process of secularization. In reviewing the interdisciplinary stakes to which Hyde's *Self-Measurement* responds, I will also revisit the pioneering research on personality in popular and cultural studies and compare it to recent research in celebrity studies. Although cultural studies have generated a long-standing interest in the cult of personality, early and contemporary approaches are rarely brought into a productive dialogue. Can current celebrity studies benefit from the research programs of early cultural personality studies? What insights could celebrity studies bring to the historical questions raised in the early formative years of cultural studies?

Roberta Hofer (University of Innsbruck)

The Land of the Free? Life, Liberty, and Human Puppetry

"[A]ll Men are naturally in . . . a *State of perfect Freedom*," writes the English philosopher John Locke in his influential 1690 essay on Civil Government. "[W]ithout asking leave, or depending upon the Will of any other Man . . . without Subordination" (John Locke). The last decades, however, have seen several US films feature characters who find themselves manipulated like puppets. Examples include *The Truman Show* (1998), *Being John Malkovich* (1999), and *Stranger than Fiction* (2006).

The relationships between these puppets and their masters are rooted in dominance and control, inherently American themes, considering the importance of independence and self-determination in the nation's consciousness. The case studies not only express ideas of dependency and freedom through visual clues, but also create storylines that culminate in a shift of auctorial power, the once-submissive puppets grabbing the reins and emancipating themselves into confident narrators. While both, puppets and masters, work towards the fulfillment of their American Dream, only one succeeds.

Referencing key-documents like the *Declaration of Independence* and the *Bill of Rights*, this paper places the filmic examples in a wider cultural context, illustrating that the trope of the human marionette is not only rooted in the architecture of narration, but in the cornerstones of the US constitution and the American psyche.

Marie Dücker (University of Graz)

Feeling Literature: Emotions and Affect in the Contemporary Intermedial American Young Adult Suicide Narrative

Contemporary young adult (YA) fiction has produced multiple works focused on suicide and its aftermath; among these texts, a large number uses epistolary or diary formats which, on top of that, have a decidedly intermedial bent. This raises the question as to how intermedial features figure within the affective mechanisms of these novels. Forms of the postmodern disaster novel and the blurring of gender stereotypes as seen in the character formation of the female heroine in dystopian realities have been the focus of YA novel research, whereas an intermedial perspective is not to be found in extant research. Furthermore, the thematic focus of these suicide-themed texts particularly invites discussion of how specific forms of mediating affect can be read in light of narratological models and how these texts use intermedial features to push the genre of YA narratives towards new forms. And, finally, intermedial perspective helps to discuss the extra-textual lives of these texts. What the primary works to be discussed in this talk have in common is the interdependence of the multimodal character of the narratives, employing more than one medium in the semiotic format of the printed text, and the complex structures of feelings embodied by the characters expressing their emotions. The heroes or heroines of these narratives are moreover affected by the suicide of one of their loved ones or battle their own suicidal thought patterns they are confronted with in the myriad social institutions in which they must function, such as family and school, to name but a few. However, in these structures of feelings employed in those narratives diffusions of positive and hopeful emotions eventually outweigh the initially negatively connoted spheres of emotion that characterize the discussion of adolescent suicidal tendencies. Novels to be discussed might include *Thirteen Reasons Why* (2007) by Jay Asher, *I Was Here* (2015) by Gayle Forman, and *The Last Time We Say Goodbye* (2015) by Cynthia Hand among others.

Workshop 10: Where Are We Going? New Directions in American Studies

Sunday, November 5, 2017 | 10:45 – 12:15 | Heller Room | Chair: Ralph J. Poole

Sabine Sielke (University of Bonn)

Ecotoning Inter- and Transdisciplinaryity - Interrogating the Transitional Habitats of (North) American Studies

From its very beginnings American studies has positioned itself as an inter- and transdisciplinary enterprise and thus been a driving force of an approach indispensable to knowledge production. After all, most research questions require multiple perspectives and communication across disciplinary divides. Yet such conversations not only remain a challenge; competing for research funds, interdisciplinary joint ventures are often met with considerable skepticism by the very research institutions and foundations that hail inter- and transdisciplinaryity.

Evolving from a collaborative project on knowledge ecologies and focusing on work in (North) American Studies, my talk employs the concept of the ecotone (defined as a transitional habitat where two or more distinct ecosystems meet and overlap) to interrogate these questions: Under what conditions does inter- and transdisciplinary work thrive? What repercussions do interdisciplinary conversations have on individual disciplines? And why is it often difficult 'to sell' inter- and transdisciplinary work? Reentering the debates on inter- and transdisciplinary collaboration with a focus on processes of interaction, adaptation, and transformation, I aim to assess the effects and future of our field's inter- and transdisciplinaryity.

Gudrun Grabher (University of Innsbruck)

American Studies and Medical Narratives: Challenge or Provocation

Even though from its very beginnings American Studies has been defined as a cultural studies field of research and therefore characterized by its multi-disciplinarity — focusing primarily on literature but also including history, the arts, politics, philosophy, etc. — my philosophical approach to Emily Dickinson in my PhD thesis in 1979 was perceived as a challenge to the traditional boundaries of doctoral theses at that time. Nowadays, almost four decades later, American Studies has pushed the frontier of its disciplines even further and also includes Film and Media as well as Television Studies. In addition, popular cultural in general also features as a major focus in American Studies. What has also gained ground within American Studies is the field of Law and the Humanities and Medical Humanities as these trans-disciplinary investigations started to develop and establish themselves at US-American universities two to three decades ago. May we hence conclude that within American Studies, “anything goes”?

By means of my current research project in the field of Medical Humanities — a monograph on facial disfigurement in American narratives on the basis of Emmanuel Levinas' ethics — I wish to demonstrate, in my presentation, how the inclusion of topics such as the development of plastic and reconstructive surgery within (and outside) the US, the perception of disfigurement over the centuries within the cultural and historical context, its relation to disability studies, as well as their reflection in literature do pose a challenge but also enrich this field of American Studies, widening the horizon of its perspectives and deepening the insights into American culture.

Simon Whybrew (University of Graz)

The Promise of Tomorrow? Trans-Histories of Becoming in US Contemporary Speculative Fiction

Speculative fiction has a long history of conservative and regressive politics—particularly with regard to gender and sexuality. However, the genre has also been praised for its potential to imagine futures that transcend existing social hierarchies. In this paper, I will explore the opportunities that science fiction (SF) offers for narrating trajectories of trans-becoming that potentially allow for more nuanced portrayals of trans-histories than the classic narrative of “being born in the wrong body,” which ultimately reinforces limiting binary notions of gender. However, as I will show, SF literature also runs the risk of erasing trans-histories and experiences by focusing primarily on the promise of perfect bodily transformations and modifications in their futuristic landscapes. In order to illustrate these tendencies, I will juxtapose Nino Cipri’s “The Shape of My Name” and Everett Maroon’s “Treasure Acre” (both short stories from the 2016 *Transcendent: The Year’s Best Transgender Speculative Fiction* by K.M. Szpara) with select passages from John Varley’s *Steel Beach* and Kim Stanley Robinson’s novel *2312*. In this analysis, I will employ key concepts from Transgender Studies such as transnormativity, passing, Jasbir K. Puar’s conception of becoming trans, and Gayle Salamon’s idea of “assuming a body”.

Astrid M. Fellner (Saarland University)

Borders and the Making of Trans-Americanness

At the 2007 AAAS conference, which was held on the topic of “American Studies in Austria,” I delivered a paper on “Transhemispheric Visions, Border Studies, and the Literatures of the Americas.” Ten years later, transhemispheric approaches to American Studies have become popular, and Border Studies has turned into a vast discipline with different Centers for Border Studies in various parts of the world. My paper intends to look into the disciplinary entanglements of American Studies and Border Studies, showing that American Studies has always already been Border Studies. The border is the most widely used conceptual framework for the study of identity, difference, and cultural encounters in the North American context. In the last decades, border thinking has replaced Fredrick Jackson Turner’s concept of the frontier. It was historian Herbert Eugene Bolton, who coined the term ‘borderlands’ in the 1920s to stress the similarities in the histories of various nations in the hemisphere. While Bolton’s concept of borderlands never gained much influence beyond historical scholarship, it was Gloria Anzaldúa’s book *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987) that became the foundational text for Border Studies in the humanities.

