

17TH TRANSATLANTIC STUDENTS SYMPOSIUM

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRATIC CULTURES

VIENNA AND BERLIN, MARCH 23-30, 2019



in cooperation between, and supported by:

OSU, MA English Program, Political Science Program

Humboldt-University Berlin, Germany

University of Warsaw, Poland

Max Kade Foundation



Vienna, Meeting at HOSI

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CONTENTS

1.	NOTES ON PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT.....	2
2.	PREPARATORY SEMINARS.....	2
3.	ORGANIZERS AND PARTICIPANTS.....	2
4.	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION / CALL FOR PAPERS	3
5.	SYMPOSIUM WEEK FIELD TRIPS	3
	Saturday, March 23th: Arrival in Vienna	4
	Sunday, March 24th: Site Visits.....	4
	Monday, March 25th: Meetings and Site Visits.....	4
	Tuesday, March 26th: Meetings and Site Visits.....	5
	Wednesday, March 27th: Transfer to Berlin	5
	Thursday, March 28th: Meetings and Site Visits.....	6
	Friday, March 29th: Symposium Conference	6
	Saturday, March 30th: Meetings & Concluding Activities	6
6.	SYMPOSIUM CONFERENCE SCHEDULE, HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITY BERLIN.....	7
	Faculty	7
	Student Organizers	8
	09:00 - 10:15 Panel 1: Rhetoric, Discourses, Metaphors	10
	10:30 - 12:00 Panel 2: Texts, Theory, Histories.....	12
	13:00 - 14:45 Panel 3: Politics, Challenges, Perspectives	15
	15:00 - 16:15 Panel 4: Tech, New Media, Modernity.....	18
	16:30 - 18:00 Panel 5: Identity, Activism, Resistance.....	20
	18:00 Closing Remarks	23
7.	SECOND SYMPOSIUM CONFERENCE, HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITY BERLIN.....	24
	Panel 1 – Narratives, Discourses, Rhetorics	25
	Panel 2 – Politics, Challenges, Analyses	27
	Panel 3 – Tech, Media, Society.....	31
	Panel 4 – Identity, Representation, Resistance	32

This report is an addendum and expansion of the main symposium report, located at <http://www.trasym.org/report.html>.

1. NOTES ON PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The program added the MA English program as a major partner at OSU. The theme was set in response to elections in Europe and the US that seemed to strengthen anti-transatlantic sentiments.

2. PREPARATORY SEMINARS

A preparatory seminar was taught by PD Dr. Reinhard Isensee in Winter Semester 2018/19 at Humboldt University, which incorporated a selection process. Prospective symposium participants on the Humboldt side submitted their proposals and were accepted based on academic merits.

Another seminar was taught by Dr. Philipp Kneis in Winter Quarter 2019 at Oregon State University, to prepare the students who answered the call to participate in the symposium.

At Warsaw University, Dr. Tomasz Basiuk prepared the students in Winter 2019.

All classes were coordinated by drawing from the same core syllabus (available on <http://www.trasym.org/trasym17.html>) to ensure that students — despite their different fields — shared the same background. A video conference between all partners was held in February, allowing an exchange of ideas and introductions.

3. ORGANIZERS AND PARTICIPANTS

Number of Participants: 36

Organizers: 5

Dr. Philipp Kneis, Dr. Allison Davis-White Eyes, Dr. Raymond Malewitz (Oregon State University)

PD Dr. Reinhard Isensee (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

Dr. Tomasz Basiuk (University of Warsaw)

Student/Assistant Organizers: 7

Carlota Surós, Nadja Riegler, Dominik Michaelis (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin);

Alexus Austin, Angela Nguyen (Oregon State University)

Karolina Szlasa, Bogdana Sybikowska (University of Warsaw)

Students: 24

(Humboldt: 9, OSU: 12, Warsaw: 3)

4. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION / CALL FOR PAPERS

The current geopolitical climate appears to increasingly produce narratives suggesting that democratic governments are on a declining path, that authoritarianism is a winning proposition, and that democratic values and cultures are losing their appeal on both sides of the Atlantic.

The 17th Transatlantic Students Symposium – which will take place in selected cities in Europe – investigates this proposition from a transdisciplinary perspective and discusses the historical, political, cultural and literary dimensions of democratic cultures in the United States and Europe.

Organized in collaboration with Oregon State University, Corvallis, and the University of Warsaw the fieldtrip offers a space for a transatlantic dialog among students from different disciplines that is accompanied by institutional and cultural visits as well as workshops at the respective symposium destinations.

