Digital Americas

The 48th Conference of the Austrian Association for American Studies

www.digital-americas.at

Twitter: @aaas_2021 | Facebook: facebook.com/digitalamericas

Dates

Online: October tba–October 30, 2021 (depending on number of presentations/Q&A sessions)
On-Site (Graz, Austria): October 30–31, 2021

Description

In addition to exposing a variety of vulnerabilities (the topic of the 2020 AAAS conference), the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has made us all all-too aware of our entanglements with digital technologies, as seemingly never-ending video calls and remote teaching have joined technologies that feel nearly antiquated by now: emails, literature searches in databases, writing your latest manuscript in a word processor, drafting the budget for your next project in spreadsheets, preparing the slides for your next (online or face-to-face class)—our work is, in many respects, interconnected with the digital.

While the "digital turn" has had a tremendous impact on academic work, it has also led to the emergence of new objects of inquiry and methodologies, ranging from the digital humanities and questions of digital literacies to video games, social media, slacktivism, and streaming platforms.

The conference "Digital Americas" seeks to take stock of "the digital" within the context of American studies. We understand "America" broadly here—the United States, the Americas, and the Americas' global entanglements. We are thus interested in contributions on digital pedagogy, digital methodologies, digital culture and digital media as objects of critical inquiry, and digital scholarship.

Accordingly, topics may include (but are by no means limited to):

➢ social movements and/vs. slacktivism;
➢ digital politics/the politics of the digital (e.g. cybercrime and cyberattacks, disinformation, election interference, the weaponization of social media);
➢ augmented realities and the re-conceptualization of American cities;
➢ video games, American myths, and "Americanness";
➢ the digital and the changing character of American sports (e.g. e-sports, virtual crowds);
➢ film/television, digital visual effects, and the (re-)construction of space;
➢ cyberlabor and the digital divide separating the US/Canada from Latin America;

- ➢ moving through digital archives;
- ➢ cyberpoetry and media affordances;
- ➢ digital media, fan labor, and performance (e.g. vlogging, vidding, influencer culture);
- ➢ teaching history and/with virtual reality;
- ➢ streaming, performances, and the ongoing pandemic;
- ➢ digital media/networks and ecological questions (e.g. Google's fiber optic subsea cables);
- ➢ digital media and/vs. representing/simulating nature;
- ➢ the cancelation of the EU-US Privacy Shield and impacts on transatlantic data transfer, data ownership, and data security (e.g. concerning research collaboration);
- ➢ digital technologies and techno-fixes to contemporary ills (e.g. de-extinction as an antidote to mass extinction, online counseling);
- ➢ Netflix parties and similar remote film/TV viewing experiences;
- ➢ and the digital divide (nationally, regionally, and/or globally; age-based, class-based, etc.)

Conference Format

Since Steve and Michael have learned their lessons from the last conference they organized and seek to steer clear of creating the impression that "Austrian academic spaces [were] geometrically challenged" and do not want to be guilty of (yet again) causing "FOMO for a conference"—and since there's a pandemic ongoing—the bulk of the actual conference will be virtual, stretched over at least a week, possibly as much as two.

In addition to the virtual extravaganza, we will have an on-site workshop-type experience that will offer room for discussing questions such as virtual teaching during a pandemic, open-access and digital preservation, and access, accessibility, and the virtual domain.

Thematic Tracks, Round tables, and On-Site Workshops

Scholars are invited to submit pitches for thematic tracks, round tables, and/or on-site workshops. If your pitch is accepted, we will put you in charge of recruiting/selecting speakers.

Two requirements:
(a) No more than a third of the contributors of a given track, roundtable, or workshop may be from one institution. Workshops, roundtables, and tracks with too many participants from one institution may be canceled/rejected.
(b) Max. two thirds of the contributors may be from one country (in terms of affiliation or—if independent scholars are involved—place of residence).

Presentation Formats

Pre-recorded video presentations: from slides with voiceovers and "talking head" videos to video essays, anything goes here; max. 15 minutes. We will screen videos and return/reject videos that fail to comply with the 15-minute max. Please consider questions of accessibility and at least provide subtitles (or entire scripts) for your videos.

Texts with illustrations/slides: max. 1,500 words and 10 illustrations.

Conference Fees

Virtual participation will incur minimal fees for presenters (10 Euros tops). Non-presenters will be asked to pay a slightly higher fee (20 Euros tops). On-site participation will incur higher fees, which are, unfortunately, unclear at this point (but so is the question of whether the on-site workshop can take place).

Should any of the keynotes be presented live, they will be open to the public.

Conference Times

Part of the idea to stretch the main part of the conference over several days (if not weeks) is to limit "live" conference time to a few hours per day in time slots that are "doable" in various parts of the world—between 5pm and 10pm GMT. In addition to the synchronous discussion sessions (of entire tracks/parts of tracks, not individual presentations), we will also have a comment function on our conference website, which will allow the audience to interact with speakers.

Roadmap

February 15, 2021:	Deadline for proposals for thematic tracks (max. 500 words; no tentative list of speakers needed), on-site workshops (max. 1,000 words; no tentative list of speakers needed), and round tables (max. 1,000 words; list of tentative and confirmed speakers needed; indicate whether on-site or virtual; "live" or pre-recorded)
March 7, 2021:	Notifications
March 8–April 30, 2021:	Submissions of abstracts for presentations and contributions to workshops opens
June 15, 2021:	Notifications
September 1, 2021:	Deadline for pre-recorded presentations
September 15, 2021:	Deadline for pre-recorded round tables

Confirmed Keynote Speakers

TreaAndrea Russworm (University of Massachusetts, Amherst) *virtual*

Sharon Block (University of California, Irvine) *virtual*

Martin Paul Eve (Birkbeck, University of London) *virtual*

Main Organizers

Michael Fuchs, University of Oldenburg, Department of English & American Studies

Roberta Maierhofer, University of Graz, Center for Inter-American Studies

Stefan Rabitsch, University of Graz, Center for Inter-American Studies

Barbara Ratzenböck, University of Graz, Center for Inter-American Studies

How to Submit Proposals/Abstracts

You will find the submission forms on the conference website, www.digital-americas.at.