I will attempt to tease out what American Studies has to offer to the burgeoning field of Border Studies by looking into the significance of the border in the making of trans-Americanness. This new critical arena, proposed by José David Saldívar in 2012, implies the unsettling of the logic of the nation-state model and the strengthening of a form of “trans-American studies” that straddles US, Chicano and Latino, Latin American and subaltern Studies. The notion of trans-Americanness, I want to show, can provide crucial impetus for the development of American Border Studies.

**Workshop 11: Make American Studies About History Again –
Post Factual America - Needs and Challenges in American Studies**
Sunday, November 5, 2017 | 10:45 – 12:15 | Campbell Room | Chair: Martin Gabriel

Stefan Rabitsch (University of Graz)

The Return of History; or, Prepare for "American Carnage": Combatting Post-Truth in the American Studies Classroom (Historical Thinking, Popular Culture, Counterfactuals)

American history is on trial, *again*. Francis Fukuyama proclaimed, somewhat presumptuously, the *End of History* in his eponymous book in 1992 vis-à-vis the intensifying of the culture wars that informed the decade. Donald Trump's victory and the "whitelash" (Jones, 2016) it represents are but the result of the ongoing fallout of these multi-discourse conflicts. More often than not, they boiled down to whose history is told and by whom it is represented; we readily recall the Jefferson-Hemings debate, or the controversy over the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, as recent examples of when American history was put on trial with varying degrees of success. For the latter, the refurbished B-29 *Enola Gay*, which was put on exhibit the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, became a national focal point. While *alternative facts* are by no means a recent phenomenon, President Trump's election speaks to the potential of post-truth translating into a paradigmatic shift which in turn poses severe challenges to the teaching of American Studies. Part position paper, my contribution aims at unsettling the lethargy, liberal presumptuousness, shortsightedness and willful ignorance of dealing with the controversial and the unpleasant which seem to have relegated the teaching of American cultural histories (dominant and marginal) to a position of tertiary importance. Thus, the paper will showcase practical examples that serve to illustrate how we can redouble our efforts to place the workings and vagaries of historical narrative discourses front and center in the American Studies classroom.

For example, from *fake news* to *alternative facts* it is but a small step into the realms of *counterfactuals*. They all necessitate an understanding of and proficiency in shaping historical narrative discourse for various effects. Hence, using counterfactuals as a critical laboratory allows students to acquire the antidotal tools for countering the insidious effects of the post-truth turn. We must also tackle head-on the intellectual discomfort that might be caused by engaging with *whiteness*. The use of potent symbolism (e.g. Donald Trump hung the presidential portrait of Andrew Jackson in the Oval Office while the Keystone XL pipeline protest at Standing Rock was cracked down upon) are echoed by disconcerting effects such as Trump's most recent revisionist comments on the Civil War. Once again, we can reach deep into the toolbox of the cultural historian and make meaningful these latest developments in terms of *Custerism*. What is the whitelash if not yet another permutation of *The Last Stand of Custer* which has enjoyed a long and problematic history despite the efforts of New Western Historians? Lastly, popular culture offers useful refractions and reflections of whiteness vis-à-vis counter discourses. Songs like Toby Keith's 'Made in America' (2011), the ready-to-teach musical *Hamilton* (2016), and most recently, the TV adaptation of *American Gods* (2017-) are but a few examples for how to reinvigorate the teaching historical thinking.

Martin Gabriel (University of Klagenfurt)

Forging National Identity in the Trans-Mississippi Theater - The US Army, Warfare, Racism, and Nation-Building (c. 1840-1890)

This paper deals with the issue of settlement, warfare, and nation-building in the area west of the Mississippi from 1840 onwards, and especially with fault lines among the white population that can be traced back to differing interests and motivations when dealing with Native Americans and dividing up the “virgin lands”. The campaigns waged against Native American peoples by the United States during the 19th century are often identified as conflicts resembling those between European colonial powers and indigenous peoples in Africa or Asia. In fact, while there are striking similarities, one has to keep in mind that the expansion of European settlement in the Trans-Mississippi theatre can be seen as quite unique. In most cases, settlement preceded administration; and even where army posts had been established prior to mining towns or farm communities, this seldom meant that garrisons effectively controlled surrounding areas. Troops were later tasked with securing reservations’ borders and guaranteeing the safety of their former enemies. In most cases, new conflicts did *not* arise from unprovoked Native American attacks, but from white settlers’ intrusions on reservations. Before areas of settlement in the West were “pacified”, settlers often called for a larger military presence; later on, the same settler groups lobbied for the closing of army posts – mainly because they occupied precious land. The Army had to abandon posts when it suited local communities or state governments eager for re-election. For some time, military units prevented settlers from violating the reservations’ borders. However, this policy became more and more obsolete with the rapid increase of the white population. Even so, the so-called “Indian Wars” have still to be characterized not only as colonial warfare, but also as the result of a not-yet consolidated nation trying to expand its territory while struggling for internal stability. The nexus of – capitalist, territorial or financial – interests and military or personal duties of (as well as the conflicts between) government, military, settlers, businessmen, and indigenous peoples formed the nucleus of a strife that was to shape American identity for generations to come.

Michael Streif (University of Salzburg)

Queering History: New Perspectives on Manliness in the Age of the American Revolution

In eighteenth-century America, the notion of masculinity was far from being a stable construct. Shifting ideas as to what constitutes the ‘ideal’ man posed considerable challenges to the male population. In an era of political turmoil and unsteadiness, “fraternal love” was of utmost importance. An analysis of personal letters and diary entries clearly shows that male-male friendships in the Age of the American Revolution were characterized by affection, devotion, and fondness, and that these relations by far exceeded our modern idea of ‘bromance.’

While there is no question that we cannot discuss eighteenth-century same-sex relations solely in terms of our modern notion of homosexuality, it would be just as one-sided to argue that the issue of sex did not arise in any way. It is thus time to renegotiate the question of same-sex desire in a time when the term ‘homosexuality’ was not even coined. Reading correspondence between eighteenth-century men through the queer lens brings to light that many a friendship was in fact homoerotic in nature.

Margaret Sönsner Breen

The Locations of Politics: Highsmith's *The Price of Salt*, Todd Haynes' Film *Carol*, and American Cultural Post-War and Post-9/11 Landscapes

In this talk I examine Patricia Highsmith's lesbian novel *The Price of Salt* (1952) and its recent film adaptation *Carol* (2015). Considered a lesbian classic, the former is one of the few works of pre-Stonewall fiction to offer its protagonists a happy ending. The latter, directed by Todd Haynes with a screenplay by Phyllis Nagy, is a love letter as much to Highsmith's protagonists Therese and Carol, as it is a love letter to postwar cinema, in particular that cinema's explorations of and coded tributes to illicit sexuality and gender nonconformity. In so far as the doubled question that structures Joyce Carol Oates' 1966 story "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" may be said to structure Haynes's twenty-first-century engagement with queer texts, filmic and literary, from the postwar period forward, one might well argue that reading the novel and film together and against other contemporary artistic productions allows one to recognize an inward turn of cultural insularity that, while differently modulated in each, is nonetheless at work in both texts. How queer are these texts, after all, and in so far as "queer" gestures toward social inclusion, how queer are these texts in their vision of America? This is a primary issue that a joint analysis of novel and film engenders.