5. SYMPOSIUM WEEK FIELD TRIPS

Site Visits: Vienna: Art History Museum (Kunsthistorisches Museum), Imperial Furniture Museum (Hofmobiliendepot), City Castle (Hofburg). Berlin: City Tour

Institutional Visits: Vienna: Walking tour with former deputy mayor Rudolf Schicker, HOSI (Austrian LGBTQ Rights Organization), Vienna Women’s Affairs Department, Talk by Dr. Franz Leander Fillafer at Austrian Academy of Sciences on Post-Imperial Austria, European Center on labor migration, Reporters without Borders, World Wildlife Fund, National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism. Berlin: Walking Tour “Lobby Control”, International Organization for Migration (IOM), POLIS180 think tank for foreign affairs and European politics, Bündnis Neukölln – refugee housing project, Concluding talk and discussion



Vienna, Parliament



Vienna, Hofburg Castle

Saturday, March 23th: Arrival in Vienna

Morning Arrival of Groups
5:00 PM Get-Together / Orientation

Sunday, March 24th: Site Visits

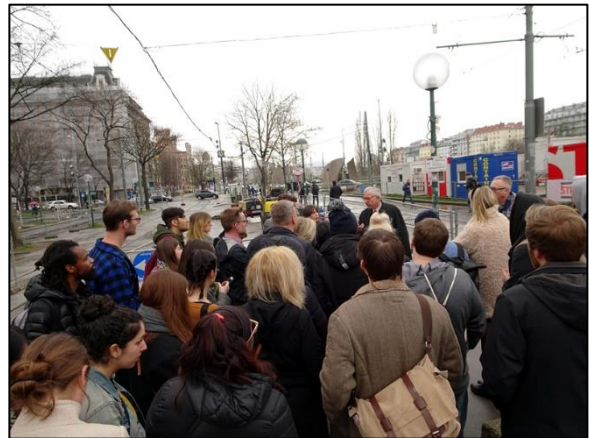
10:30 AM Art History Museum (Kunsthistorisches Museum)
01:30 PM Imperial Furniture Museum (Hofmobiliendepot)

Monday, March 25th: Meetings and Site Visits

09:00 AM Walking tour with former deputy mayor Rudolf Schicker
11:30 AM HOSI (Austrian LGBTQ Rights Organization)
02:30 PM Vienna Women's Affairs Department
03:30 PM Walking tour through city center
05:00 PM Talk by Dr. Franz Leander Fillafer at Austrian Academy of Sciences on Post-Imperial Austria



Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (Art History Museum)



Walking Tour



City of Vienna Women's Department



Austrian Academy of Sciences



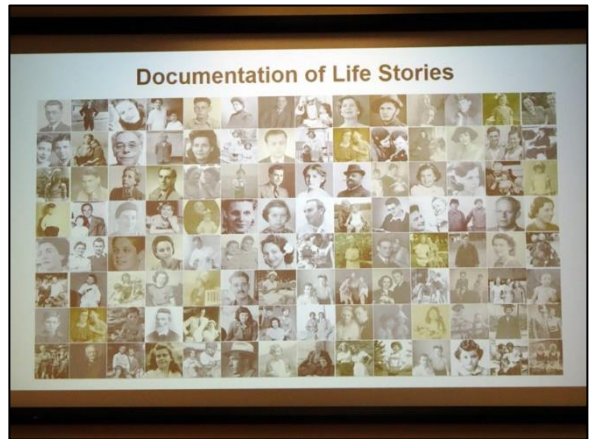
European Center



Reporters Without Borders, at Café Prückel



World Wildlife Fund



National Fund for Victims of National Socialism

Tuesday, March 26th: Meetings and Site Visits

- 10:00 AM European Center, with Sonila Danaj (posting of workers), Ms Eszter Zolyomi (gender, migration) and Mr Ricardo Rodrigues (inequalities, health&care)
- 02:00 PM Reporters Without Borders with Dr. Rubina Möhring at Café Prückel
- 04:30 PM World Wildlife Fund, Karl Schellmann
- 06:30 PM National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism, Michaela Niklas, Susanne Betz, Stephanie Meyerhofer

Wednesday, March 27th: Transfer to Berlin

- noon: flights to Berlin
- Evening: free time



Berlin, Parliament (Bundestag) in the Reichstag Building



Holocaust Memorial



Project Neuköln meeting at Humboldt University



Conference at Humboldt University

Thursday, March 28th: Meetings and Site Visits

- 10:00 AM Walking Tour with NGO “Lobby Control”
- 02:00 PM International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- 04:00 PM POLIS180 think tank for foreign affairs and European politics, at Humboldt U.

Friday, March 29th: Symposium Conference

- 9 AM–7 PM Student Conference

Saturday, March 30th: Meetings & Concluding Activities

- 10:00 AM Meeting with Adam Bresnahan from Bündnis Neukölln at Humboldt U.
- 11:00 AM Philipp Kneis, “Plato and the Soul of Academia”
Concluding Discussion

6. SYMPOSIUM CONFERENCE SCHEDULE, HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITY BERLIN

Faculty

Dr. Tomasz Basiuk, Uniwersytet Warszawski, American Studies Program

Tomasz Basiuk holds a doctoral degree in English from the University of Warsaw and a post- doc degree from the University of Gdańsk. Author of *Exposures. American Gay Men's Life Writing since Stonewall* (2013) and a book on the novelist William Gaddis (in Polish, 2003). Co-editor of several volumes in queer studies and in American Studies. Co-founder of the electronic queer studies journal *InterAlia*. He teaches in the American Studies program at the University of Warsaw.

Dr. Allison Davis-White Eyes, Oregon State University, Office of Institutional Diversity

Allison Davis-White Eyes holds a B.A., M.A. from U.C.L.A and a Ph.D. from Oregon State University. She currently serves as the Director of Community Diversity Relations in the Office of Institutional Diversity at OSU. In addition, she serves as affiliate faculty in the School of Public Policy and as adjunct faculty in the School of Language, Culture and Society with a research emphasis in post-colonial cosmopolitanism and mobilities of culture and identity. Dr. Davis-White Eyes has held positions in higher education for over 20 years and has created research partnerships and collaborations between Oregon State University, Tribal communities and international universities--designed to enhance the student experience, and to provide opportunities for experiential learning that critically explore narratives of difference and representation.

PD Dr. Reinhard Isensee, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

PD Dr. Isensee teaches in the American Studies Program at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. After completing his Ph.D. on 19th century American literature, he pursued a postdoctoral research project on 20th century American Adolescent Literature (Habilitation in 2002). With a particular interest in transatlantic and transnational topics, he has more recently focused in his research on (visual) media with a special emphasis on the cultural work of digital media. He has published extensively in the field of American literature on American Naturalism and on 20th century young adult literature, as well as in Cultural Studies on multicultural education, cultural identity formation, as well as digital media. His current research work encompasses the contemporary American adolescent novel, the cultural and social history and present models of transatlantic, transnational and global education as well as the impact of digital media on the production and distribution of knowledge in American culture. He has frequently held long-term as well as short-term guest professorships at universities and colleges in the United States and in Europe.

Dr. Philipp Kneis, Oregon State University, Political Science Program

Philipp Kneis holds an M.A. in American Studies and History from Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and a Ph.D in American Studies from the University of Potsdam. He is one of the founding members of the Transatlantic Students Symposia. He teaches in the Political Science program at OSU. His main research interests pertain to intersections of culture and politics in the US and the European Union.

Dr. Raymond Malewitz, Oregon State University, MA English Program

Raymond Malewitz is an associate professor in the School of Writing, Literature, and Film at Oregon State University, and serves as the MA Director for its graduate program. His work is centered in contemporary American literature, literature and science, environmental literature, and material culture. He received his Ph.D. in English from the University of Virginia in 2007.

Student Organizers

Nadja Riegler, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program

Nadja earned her Bachelor's degree in English, American and Polish Studies at Potsdam and Warsaw University. After completing the program, she worked as a translator for audiovisual media, mainly for film and television, specializing in subtitling and audio description. She has been working for the Berlin Film Festival and the Arsenal, Institute for Film and Video-Art for seven years until today. In between all that, she felt the urge to return to university and now attends the MA American Studies program at HU. Obviously, her main interest are cultural studies and film culture but also, since she was growing up surrounded by Americans, having family in the U.S., she has always been interested in questions of transatlantic exchange. It goes without saying that Nadja is, also in her private life, consuming American art and media with a special passion for American Independent Film and Indie Music. Nadja is commuting between Berlin, where she is very grateful to be able to live and Northern Bavaria, where she grew up.

Carlota Surós, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program

Carlota is an English Studies graduate holding two Masters from Spanish universities (a M.A. in Museum Studies and Critical Theory and a M.A in Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies). She is currently pursuing a third Masters in American Studies at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Carlota has also completed her first pre-doctorate year on Comparative Literature and Sociology at the Open University of Catalonia, Spain. Her interdisciplinary background and love for research has brought her to work extensively in the art field as a curator and cultural manager, as well as working with several media and publishing houses as a freelance writer, researcher and translator. Her main academic interests fall into the intersection between urban sociology, feminism, human geography, critical theory and postcolonial studies, which she applies to cultural practices such as music or contemporary art.