Workshop 12: Across the Ocean and Back –

Mobility and Cultural Negotiations

Sunday, November 5, 2017 | 10:45 – 12:15 | Elledge Room | Chair: Roberta Hofer

Alexandra Ganser (University of Vienna)

Maritime Mobilities in American Studies

Focusing on the first half of the conference title, my paper is asking where American Studies is going when it turns to the sea. While the Atlantic—in its various versions as the Black Atlantic (Paul Gilroy), the Red Atlantic (Marcus Rediker, Jace Weaver, David Armitage), or in the well-established transatlantic version of American studies—has been made productive in the discipline for at least two decades and the Pacific has come into focus more recently, the latest developments in the field have started theorizing maritime American studies also on more general terms. Elizabeth DeLoughrey, for instance, has taken up Kamau Braithwaite's notion of *tidalectics* (the cyclical model of the continual movement and rhythm of oceans) in her exploration of how island literature articulates relations between routes and roots, destabilizing national, ethnic, and regional frameworks. John Carlos Rowe, Brian Russell Roberts, or Michelle Stephens, among others, are currently reconceiving American Studies as Archipelagic Studies, departing from conventional narratives of both the U.S. in particular but also the Americas generally as fundamentally continental spaces; they theorize America as “constituted by an assemblage of interconnected islands, archipelagoes, shorelines, continents, seas, and oceans” (book cover).

In my talk, I will revisit these concepts and introduce my own research perspective on maritime American Studies as informed by mobility studies, which has evolved as an interdisciplinary field within the humanities since the 1990s, taking up cultural geography's revision of mobility beyond mere transportation studies. Mobility studies ask about the production of mobilities and immobilities historically, socially, politically, and culturally, and it is especially this latter aspect that I will bring into dialogue with maritime American studies. In this way, my talk reflects also on the beginnings of American Studies as an interdisciplinary field and inquires into research perspectives emerging from cross-disciplinary dialogues such as that fostered by the research platform “Mobile Cultures and Societies” at the University of Vienna (www.mobilecultures.univie.ac.at).

Leopold Lippert (University of Salzburg)

Negotiating the Early United States in the Context of the Atlantic World: Susanna Rowson's *Reuben and Rachel*

As part of a recent rediscovery of Susanna Rowson's (1762-1824) writings other than her bestselling sentimental novel *Charlotte Temple*, her two-volume *Reuben and Rachel; or, Tales of Old Times* (1798) has been lauded in particular by critics. The novel presents a centuries-long, multigenerational family history that reaches from the first landing of Christopher Columbus in the Americas in 1492 to a melodramatic renunciation of European titles in eighteenth-century Philadelphia. In many ways, *Reuben and Rachel* speaks—albeit contradictorily—to contemporary debates in American studies about race, gender, and the transnational: it espouses interracial and interreligious connection and exchange (and even marriage); it offers transatlantic and hemispheric perspectives on early America; and it provides positive depictions of female agency and women's political empowerment.

In my talk, I want to suggest that *Reuben and Rachel* strategically uses the Atlantic Ocean (and the materiality of seafaring on it) in order to interrogate the shifting imperial geographies of the Atlantic world from the late-fifteenth to the late-eighteenth century. By employing maritime mobility as a site of cultural negotiation, I argue, Rowson examines the fantasies of transatlantic coherence and connectivity that were so central to the project of early American nation-building.

By focusing on the ways in which Rowson reiterates (and performatively overwrites) a haunting scene of “coastal distress” throughout the novel, I want to show how *Reuben and Rachel* at first embraces transatlantic circulation and exchange (as well as cross-racial encounter), but eventually abandons them in favor of continental sedentariness and nationalized whiteness.

M. Katharina Wiedlack (University of Vienna)

In Search for a Better Future? Narratives in Female Russian-American Writing

What is the experience of the many young women who immigrated to the USA in the late 1980s, 90s in search of a better life? How did they manage to survive in the new country, and how do they remember their youth in the USSR? The autobiographically inspired novels *Growing Up In Moscow: Memories of a Soviet Girlhood* (1989) by Cathy Young, *Memoirs of a Muse* (2006) and *The Scent of Pine* (2014) by Lara Vapnyar, *Panic in a Suitcase* by Yelena Akhtiorskaya as well as *Petropolis* (2008) and *Lena Finkle's Magic Barrel* (2014) by Anya Ulinich shed some light on the many struggles young soviet/post-soviet women went through coming to ‘the land of the free.’ Young, Ulinich and co. tell the stories of women, who migrated as mail order brides, to join the Jewish diaspora of Brighton Beach, or earn college degrees etc. and were ill equipped to meet the demands the American way of life in terms of intimacy, and the possibility or pursuit of happiness. All these novels use humor to communicate the soviet and migrant-hardship, peppered with nostalgically funny episodes, for example one out of the “Glorious People’s Sex Education” (Ulinich 2014). They struggle with their new immigrant identity and feel a sense of displacement. Their gaze is simultaneously introspective and from the outside; they educate American audiences as much about the soviet history as they mirror their American present. But what kind of women are they/do they want to be? Emancipated or neo-conservative? Are they feminists? If so, what type of feminists? Marxists? neoliberal? Close reading the novels, I will analyze the dominant narratives of soviet girlhood and female migration, to find out what model(s) and politics of womanhood and femininity the texts provide.

Karolina Lovejoy (University of Warsaw)

Media Images of the United States in the Russian Weekly Magazines on the Eve and Immediately after Annexation of Crimea (2013-2014)

With the end of the post Cold War order, marked-in view of many analysts by annexation of Crimea, America still is a major world power and its capacity to influence international events constructively depends on how the world perceives its social system and its global role. The article analyses media images of the United States in three diverse Russian socio-political magazines: *Argumenty I Fakty*, *Kommersant Vlast* and *Novaia Gazeta*. Author uses the concept of framing and qualitative content analysis as she applies the Collective Narcissism Theory to analyze the attitudes found in the Russian publications towards the United States as the tensions in the world politics are building up throughout the year 2013, culminating in the act of annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and causing considerable change of the international discourse in its aftermath. Collective Narcissism is a form of high but unstable collective self-esteem that needs constant, external validation but accepts no validation as sufficient. Just as individual narcissists, the narcissist groups respond with anger and aggression to perceived insult, criticism and humiliation. The author argues that Russia is a collective classic narcissist in its attitude towards the United States. The anti-American sentiments found in the Russian press are reflections of the collectively narcissistic Russian attitude that perceives the United States as the most important source of external validation and at the same time as the one that is chronically threatening. Annexation of Crimea is seen as an example of narcissistic rage but also as the ultimate end of the post-Cold War period when Russia switches its address to “non-West.”

Workshop 13: Futures of Gender Performance

Sunday, November 5, 2017 | 10:45 – 12:15 | Parker Hall | Chair: Stephan Brandt

Sylvia Mieszkowski (University of Vienna)

Cultural Crossovers: Transmedial Adaptation and Activist Appropriation of *The Handmaid's Tale*

That Margaret Atwood's *A Handmaid's Tale* (1985) should climb to the top of Amazon's bestseller list more than 30 years after its publication might have seemed outlandish a couple of years ago. But the steady hollowing out of reproductive rights in US elective districts gerrymandered by the political Right, the appointment of a VP-candidate famous for his reactionary stance with regards to Roe vs. Wade, the election of Donald Trump and the Women's March protests on the day after Inauguration have created a socio-political climate for which Atwood's Offred seems to provide the suitable icon.

Atwood herself keeps commenting on parallels between US history, her fictional theocracy and 21st century politics and was hired as a consultant when the streaming service Hulu commissioned an adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale* into a TV-series in 2016. Five weeks before it aired, cosplay activists staged a silent pro-choice protest on the gallery of the Texas State Senate to draw attention to Anti-Abortion Legislation. On 3rd May 2017 a similar protest took place at the Capitol in Jefferson, Missouri. The TV-series' launch itself was accompanied by an art installation on the New York Highline.

Drawing on the concept of the 'serial figure' (Mayer), this paper is going to take a close look at *The Handmaid's Tale*, its adaptations (into film, ballet, audiobook, TV series, graphic novel, installation art) and some of the activist practices that use the handmaid costume as a feminist shorthand meme within contemporary political discourse. My goal is to offer a Foucaultian reading that frames this crossover "from the page to the screen and into the streets, framing social media conversations and activists efforts" (Deborah James) as a popular form of counter-conduct.

Elisabeth Kriebler (University of Salzburg)

Female Resistance and Re-Signification in Comics: Phoebe Gloeckner's Subversive Feminist Strategies

The representation of women in visual media constitutes a prominent example of how dominant cultural myths persistently infiltrate our collective consciousness. The elegant female nude portrait in classical art, the alluring object of desire in movies and the glamorous personification of current beauty ideals in advertisements have all shaped the pervasive image of women as defined by their appearance and stylized for the demands of the heteronormative male gaze.

While a lot has changed between the publication of Laura Mulvey's seminal "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" and today's promotion of the independent post-feminist woman in mainstream media, gendered subjectivity is still being reinforced through categorical stereotypes. To reveal ideological biases behind the construction of such representational standards, it is necessary to expose underlying processes of naturalization. New subversive forms of representation, such as demonstrated in Phoebe Gloeckner's (semi)autobiographical graphic novels, have the potential to do so. The comic book artist involves her readers in a critical, self-reflexive examination of the female image while simultaneously exposing the mechanisms that habitually confine women to the position of passive object.

In my talk I will outline Gloeckner's feminist strategies through the lens of psychoanalytic feminist (film) theory. I seek to foreground the artist's critical engagement with female subjectivity in visual media, her resistance to a masculinist discourse of representation and her

subversive resignification. For this purpose, I will provide a systematic analysis of some of her most expressive and controversial illustrations.

Matea Lacmanović (University of Graz)

From Femininity to Masculinity in "Androgyny": Gender as a Social Construct in Popular Music

Garbage, a popular American band which shook up the American music scene in the 90s, brought up a lot of discussions, issues and indirectly posed questions to the audience regarding femininity, masculinity, gender and sexuality related topics. Shirley Manson, a Scottish-born lead singer of the band, gained attention on and off the stage mostly by her contribution to the transgressiveness in feminism and gender studies via popular culture. In this work, I want to discuss gender fluidity, masculinity and femininity as perceived in the Western society and apply Butler's gender performativity construct in Garbage's music video "Androgyny" in which Manson deconstructs the stereotypical male-female binary opposition. The video will be shown after which a short deconstructive analysis will be made for the purpose of applying the perspective of gender as a social construct. A gradual shift between the femininity pole and the masculinity pole will be seen in the video, and questions of gender terminology in recent popular culture will be posed.

Alekzandra Rokvity (University of Graz)

The Sign as a Battlefield: Subculture, Fashion and Gender

If we claim that culture is built by signs and their meanings, and that ideology is what naturalizes those meanings, what follows is that the battle between the classes is but a battle over the sign. Subculture is a form of rebellion against the dominant ideology with the weapons it uses in its revolution being exactly signs – it takes existing signs, signs already used by the ruling class, and gives them new meaning, thus subverting the predominant ideology. A highly symbolic aspect of subculture is the aspect of style: the subversion of the sign is seen in the expression of ideas through fashion. The battle of the classes thus commences, and the battlefield is the attire of the individual. The ideology is undermined as the meaning of the sign is destabilized, but a new set of problems emerges. The fluidity of meaning is foregrounded - meaning keeps changing when the variables of the meaning-makers change: gender, race, class. This is the point at which semiotics turns into semiology, invaded by the studies of gender, social class, race relations, and capitalism; the point at which the analysis of an outfit becomes an all-encompassing discussion about hegemony within our culture.

About the Speakers

Keynote Speakers

(In alphabetical order)

Julia Leyda is Associate Professor of Film Studies in the Department of Art and Media Studies at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim. She is currently conducting research on contemporary screen texts from two fields: climate change on the one hand, and the financialization of domestic space on the other. In the context of these two fields, she is working on two monographs: The first one aims to place the newly minted category “cli-fi” (climate fiction) in the broader context of fiction, films, and television programming that tackle a constellation of topics related to environmentalism and sustainability. The second monograph aims to bring together film and media studies work on the recession with the relatively new field of critical finance studies to fill a gap in current scholarship on the representations of home at the turn of the twenty-first century.

Philip McGowan is President of the European Association for American Studies (2016-20) and Senior Lecturer in American Literature with research and teaching interests in twentieth-century American poetry, contemporary American fiction, as well as film. He also has wider interests in revolutionary America, the American nineteenth century, westerns, and American narratives of addiction and alcohol control. He is the editor of *The New Stevens* (2019) for Cambridge University Press. Forthcoming research includes articles on the poetry of Elizabeth Bishop, RS Thomas & Wallace Stevens, John Berryman, and Mark Doty. In terms of prose writing, work on the 1930s' short stories of F Scott Fitzgerald will be forthcoming in *The F Scott Fitzgerald Review* in 2018. while a longer term project is an illustrated biography of Dorothy Parker.

Ralph J. Poole is Professor of American Studies at the University of Salzburg, Austria. He taught at the University of Munich, Germany, and at Fatih University in Istanbul, Turkey. His publications include a study on the Avant-Garde tradition in American theater focussing among others on Gertrude Stein and Robert Wilson, a book on satirical and autoethnographical “cannibal” texts from Herman Melville to Marianne Wiggins, and most recently a collection of essays on “dangerous masculinities”. He is co-editor of a two-volume set of *Austria and America: Cross-Cultural Encounters*, and most recently of *US American Expressions of Utopian and Dystopian Visions*. He currently conducts a project funded by the Austrian Science Fund on “Gender and Comedy in the Age of the American Revolution.” His research interests include American literature, drama, gender/queer/masculinity studies, popular culture, and transatlantic negotiations.

Mark Reinhardt is the great-grandson of Max Reinhardt, co-founder of the Salzburg Festival (Salzburger Festspiele). He is the Class of 1956 Professor of American Civilization at Williams College, where he teaches political theory and American studies. For the past decade, he has written primarily on race and slavery in American culture, and/or on the ethics and politics of visual culture. His current research is shaped by a commitment to showing how political theory and political science can engage more fully with the visual domain. Among the areas of particular interest are the ethics and politics of images and the place of visuality within the history of political thought (ancient and modern); a related strand of work concerns the relations between politics and aesthetics. His current book in progress is titled *Visual Politics: Theories and Spectacles*.

Panelists

(In alphabetical order)

Vassil Anasstasov has more than 20 years of experience in teaching General, Indo-European, Slavic and Balkan Linguistics and General and Special English. He has been involved in research work and in the development of major academic projects, has published many scientific articles in Bulgaria, Poland, and other countries, and has participated in various conferences in Europe, USA, and Canada.

Nassim W. Balestrini is professor of American Studies and Intermediality, and Director of the Centre for Intermediality Studies in Graz. Her publications and research interests include American literature and culture (predominantly of the 19th through the 21st centuries), adaptation and intermedial relations (as in her monograph *From Fiction to Libretto: Irving, Hawthorne, and James as Opera*, 2005, and in the edited volume *Adaptation and American Studies*, 2011), hip-hop artists' life writing across media, African-American theater and performance, contemporary American opera, the poet laureate traditions in the United States and in Canada, and intersections between Russian and English literature, adaptation, popular culture, and intermediality in the works and reception of Vladimir Nabokov.

Michael Barton, professor of American Studies & Social Science and director of the Center for Pennsylvania Culture Studies at Penn State Harrisburg, received his Ph.D. in American Civilization at the University of Pennsylvania in 1974. Recently he edited the history of the 209th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry and the Civil War memoir of Sgt. Christian Lenker. Michael Barton has lectured on the American character in Scotland, Finland, Ireland, Australia, Poland, Bulgaria, Mauritania, Greece, Netherlands, Portugal, Canada, Austria, Republic of the Congo, Republic of Georgia, and Denmark, where he was a Fulbright professor at the University of Copenhagen.

Barbara Bračić is a graduate student of English and American studies at the Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt, Austria. She holds an MSc in IT Management from Split Faculty of Economics, Croatia. Her personal interests and research focus on Anglophone Culture, namely US politics and superheroes. Whenever given the opportunity, she likes to dress up and deliver her presentations "in character".