Dominik Michaelis, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program

Dominik holds a vocational degree as a kindergarten teacher, has spent his twenties working at a geek culture store, as a Kindergarten teacher and cleaning rails at night, and only started his academic training in his early thirties. This trajectory of eclecticism in his interests brought him to studying Amerikanistik and Kulturwissenschaft at HUB, as they were the two most free and least rigid courses in terms of subject matters and methodology. During his undergraduate studies he developed an interest in mythologies - literary, political and otherwise -, French theory, history of ideas, and political narratives. He started tutoring English, German, History, and Political Science on the side and, through this, rekindled his love for teaching.

Being glad that he had found such a free and nourishing intellectual environment in the HU Amerikanistik, he did not have to think twice about pursuing his master's here, which allowed him to participate in last year's symposium in New York. This experience in turn motivated him to co-organize this year's symposium. At the moment he is working on his Master's Thesis about the history of American right wing extremism and its relationship to its German counterpart.

Angela Nguyen, Oregon State University, Political Science Program

Angela was born and raised in Salem, Oregon. She moved to Corvallis, Oregon to study Political Science at Oregon State University in the Fall of 2015. Angela will finish her degree this coming June and will receive her Bachelor's degree in Political Science with concentrations on International Relations and Law Politics as well as a minor in Philosophy. After graduation, Angela will be moving to Houston, Texas to pursue a law degree from Texas Southern University at the Thurgood Marshall School of Law. Her drive to go to law school comes from wanting to serve underserved communities. Outside of academics, Angela enjoys to country western dance as well as line dance.

Alexus Austin, Oregon State University, History Program

Alexus is a senior studying at Oregon State University. This June, she will graduate with a degree in history. In addition to her academic pursuits, she is an archival assistant for the Oregon Multicultural Archives at the OSU Special Collections and Archives Research Center, as well as an outreach and promotions intern for the Oregon State University Libraries and Press. Throughout her academy career, she has the opportunity to work at the university in a number of capacities including at the Hattie Redmond Women and Gender Center, the Department of Recreational Sports, as well as the Office of New Student Programs and Family Outreach, amongst others. Her capstone focused on interfaith perceptions of Jews and Muslims in medieval Islamic Spain, primarily as seen through literature and laws. Such work and academic study have led to an ongoing desire to work to promote the representation and advancement of underrepresented communities while continuing to examine the ways in which identities intersect with areas such as history, law, marketing, and art.

Karolina Szlasa, Uniwersytet Warszawski, American Studies Program

Karolina is a second year M.A. student at the American Studies Center in Warsaw. In between her BA studies at ASC she spent a year and a half at the Academy of Fine Arts. She initiated the ASC Film Society and is the President of the American Studies Center Students' Organization. She's interested in modernist literature, philosophy, language, politics and the media, especially the role that television plays in educating people. She is writing her M.A. thesis on Ezra Pound's *Cantos*.

Bogdana Sybikowska, Uniwersytet Warszawski, American Studies Program

Bogdana is a PhD student in security studies at the University of Warsaw and a student of the Master's program in American Studies. Her research interest is primarily concentrated on collective security system, the institutionalization of security and the United Nations reform. Prior to completing her Master's program in international relations, she won the award for the best research of the year and managed to organize numerous conferences on international security. Her commitment to the organization of Warsaw Security Forum 2017 was recognized by the Organizing Committee. She currently is a member of the project «Young European Ambassadors in the Eastern Partnership region», which is funded by the EU, and is mainly interested in evolving democracies in the region.

Conference Program

09:00 - 10:15 Panel 1: Rhetoric, Discourses, Metaphors

Marisa Yerace,
Oregon State University, MA English Program:
“Rhetoric and its Place in Modern Democracy

Bio: Marisa is pursuing her Masters in Rhetoric, Writing, and Culture at Oregon State University, where she has taught almost 70 students in the composition classroom and works with the Writing Intensive Curriculum. She completed her Bachelor of Arts in English (Writing Studies) at Northern Kentucky University in 2018, Summa Cum Laude. While an undergraduate, Marisa collaborated on research examining creative placemaking as a new form of civic participation in the Greater Cincinnati Area. Her undergraduate Honors Capstone studied rhetorical analysis of place and its interdisciplinary applications. Her research now seeks to solidify understanding of invitational rhetorics by paralleling them with placemaking processes.

Abstract: Rhetorical study began in Ancient Athens as a natural complement to democratic deliberation. This presentation examines how rhetoric and composition as a discipline within the American university is situated as part of a democratic education. Marisa wishes to deconstruct and critique implicit claims of literacy and rhetorical awareness as building citizenship and encouraging democracy by turning to other scholars in my field who discuss composition pedagogies, our definitions of democracy, and the values implicit in liberal arts education. Overall, Marisa aims to identify trends in our thinking and understand what rhetoric and composition scholars can do better to cultivate participatory citizenship.