Stefan L. Brandt is Professor of American Studies at the University of Graz and former President of the Austrian Association for American Studies. After receiving his PhD and *Venia Legendi* at Freie Universität Berlin, he became affiliated with various international universities, among others Freie Universität Berlin, University of Vienna, Università Ca' Foscari, Radboud Universiteit, University of Toronto, and Harvard University. Brandt *has talked and published on a wide range of topics within the interdisciplinary fields of American Popular Culture, Gender & Urban Theory as well as Transnational Studies*. He has published three monographs – *Male Gazes* (1999), *Staged Masculinity* (2007), *The Culture of Corporeality* (2007) – and (co-)edited four anthologies – *Douglas Sirk's Imitation of Life* (1999), *Transnational American Studies* (w/ Winfried Fluck and Ingrid Thaler) (2007), *Making National Bodies* (w/ Astrid M. Fellner) (2010), and *Transcultural Spaces* (w/ Winfried Fluck & Frank Mehring) (2010). *Three volumes, entitled In-Between: Liminal Spaces in Canadian Literature and Culture (Lang Canadiana Series), Space Oddities (LIT Verlag, w/ Michael Fuchs), and Fantastic Cities (U of Mississippi Press, w/ Michael Fuchs and Stefan Rabitsch) are forthcoming.*

László Bernáth is a graduate student at the University of Klagenfurt, Austria. He developed a particular interest in Canadian Studies early in his studies, and his special field of research is Culture Studies, with focus on literature and film. In September 2015, he obtained a Bachelor's Degree in English and American Studies, with his thesis investigating the representation of English Renaissance as a period of ideological transition in Christopher Marlowe's drama. In his free time, he enjoys hiking and spending time in the calm of nature.

William L. Chew III is retired Professor of History at Vesalius College, Brussels, where he taught 1987-2016. He earned his PhD at the Eberhard-Karls Universität Tübingen in 1986 (magna cum laude) with a dissertation entitled "Das Leben in Frankreich zwischen 1780 und 1815, im Zeugnis amerikanischer Reisender." He has continued his research activities in the domain of Franco-American social, cultural, and political history of the 18th and 19th centuries, using travel writings as sources and applying the theoretical framework and methods of image studies. Chew has also published in the field of pedagogy and contributed to the academic debate on the Bologna Reform in history.

Deborah Cohn Deborah Cohn is professor of Spanish and Portuguese at Indiana University Bloomington. She is the author of *The Latin American Literary Boom and U.S. Nationalism during the Cold War* (Vanderbilt UP, 2012) and *History and Memory in the Two Souths: Recent Southern and Spanish American Fiction* (Vanderbilt UP, 1999), as well as coeditor, with Jon Smith, of *Look Away! The U.S. South in New World Studies* (Duke UP, 2004). She has published widely in journals such as *Latin American Research Review*, *Mississippi Quarterly*, *CR: The New Centennial Review*, *American Literature*, and others. Her current research focuses on Cold War cultural diplomacy. She has recently published an article on William Faulkner as Cold War cultural ambassador for the U.S. Department of State in *Diplomatic History*, and is working on a project titled "Cold War Humanities: American Studies, Foreign Language Study, and the U.S. National Interest." She has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities (Vanderbilt University), the Rockefeller Archive Center, the American Philosophical Society, and the Harry Ransom Center (University of Texas at Austin), among others.

Volker Depkat is a trained historian and Professor of American Studies at the University of Regensburg. His research interests include the history of North America from the colonial era to the present as perceived from a continental perspective; the history of European-American relations; biography and autobiography; visual culture studies in transatlantic contexts; and the history of federalism through a transatlantic lens. He is currently working on a book on "American Exceptionalism." Among his latest major publications are: *Geschichte der USA* (2016); *Religion and Politics: Transnational Historical Approaches* (ed. with Jürgen Martschukat, 2013); *Visual Cultures—Transatlantic Perspectives* (ed. with Meike Zwingenberger, 2012); *Geschichte Nordamerikas: Eine Einführung* (2008).

Marie Dücker is a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of American Studies at the University of Graz, where she has been teaching young adult fiction and contemporary American film. She has studied at the University of Cambridge, Rider University, the University of Roehampton, as well as Williams College, where she also worked as a Teaching Associate in the academic year of 2014/15. She received her BA from the University of Graz and a European Joint Master's Degree of English and American Studies from the University of Graz and the University of Roehampton. Her Ph.D. project is concerned with the interplay between intermediality and emotion and affect within the contemporary American young adult suicide narrative. In 2015, she was granted the JungforscherInnenfonds Research Scholarship awarded by the University of Graz. Her research interests include YA fiction, intermediality, affect theory, cognitive sciences, and neoliberal exhaustion.

Michael Fuchs is a non-TT assistant professor in American Studies at the University of Graz. He has co-edited three books and authored more than thirty published and forthcoming journal articles and book chapters on video games, American television, horror and adult cinema, contemporary American fiction, and fan cultures. Among others, he is currently co-editing a volume on video games and intermediality for Bloomsbury Academic and working on monographs on video game cities and performing America in video games.

Martin Gabriel is a lecturer in Modern History at the Department of History of the University of Klagenfurt. His fields of research and teaching include modern history (1550 to 1900), colonialism and imperialism, the social history of empires, as well as military history. He has worked as a research assistant for different projects, and submitted his PhD thesis on the nature of warfare during the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Hercegovina in January 2017.

Alexandra Ganser is a professor at the Department of English and American Studies of the University of Vienna. Her research interests include US-American, Anglophone Caribbean, and Canadian maritime literature and culture, mobility studies, transnational as well as transatlantic American Studies and the Black Atlantic, gender studies, Native American and First Nations Studies, and ecocriticism. She is currently working on a research project on “Crisis and Discourses of (Il)Legitimacy in American Narratives of Piracy, 1678-1865.”

Roberta Hofer is a university assistant and PhD student at the Department of American Studies at the University of Innsbruck. Her main research interests include film studies, narratology, performance, and (puppet) theater. In 2013, she was an invited teaching assistant for film studies at Boston University, and in 2014, the University of Innsbruck presented her with the Best Student Paper Award for her article on the meta-narration of Danish filmmaker Lars von Trier. Her articles on human puppeteering have been included in international peer-reviewed anthologies and journals, and she has been an invited guest speaker at Munich’s Ludwig Maximilian University.

Cornelia Klecker is an Assistant Professor in the Department of American Studies at the University of Innsbruck, Austria, where she teaches mostly American literature, American culture, film and television. She is a series editor of “Film and Television Studies” at Universitätsverlag Winter, which also published her first monograph *Spoiler Alert! Mind-Tricking Narratives in Contemporary Hollywood Film* (2015). Her other publications include “Symbolic Annihilation’ and Drive-By Misogyny: Women in Contemporary US-American Television Series” in *Transgressive Television: Politics and Crime in 21st-Century American TV Series* (2015), “The Other Kind of Film Frames: A Research Report on Paratexts in Film” in *Word & Image: A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry* 31.4 (2015), “Authentication Authority and Narrative Self-Erasure in *Fight Club*” in *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 59.1 (2014), “Mind-Tricking Narratives: Between Classical and Art Cinema Narration” in *Poetics Today* 33:4 (Winter 2012): 625-52 and “Chronology, Causality, ... Confusion: When Avant-Garde Goes Classic” in *Journal of Film & Video* 63.2 (Summer 2011): 11-27.

Esther Košutnik-Striedner is a graduate student of English and American Studies at the Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt, Austria. In addition to that, she teaches full-time as a bilingual primary school teacher (German/Slovene) in the South of Carinthia. Her personal interests and academic research focus on Anglophone Culture and Literature Studies. Some of her undergraduate projects concentrated on film studies, which comprised contemporary TV series as well as movies.

Dean J. Kotlowski is professor of history at Salisbury University where he has taught since 2000. A specialist in twentieth-century US political and policy history, he received his B.A. from Canisius College and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Indiana University Bloomington. He is the author of *Nixon's Civil Rights: Politics, Principle, and Policy* (Harvard University Press, 2001) and *Paul V. McNutt and the Age of FDR* (Indiana University Press, 2015) and the editor of *The European Union: From Jean Monnet to the Euro* (Ohio University Press, 2000). Dr. Kotlowski has published over thirty articles and book chapters in the US, UK, Australia, Austria, Germany, Denmark, Finland, and Russia. He has lectured in nineteen countries and has twice been Fulbright scholar, in the Philippines (2008) and Austria (2016).