Ben Platt,
Oregon State University, MA English Program:
“Microbial Living: Re-examining the Metaphors that Shape our Communities”

Bio: Ben is an MA student in the literature and culture discipline at Oregon State University. He grew up on the front range of the Rocky Mountains and received a BA in English at the University of Wyoming. His thesis research is focused on developing a posthuman understanding of the world to improve our knowledge practices, how we represent the nonhuman agents whom we coexist with and depend on, and our ethical practices towards our environment.

Abstract: Political studies, and international relations specifically, have traditionally discussed the status of communities and states through bodily metaphors. Ironically, though, these metaphorical bodies do not match our contemporary understanding of bodies nor consider the lived experience of individual bodies within states; it instead assumes a liberal, bounded, and homogenous nation that is collectively working towards a common good and invokes a discourse of immunology and internal vs. external to justify this conception. Ben proposes, along with other interdisciplinary political thinkers, that we update our biology and our metaphors when we talk about states in order to better handle contemporary crises facing our communities and our world that the state-as-body metaphor simply fails to comprehend. Ben proposes that we understand our nations as biospheres in the same

way that biologists currently understand our material bodies to be microbial biospheres, heterogeneous, porous, and constantly in flux. To think microbially is to re-center our focus in political discussions from the abstract level of the state to the lived experiences of people and onto the pluralism and dynamism that a democratic, healthy community requires in order to thrive. This pluralism moves past the anthropocentrism of our previous metaphors, something that any philosophy of community must in our age of ecological devastation.

Deborah Pomeranz,

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:

“‘Eine andere Form von Antisemitismus’: Discourses on ‘Muslim Antisemitism’ and their Impact on Democratic Cultures”

Bio: Deborah is a first year M.A. student in American studies at Humboldt University. She received her B.A. in ethnic studies from Brown University, where she wrote her bachelor’s thesis on discourses of public safety in 1970s New York. She is particularly interested in issues of race, gender, and sexuality in modern American history. Outside of the classroom you can find her working at the Center for Research in Antisemitism or swing dancing.

Abstract: In this presentation Deborah takes up what she terms discourses on ‘Muslim antisemitism.’ Though demonstrably false, the narrative that Muslims are the main source of antisemitism in Germany and the U.S. is often insisted upon by politicians, the media, and private citizens. Deborah analyzes several examples of this discourse in order to argue that it serves to demonize and exclude Muslims by painting them as intolerant and backwards, while ignoring the real and growing white supremacy that poses the most significant threat to Jews and Muslims alike. These discourses allow the political mainstream in the U.S. and Germany to continue perceiving themselves and their countries as liberal and democratic, while in fact excluding both Muslims and Jews from full national belonging.

Michał Niedzielski,

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:

“Discourses on the ‘Urban vs. Rural’ – Divide”

Bio: Michał is a second year M.A. student of American studies at the American Studies Center at the University of Warsaw. Following his bachelor’s degree in French language and literature at the University of Warsaw, he is especially interested in critical and literary theory and is writing his M.A. thesis about the role of irony in the works of David Foster Wallace. Michał has also completed a semester abroad as an Erasmus exchange student at the Humboldt University in Berlin where he has participated in Prof. Isensee’s Transatlantic Symposium preparatory seminar.

Abstract: Michał’s presentation focuses on the discourses surrounding the so-called “urban vs. rural divide” in relation to American politics but also in a transatlantic context. He is working on the discourses of the urban vs. rural divide in contemporary politics because he wants to find out how political orientation is related to population distribution in order to help the reader understand the bigger and more important question of the impact of urbanization on the political life of the transatlantic community. The discourses surrounding the urban and the rural were a significant element of the political climate leading up to the 2016 presidential election – in his presentation he wishes to assess the extent to which these discourses are reasonable, examine the imageries behind the “rural”

and the “urban” by comparing how these imageries function in the U.S. and Poland and finally attempt to answer the question of whether dichotomies such as urban/rural, liberal/conservative or Democratic/Republican are still useful for observations not only of American but also, more broadly, of transatlantic political life.

10:30 - 12:00 Panel 2: Texts, Theory, Histories

**Nathan Phelps,
Oregon State University, MA English Program:
“Historical Narratives as Tools of Power”**

Bio: Nathan is a graduate student at Oregon State University’s School of Writing, Literature, and Film. He received a Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of Wyoming in 2016, and wrote his undergraduate honor’s thesis on the intersection of gender, imperialism, and ecocriticism in medieval Arthurian literature. He is interested in relationships of power in medieval literature, especially as they apply to time, history, and imperialism.

Abstract: History is often presented in the light of a ‘modern’ objectivity. This view of history assumes that a focus on fact and accuracy recreates truth for the listener. However, for an egalitarian, democratic society to be a possibility, this idea must be complicated and challenged. Engaging with the historical dialogue on the internet around Brexit as well as with Geoffrey of Monmouth’s medieval chronicle, the purpose of this presentation is to underscore the often-didactic nature of historical narratives, emphasizing the way that history is told to reinforce a view of how the world ought to be. History, in other words, serves power toward creating a future. In this way, the history applied to narratives around Brexit are shown to manipulate history into a dangerous kind of narrative that parallels Geoffrey’s own narratives which serve the ends of a monarchical, centralizing power.

**Carolina Henryka (Karolina Szlasa),
Uniwersytet Warszawski, American Studies Program:
“An essay inspired by David Foster Wallace”**

Bio: Karolina is a second year M.A. student at the American Studies Center in Warsaw. In between her BA studies at ASC she spent a year and a half at the Academy of Fine Arts. She initiated the ASC Film Society and is the President of the American Studies Center Students’ Organization. She’s interested in modernist literature, philosophy, language, politics and the media, especially the role that television plays in educating people. She is writing her M.A. thesis on Ezra Pound’s *Cantos*.

Abstract: Carolina’s going to share with you a piece of prose writing inspired by the writer David Foster Wallace. What she is looking at is the question of whether the narratives we create in history and culture need to be as pure and honest as we would like them to be, whether it is even possible to ask them to be that. All the quotations used come from the essay “Up, Simba” from the book of short stories titled *Consider the Lobster*.

Magdalena Kos,

Uniwersytet Warszawski, American Studies Program:

“An Authoritarian Gaze into the Future. The Authoritarian Gaze in Social Dystopia Films”

Bio: Magdalena is a MA student at the American Studies Center, at the University of Warsaw, where she had previously received her BA degree. Her chief academic interests include critical theory, posthumanism and American science-fiction cinema. Currently, she works on a MA thesis regarding postgender themes in culture and philosophy. She has a soft spot for modernist poetry, jazz music and filmography of Nolan brothers.

Abstract: Magdalena is interested in the question of how popular culture reflects the future of (un)democratic societies, therefore I gravitated towards a particular science fiction subgenre: social dystopia film. Instead of merely restating some of the problems that have been already described, she focuses on the audiovisual order which governs the formal structure of these movies and in turn—prevents us from noticing issues which occur on the narrative level. Building on theories of Carl Freedman, Susan Sontag and John Rieder she proposes to use the term “authoritarian gaze” to describe this audiovisual logic, which functions as a tunnel vision—it allows the audience to only partially engage in the cognitive process of movie’s interpretation and, in turn, undermines the basic assumption about the progressiveness of the genre.

Nicole Horowitz,

Oregon State University, MA English Program:

“Trans-historical Literature: Hemingway’s ‘The Butterfly and the Tank’ as a Metaphor for Modern Democratic Practices”

Bio: Nicole is a first-year graduate student studying twentieth century American literature and culture at Oregon State University. She received her undergraduate degree from New York University’s Gallatin School. Her work at OSU concerns the intersection of feminist criticism and Modernist literature, and their connection to periodical and magazine culture of the early twentieth century.

Abstract: In the contemporary moment, the future of Democratic culture feels more unsure than ever. In her presentation, Nicole applies this anxiety to the history of democracy in Spain, seen through the lens of Ernest Hemingway’s short story “The Butterfly and the Tank.” As the story takes place during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), Nicole positions it as a way into the intersection of the largely modern notion of democracy with the growing undercurrent of an unruly, populist way of being. Nicole argues that this text can be read as a way of seeing into the anxiety over the conflation of the notions of fact and fiction, play and war, that seek to undermine a democratic regime, which appears to be a relevant struggle today.

Jenna Patten,

Oregon State University, MA English Program:

“Indoctrinating the Bare Life”

Bio: Jenna is a Master of Arts student at the Oregon State University School of Writing, Literature and Film. She obtained her undergraduate degree in Business Real Estate with a minor in Economics at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota, graduating with honors. Later, she attended Oregon State

University, seeking her undergraduate degree in English before transitioning into the graduate program, with a focus on literature and culture. Born and raised in South Dakota, Patten moved to Minnesota after graduating from high school. After a short career in banking, she chose to move to the west coast, specifically Willamette Valley of Oregon. While her initial educational interests were in the fields of business and banking, these areas were not a personally satisfying and she chose to return to school in order to attain a degree in English literature studies. Her current research centers around Greek literature, and how they relate to biopolitical theory. At present, Patten lives in Monmouth, Oregon with her dog Sherlock.