Elisabeth Kriebler is a PhD student at the department of American studies at the University of Salzburg. She has completed her Bachelor's degree in English and American Studies at the Karl-Franzens University in Graz and holds a Master's degree in English Studies and the Creative Industries from the University of Salzburg. Her research interests include Gender and Women studies, Media studies, Comic and Visual studies as well as Social Semiotics. She is also part of the department's research project "Performing America (Gender, Theater, Media)."

Matea Lacmanović grew up in a small touristic town Rovinj, Croatia where she attended primary and secondary education. She holds a Bachelor's degree from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka, University of Rijeka in 2013. Her studies at the Master's program were immediately continued, and she has chosen the teacher track for her Master's education. After five years (2010 – 2015), she has completed both the Bachelor's and Master's program in English Language and Literature combined with Croatian Language and Literature. Currently, she is a PhD student at the Department of American Studies, University of Graz. Working with Prof. Roberta Maierhofer, she is developing a thesis in the fields of popular culture, feminism, gender studies, textual analysis, and interpretation.

Leopold Lippert is a post-doctoral fellow at the research project "Gender and Comedy in the Age of the American Revolution" (sponsored by the Austrian Research Fund FWF) at the University of Salzburg, Austria. Before coming to Salzburg, he worked as a research and teaching assistant at the Universities of Graz and Vienna. He holds a PhD in American Studies from the University of Vienna (2015), and his dissertation *Performing America Abroad: The Politics of Transnationalism in the Age of Neoliberal Difference* was awarded the 2016 Fulbright Prize in American Studies. In his current post-doc project, he is concerned with the relationship of humor and the public sphere in late-eighteenth-century America. He is a member of the DFG Research Network "Cultural Performance in Transnational American Studies" and has published a number of essays on early and contemporary American theatre, American television, transnational American cultural processes, queer cultures in/outside the U.S., as well as practices of cross-racial impersonation.

Karolina A. Lovejoy is a Ph.D. candidate in the Polish-French Doctoral Studies Program at the University of Warsaw and the Université Cergy Pontoise France (cotutelle). In her dissertation, she analyzes media images of the USA in selected news magazines in Russia and media images of Russia in selected news magazines in the United States from 2004 to 2014. Karolina holds an M.A. in Political Science from Kansas State University, an M.A. in Slavic Languages and Literatures from the University of Virginia, as well as an M.A. in Modern Languages (spec. Communication) from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. In addition, she teaches foreign languages and social studies at Athenia eAcademy in American Fork, USA. She lives in Ogden, UT, USA and Kielce, Poland.

Johannes Mahlkecht is Assistant Professor in the Department of American Studies at the University of Innsbruck, where he teaches courses on American film history and literary history. Articles on the subject of word-image combinations of filmic paratexts have been published, among others, in *Word & Image* and *Poetics Today*. In 2016 the Universitätsverlag Winter published his dissertation thesis, *Writing on the Edge – Paratexts in Narrative Cinema*.

Mahshid Mayar is a non-TT assistant professor in North American literature and culture at the University of Bielefeld. Her dissertation, "Citizens and Rulers of the World: American Children and World Geography at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," won the 2016 dissertation award of the Universitätsgesellschaft Bielefeld. She is currently co-editing a special issue of *InterDisciplines: Journal of History and Sociology* and editing a special issue of *Forum for Inter-American Research on video games*. Mahshid's current research and teaching interests include game studies, cultural geography, 19th-century American history, childhood studies, the histories of globalizations, and transnational American studies.

Louis Mazzari now teaches in the City University of New York system. For the last ten years, he was an assistant professor of history and literature at Bogazici University in Istanbul. He is the author of *Southern Modernist*, a biography of Depression-era, civil rights activist Arthur Raper (LSU Press). In 2018, he will publish "Common Sense on the Lower East Side" in *Remembering and Remaking Thomas Paine* (Taylor & Francis) and "Philip Wylie and the American Century" (*International Journal for History, Culture, and Modernity*). He has been a major contributor to the *Encyclopedia of New England* (Yale University Press). Mazzari was previously managing editor of *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, and he coordinated production of the *Harvard Educational Review*.

Sylvia Mieszkowski is a Visiting Professor of Anglophone Cultures and Literature at Vienna University. She has taught at the universities of Munich, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, Berlin, Paris, Zürich, Bayreuth, Salzburg. In her research, she is most interested in British fiction of the 19th to the 21st centuries, cultural analysis, gender studies, queer studies, and sound studies. Currently, she is working on two research projects: "Mixed Pleasures: (Neo-)Victorian Narratives in Dialogue, and "Transmedial Dystopia," which explores short stories by female British writers.

Manuela Neuwirth is a master's student of English and American Studies at the University of Graz, Austria. She focuses on American Cultural Studies, has spent an academic year at the University of Minnesota and has so far presented papers at conferences in Austria, Germany, Croatia, and the United States. Her bachelor's thesis – "Cancer Culture: The American Way of Death in *Breaking Bad* and *The Big C*" – partly reflects her research interests, which include Television and Film Studies, Health and Illness Studies, and the Gothic. Her M.A. thesis will investigate the representation of the extraterrestrial as a liminal figure on *The X-Files*.

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Sascha Pöhlmann is an associate professor in American literary history at LMU Munich. He is the author of *Pynchon's Postnational Imagination* (Winter, 2010) and *Future-Founding Poetry: Topographies of Beginnings from Whitman to the Twenty-First Century* (Camden House, 2015) and (co-)editor of six volumes, including *Unpopular Culture* (Amsterdam UP, 2016), *Electoral Cultures: American Democracy and Choice* (Winter, 2015), and *Revolutionary Leaves: The Fiction of Mark Z. Danielewski* (Cambridge Scholars, 2012). He has published essays on contemporary fiction and poetry, film, video games, and music.

Maria Proitsaki was born in Greece and received her BA from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate at Gävle University, Sweden, completing a thesis which examines the works of Nikki Giovanni and Rita Dove. She has taught extensively at different Universities in Sweden and has published papers on Giovanni's and Dove's poetry as well as creative writing.

Christian Quendler is associate professor in the Department of American Studies at the University of Innsbruck. He is the author of three monographs, most recently *The Camera-Eye Metaphor in Cinema* (Routledge 2017), and numerous articles in literary, media and cultural studies. He received grants and fellowships from the Austrian Academy of Science, and the National Humanities Center and was visiting lecturer and scholar at the University of Chicago, Northwestern University, Notre Dame University, and the University of Alberta.

Stefan 'Steve' Rabitsch is an assistant professor (non-TT) in American Studies at the University of Graz and teaches courses in American cultural history at the University of Klagenfurt. His first monograph, *Star Trek's Secret British History: Setting Sail in Space with Horatio Hornblower* will be published by McFarland later this year. In addition, he is currently co-editing two essay collections, *Set Phasers to "Teach!": Star Trek at University* (under contract with Springer) and *Fantastic Cities: American Urban Spaces in Science Fiction & Fantasy* (under advance contract with the University Press of Mississippi). His research and his classes are dominated by American Culture and Literature Studies together with a pronounced focus on Science Fiction Studies across media. He places particular emphasis on the discourses and semiotics of historiography and worldbuilding in television, film and video games.

Philipp Reisner teaches as a lecturer at the American Studies Department of Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf. His approach to research is multidisciplinary. His dissertation on the theological role that the New English theologian Cotton Mather (1663–1728) played in the context of early modern society appeared in 2012. He is currently working on his habilitation project, which is a structural study of Genesis motifs in contemporary Anglo-American poetry.

Klaus Rieser is Associate Professor of American Studies at the University of Graz, Austria, where he teaches in (visual) cultural studies. He has chaired the Department of American Studies from 2007 to 2013 and again since 2016. His major areas of research comprise US film, representations of family, gender and ethnicity, and visual cultural studies. His monographs have dealt with immigration in film; experimental films, and masculinity in film. He has also published a number of articles and co-edited four volumes, amongst other topics on Iconic Figures and on Contact Spaces. He co-edits the book series "American Studies in Austria" and is presently engaged in transforming it into an online journal.

Alekszandra Rokvity is a doctoral candidate at the University of Graz, department of American Studies, with a focus on postmodernism. A former English teacher, she has completed her MA at the University of Graz, majoring in Cultural Studies. Her main research areas are the postmodern and gender studies. She is currently a student assistant at the department of American Studies.

Bärbel Schlimbach received her M.A. in English and German literatures and linguistics from Saarland University, Saarbrücken/Germany, where she is currently working as doctoral researcher for the chair of North American Literatures and Cultures. Her PhD-Project on "(South-)Western Borderland Narratives" analyzes recent productions within the genre of (Post-)Western film and fiction with respect to changing representations of the American West, identity constructions as well as processes of nation-building. Her research interests include 20th and 21st American literatures, Western and Post-Western movies and literatures as well as processes of cultural appropriation.

Silvia Schultermandl is an assistant professor of American Studies at the University of Graz, where she teaches courses in American literature/culture studies. Silvia is the author of a monograph on the representation of mother-daughter conflicts in Asian American literature and the (co)editor of five collections of essays which explore various themes in transnational studies, American literature and culture, as well as family and kinship studies. Since 2009, she has served as series editor for *Contributions to Transnational Feminism* (currently finishing volume 6). She is currently at work on a monograph on the aesthetics of transnationalism in American

literature from the revolution to 9/11 and is developing the *Palgrave Series in Kinship, Representation, and Difference*.

Sabine Sielke is Chair of North American Literature and Culture, Director of the North American Studies Program and the German-Canadian Centre, and Spokesperson of the Zentrum für Kulturwissenschaft|Cultural Studies at the University of Bonn. Her publications include *Reading Rape* (Princeton 2002) and *Fashioning the Female Subject* (Ann Arbor 1997), the series *Transcription*, and 20 (co-)edited books, among them, most recently, *Nostalgia: Imagined Time-Spaces in Global Media Cultures* (2017), *Knowledge Landscapes North America* (2016), *New York, New York! Urban Spaces, Dreamscapes, Contested Territories* (2015), and *American Studies Today: New Research Agendas* (2014), as well as more than 120 essays on poetry and poetics, modern and post-modern literature and culture, literary and cultural theory, gender and African American studies, popular culture, and the interfaces of cultural studies and the sciences. Her current book projects interrogate narratives of science in fiction and phenomena of memory, mediation, and seriality at the crossroads of the cognitive sciences and cultural studies. She has initiated and engages in collaborative projects on forms, functions, and effects of nostalgia and retro, on knowledge ecologies North America, and on mimicry as communication.

Margarete Sönser Breen is Professor of English and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies University of Connecticut, Storrs. Her research interests include LGBT literature, queer theory, women's writing and feminist literary theory, the novel. Currently, she is doing research on Narratives of Queer Desire, Butler Matters, Genealogies of Identity. In 2015, she was acting co-director of the University of Connecticut's Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program.

Andreas Stadler studied Computer Science and English as part of his teacher training at the University of Salzburg. In the course of his studies, he also spent a semester at the University of Liverpool. In his diploma thesis titled "Let's Play! – Video Games as a Dominant Force in Art, Culture, Education and Everything in Between" he illustrated how video games influence all areas of our lives. Currently, he is teaching Computer Science and English at BRG Akademiestraße in Salzburg.

Christian Stenico is a university assistant and PhD candidate at the Department of American Studies at the University of Innsbruck and his research focuses on first-person narration in different media. His other research interests include recent technical advancements in film and television, such as 3D, high frame-rate recordings or virtual reality headsets and their implications for audience immersion. He is also interested in other current developments, like changes in plot preferences from episodic to serial forms of narration, or nonlinear forms like puzzle films and general innovations in filmic and oral storytelling.

Christoph Straub is a PhD candidate at the Department of English and American Studies at the University of Salzburg. In his research, he is most interested in postcolonial criticism, film studies, and Indigenous studies. His dissertation project focuses on contemporary Indigenous films from North America, Australia, and New Zealand. Christoph holds an MA in "English Studies and the Creative Industries" from the University of Salzburg and a BA in English Studies and South Asian Studies from the University of Heidelberg. Before returning to academia, he has worked in the field of science communication and recently completed a traineeship in the press and public relations department of the German Research Foundation (DFG).

Michael Streif is a PhD candidate and a research fellow in the project "Gender and Comedy in the Age of the American Revolution" at the Dept. of English and American Studies at the University of Salzburg. He was granted the BMWFW Minnesota Doctoral Research Fellowship and spent the academic year 2016/17 at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. The working title of his dissertation is "Coming Out onto the Stage: Homosociality and Theatrical Activity in Colleges in the Age of the American Revolution."

William Tate is a practicing architect and associate professor of architectural design at James Madison University in Virginia. He is also founding director of the studio laboratory, Umbau, which has run a summer studio in Vienna since 1997. His design work engages questions of landscape, memory, symbol, ritual, justice, peace, and phenomenology. With a graduate degree from Virginia Tech, he is a direct descendent of the Bauhaus-mind. Member of a rich family life, from which grandchildren have now started to emerge. Tate is a long-time American member of the AAAS, and one who can claim Vienna as a strong second home, if not first. Long live American Studies.

Jiann-Chyng Tu holds a B.A. in German and English from Wake Forest University and a M.A. in American Studies from Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, where he is also currently a doctoral candidate. Currently a lecturer in American literature at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, his research interests includes theories of cosmopolitanisms, transnational American Studies, African Americans and Germany, 20th and 21st century American Literature, and intersection of technologies and “race”.

Simon Whybrew is a research assistant and graduate student at the University of Graz and is working on a dissertation project entitled “Neither One nor the Other: Non-Binary Gender Embodiment in Contemporary North American Speculative Fiction.” Simon has recently completed a research fellowship at the University of Delaware.

M. Katharina Wiedlack is currently Hertha Firnberg post-doc Research Fellow at the Department for English and American Studies, University of Vienna and visiting researcher at the Center for Advanced Media Studies, Johns Hopkins University (Feb-May 2017). She has a diploma in German Literature and Gender Studies and a doctoral degree in English and American Studies from the University of Vienna. She was visiting researcher at UC Berkeley (2011/2012) and writer in residence at the Jordan Center for the advanced study of Russia at NYU (2015/2016). She has taught Gender, German and Disability Studies at Lomonossow University Moscow, State University St. Petersburg, State Technical University Novosibirsk, Charles University Prague and the University of Vienna. She was project coordinator at the Gender Research Office at the University of Vienna from April 2008 to September 2015. Her research fields are queer and feminist theory, popular culture, post-socialist, decolonial and disability studies to name but a few. Currently, she works on a research project on the construction of Russia’s most vulnerable citizens within Western media. Her most recent research project is “Looking Eastward: US-Identity, Western Values, and Russian Vulnerable Bodies.”

About the Conference

The year 2017 marks the 70th anniversary of American studies in Austria. To celebrate the occasion, the Austrian Association for American Studies (AAAS) returns to Salzburg, where the country's initial seminar for American studies took place in 1947. Back then, the first students of the field stayed at the lakeside palace, Schloss Leopoldskron, once owned by Max Reinhardt, the Austrian-born American theater and film director. They shared rooms and meals during intensive weeks of lectures and discussions with some of America's most talented scholars. For them, and many who followed, it was a life-changing experience. Ever since these days, students of American studies have been fascinated by the discipline's component of free open dialogue between researchers and learners and its broadening of horizons and expectations.

American studies in Europe (1947-2017) was inclusive from its start: in a sense it was the study of modernity, or even futurity, hopeful, sublime, or repugnant. American studies nourished Cultural studies, a new star breaking on the academic horizon, and focused on inter-American studies, which added additional spatial elements. If the contributions of European Americanists were sometimes too easily overlooked by their North American counterparts, their work remains some of the finest in the field. The fact that American studies continues as an important and bustling field in Austria today, seventy years later, is due to the lasting influence of their work.