Abstract: In this presentation, Jenna looks at the work of Giorgio Agamben, particularly his notion of 'bare life' as it relates to biopolitical theory. Agamben originates his concept on the philosophical ideas of Aristotle and the Greek terms of *zoe* and *bios*. Jenna explores whether the origination of 'bare life' is borne by way of Aristotle, and not through themes of earlier archaic Greek poetry. Jenna examines the poem by the seventh century B.C.E. poet Semonides and the surviving verses of his poem "Women" as they represent a narrative of 'bare life' before the establishment of the modern sovereign. Biopolitics is largely considered a contemporary and ethically charged argument around the diminishment of specific cultural and social groups as they relate to politics and a sophisticated governmental bureaucracy. Yet, the ideas advanced by Agamben are present well before Aristotle, as seen in archaic Greek poetry, and such themes thrive now with the same indoctrinating designs.

Kamila Pękała,

**Uniwersytet Warszawski, American Studies Program:
"Hannah Arendt's On Revolution Revisited"**

Bio: Kamila is a student of Inter-area Individual Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences, She is currently doing her second year of Masters at American Studies Center. Previously, having studied French Philology, including one term spent in Paris, at Université Paris Diderot, she received a BA degree in that area. At present, Kamila is mostly interested in Queer theory, contemporary French literature and Marxism. Her MA thesis investigates the politics of representation of queer, interracial couples.

Abstract: Over 50 years after its publication, Hannah Arendt's *On Revolution* remains an important and insightful analysis of two most important revolutions of 18th century, the French Revolution of 1789 and the American revolution of 1765. In the light of current political situation Kamila revisits *On Revolutions*, in which Arendt positively evaluates the American one and condemns the French one as a failure. Using Rancière's "Ten Theses on Politics" and Butler's "Merely Cultural", Kamila shows that in some instances the evaluation can be entirely contrary to Arendt's. In her reflection the distinction between social and political and the consequences that those two categories have for understanding the outcomes of both revolutions are crucial

13:00 - 14:45 Panel 3: Politics, Challenges, Perspectives**Bogdana Sybikowska,
Uniwersytet Warszawski, American Studies Program:
“The role of the United Nations Security Council in the Struggle for Democracy During the Arab Spring”**

Bio: Bogdana is a PhD student in security studies at the University of Warsaw and a student of the Master's program in American Studies. Her research interest is primarily concentrated on collective security system, the institutionalization of security and the United Nations reform. Prior to completing her Master's program in international relations, she won the award for the best research of the year and managed to organize numerous conferences on international security. Her commitment to the organization of Warsaw Security Forum 2017 was recognized by the Organizing Committee. She currently is a member of the project «Young European Ambassadors in the Eastern Partnership region», which is funded by the European Union, and is mainly interested in evolving democracies in the region.

Abstract: With the development of a social and technological progress, new challenges have presented themselves. Nowadays the world is facing new kinds of threats to a global security and democracy as a concept. Being non-chaotic and mutually dependent, these issues should be treated in a special and cautious way on account of their dangerous and far-reaching impact. Armed conflicts have a new dangerous nature and gain a global scale; thence it is vital to note that dealing with them on a higher level becomes crucial. The problem of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war has been important and essential since the First World War. Any regional conflict can become a burst bubble for collective security, and consequently the efficiency of an organization, which controls the processes and crises all over the world, becomes a primary source of analysis. Bogdana discusses the efficiency of the United Nations Security Council in the struggle for democracy during the Arab Spring. She analyses the situation during the Arab Spring, the precursors of the conflicts and the reactive actions taken by the UNSC to cease the conflict at a certain stage. Finally, she draws conclusions as to the performance of the United Nations Security Council and what reforms are required in the United Nations system in order to transform the organization into a more productive body.

**Katie Hahn,
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:
“A New Global Class in Crisis: Examining the Rise and Struggles of the Precariat”**

Bio: Katie is a second-year MA student of American Studies at Humboldt University. She holds a Bachelor's degree in English and American Studies and in French philology from the University of Potsdam, and has studied in the English Honors Program at Chu Hai College in Hong Kong. In her research, Katie is especially interested in the intersections of literature and psychology. She wrote her BA thesis on representations of insanity in American Gothic fiction and is currently planning her MA thesis on the body/mind division in self-help literature, research for which she is going to conduct during a semester at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville this upcoming fall.