The continuity of American studies lies not only in its ever-ready willingness to tackle frontiers and encourage discourse, but also in the continuities, transgressions, and interruptions of the United States itself. In this spirit, the title of Joyce Carol Oates's 1966 story "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" resurfaces in the context of recent Nobel Prize winner Bob Dylan's lyrics. This conference seeks questions and answers on where American studies has been, where it is, and where it is going. On this seventieth anniversary, the AAAS meets in Salzburg to discuss the past, present and future of American studies – and of the Americas.

Conference Venue

Schloss Leopoldskron
Leopoldskronstraße 56-58
5020 Salzburg

Conference Team

- Hanna Wallinger (hanna.wallinger@sbg.ac.at)
- Joshua Parker (joshua.parker@sbg.ac.at)
- Ralph J. Poole (ralph.poole@sbg.ac.at)
- Elisabeth Krieger (elisabeth.krieger@sbg.ac.at)
- Christoph Straub (christoph.straub@sbg.ac.at)
- Karin Wohlgemuth (karin.wohlgemuth2@sbg.ac.at)

Website:

www.uni-salzburg.at/ang/AAAS-2017

Arrival and Driving Directions

Arriving in Salzburg

Taking a Taxi

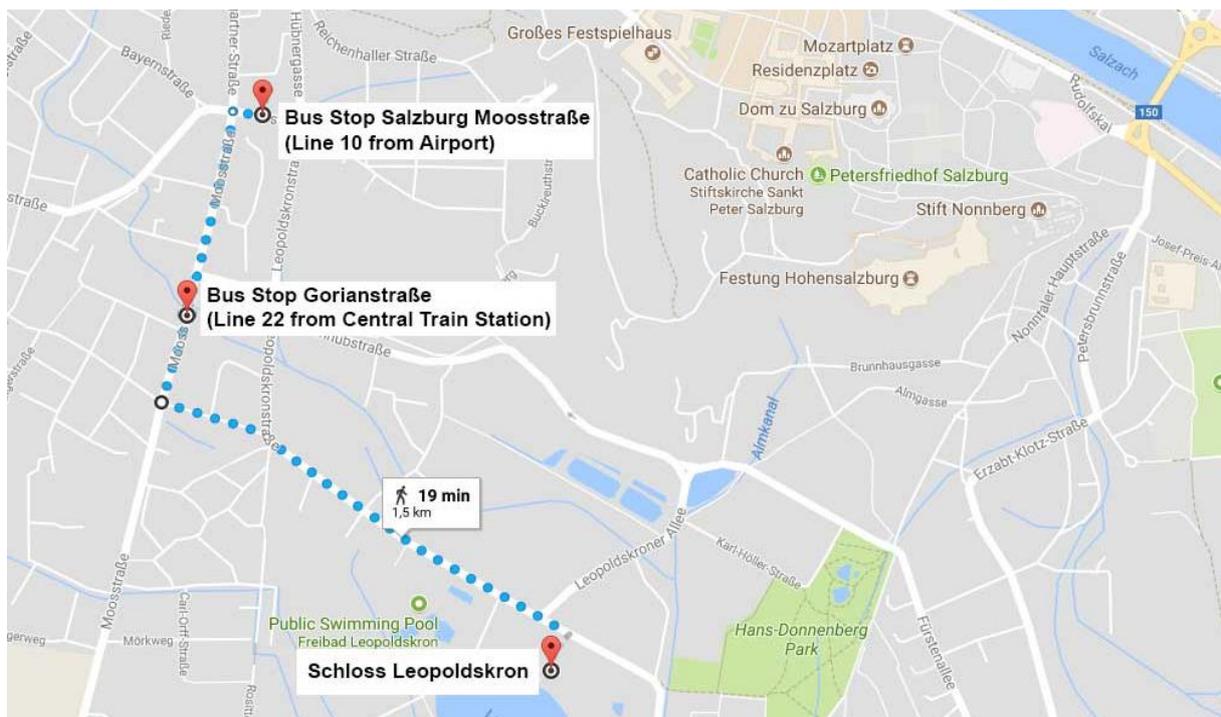
For those arriving in Salzburg at the airport or the central train station, taking a taxi is by far the easiest way to reach Schloss Leopoldskron. The taxi drivers tend to speak English quite well, and all know the location. The ride should take about ten to twenty minutes, depending on traffic, and cost about 13 Euros.*

Using Public Transport

There are a few options to reach the Schloss with public transport. Unfortunately all of them involve a 15-20 minute walk. Relatively convenient routes from Salzburg Airport and Salzburg Central Train Station are outlined below. However, you may look up other options on the Salzburg Public Transport website: <https://fahrplan.salzburg-verkehr.at>.

From Salzburg Airport: Take **bus line 10** (direction “Sam”) and get off at the stop “Moosstraße” (8 stops). From the bus stop, continue walking for a few meters and turn left onto Moosstraße. Follow Moosstraße for about 550 meters. At the roundabout, turn left onto Nußdoferstraße, which eventually becomes Leopoldskroner Straße and will take you directly to Schloss Leopoldskron. The bus ride should take about 25 minutes, the walk is approximately an additional 20 minutes.

From Salzburg Central Train Station: Take **bus line 22** (direction “Josefiau”) and get off at the stop “Gorianstraße” (11 stops). From the bus stop, continue walking in the same direction on Moosstraße for about 100 meters. At the roundabout, turn left onto Nußdoferstraße, which eventually becomes Leopoldskroner Straße and will take you directly to Schloss Leopoldskron. The bus ride should take about 30 minutes, the walk is approximately an additional 15 minutes.



Grafik: © Google Maps

Arriving by Car

Coming on the A1 motorway from either Munich or Vienna, take the Salzburg Airport exit and follow the Innsbrucker Bundesstrasse towards the city center. At the T-junction take a right onto Maxglaner Hauptstrasse and follow it until you reach Gasthof Riedenburg. Turn right onto Moosstrasse and then left at the second light onto Nußdorferstrasse, which eventually becomes Leopoldskroner Strasse and will take you directly to Hotel Schloss Leopoldskron.

What to do if you get lost:

If you have any trouble reaching Schloss Leopoldskron, please contact the receptionists at the Hotel:

Schloss Leopoldskron & Meierhof
Leopoldskronstrasse 56-58
5020 Salzburg
Tel.: +43 (0)662 83 983-0

Airport Shuttles from the International Airports of Munich and Vienna

Guests arriving at the international airports of Munich or Vienna may order an airport shuttle service via [Salzburg Mietwagen Service \(SMS\)](#). The shuttle will pick you up at the gate and drive you directly to Schloss Leopoldskron. Return tickets from Vienna International Airport are available for 160 Euros;* return tickets from Munich international Airport cost 109 Euros.* Please make sure to reserve the service in advance via SMS's website (<http://www.mietwagenservice.at/>) or by phone +43 (0)662 81 61-0.

Train Services from Vienna International Airport

Convenient high-speed trains provide direct connections from Vienna International Airport to Salzburg Central Train Station ("Salzburg Hbf"). The trains run twice an hour during daytime, and the ride takes 2 hours and 50 minutes. Ticket prices range from 19 Euros (if you book early) to 60 Euros.* Once you are in Salzburg, follow the instructions provided above.

Further information:

- [Flyer with details about the train services \(Austrian Federal Railways\) \[pdf\]](#)
[www.tinyurl.com/ydxdo2m5]
- Website to book your ticket online (Austrian Federal Railways): tickets.oebb.at/en

Train Services from Munich International Airport

From Munich International Airport, you first have to take a local train to Munich Central Station (S1 to "München Hbf"). From Munich Central Station, trains to Salzburg leave about twice an hour during daytime, and the ride takes between 1 hour 30 minutes and 2 hours. While the "Meridian" (M) trains are cheaper, travelling is more convenient with "EuroCity" (EC) trains or "RailJets" (RJ). Ticket prices range between 20 Euros (if you book early) and 40 Euros.* Once you are in Salzburg, follow the instructions provided above.

Further information:

- Website to book your ticket online (German Railways): www.bahn.com/en

* Costs may vary.

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