Abstract: Over the last decades, we have been witnessing the construction of a new globalized market economy that has brought with it new market sectors and forms of labor such as the booming gig

economy, which have been largely disadvantageous to the poor and gone hand in hand with the disappearance of work-related benefits and stable employment contracts. These economic developments have caused a re-shaping of the traditional three stratum social class model and resulted in the emergence of a new group of people living and working in highly unstable conditions and lacking a security net as well as an occupational identity – the precariat.

In her presentation, Katie is going to offer a definition of this new social class, presenting the various sub-groups of people belonging it, the labor they perform, and the economic and identitary struggles they face.

Matthew Fuller,

Oregon State University, MA English Program:

“Stifled Democracy: Citizenship and Voter Suppression in the United States”

Bio: Matthew is a first-year master’s student studying African American Cultural Rhetoric at Oregon State University. He earned his BA in English at Indiana University Kokomo where he served as managing editor of *Field: A Journal of Arts & Sciences* as well as participated in the 2017 Social Entrepreneurial Exploration.

Abstract: This paper and presentation will explore citizenship and the history of voter suppression within the United States, particularly that of African Americans and the ways in which legislation and constitutional amendments have been circumvented in order to restrain minority electorates. Through understanding the ways in which minorities are excluded from the community of citizens creating policy through active participation, we can better revitalize the declining minority vote by closing the turnout gap and combating questionable policies.

Jonathon Golden,

Oregon State University, Political Science Program:

“The Problem of Voter Apathy”

Bio: Jonathon Golden is an undergraduate student at Oregon State University majoring in political science. Jonathon has worked for the United States Forest Service for the last 12 years. During his tenure at the Forest Service, Jonathon has led teams in fire, aviation and all hazard missions around the United States. He made the decision to go back to school in 2017 after being inspired by his wife Lauren who at that time, started to pursue her PhD in public policy and administration. Jonathon and his wife have an 18-month-old son and two older dogs. They enjoy recreating out in the American West where they live. This fall, Jonathon will be attending the Henry Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Seattle to begin a graduate studies program.

Abstract: Voter apathy represents a problem in the democracies of Europe and the US. Over the last thirty years, there has been a global trend in decreased voter participation, highly associated with mistrust of politics overall. Voter participation in European parliamentary elections have been in decline for the last thirty years and the US has consistently had low voter turn-out and voter registration laws have significantly enhanced this trend. To reverse voter apathy in both the EU and the US, there needs to be an effort to increase the quality of factual information to the voter with respect to politicians, political parties and political issues. Implementing technological tools is seen as one way to help overcome information deficit and to help voters determine candidates that share similar values.

In an era where the global strongman and nationalism are gaining popularity, voter apathy should be a concern to those who favor democracy.

Ilana Schmidt,

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:

“Addressing the European Political Identity Crisis- Democracy in Europe Movement 2025 (DiEM25)”

Bio: Ilana is a German-American, originally from North Carolina, USA and has been living in Berlin for almost two years. She has finished the first semester of her Masters in North American Studies at Humboldt University. She completed her bachelor’s degree at North Carolina State University in International Studies with a focus in global cultures, as well as minors in Non-Profit Management and German Studies. As an undergraduate, she spent a semester abroad in Freiburg, Germany. Her interests include international relations and identifying ways to strengthen ties politically and culturally, especially between the United States and Germany.

Abstract: Democracy in Europe and elsewhere in the world is facing substantial challenges. Many analysts view the classical political landscape in Europe as eroding, with conservative and social-democratic parties losing votes to far-right and progressive parties. The European Union has been favoring industry, cooperating with oligarchic governments, and claiming that its citizens still have an influential role in the democratic process. Struggling governments have exhausted traditional solutions and continue to impose ineffective policies. The inability to maintain former stability is fueling xenophobic and ultra-nationalistic beliefs across the continent. Politicians’ claims, such as the economic and migration crises being resolved, have not been convincing to many EU citizens. New political movements and parties are emerging, providing viable political alternatives, including structures differing from the classical party-model. One example is the pan-European political initiative Democracy in Europe Movement 2025. DiEM25 has been created to counter traditional political structures, restore democracy to Europe and halt the disintegration of the European Union. Such alternative initiatives deserve serious consideration in the search for solutions to the European Union’s problems.

Altanay Dramalieva,

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:

“Avaaz - A Case Study in Extra-Parliamentary Politics”

Bio: Altanay was born in Bulgaria and when the time for choosing her BA came, she was very interested in Journalism and decided to apply for that. As the quota for this in Sofia University is quite limited, she was not accepted – but she says she does not regret it. She started studying English and American Studies, aka English Philology, and her thoughts were to eventually transfer to Journalism, but she enjoyed it so much, that she decided to stick to that and graduated. Her fields of interest include literature, social relations and translation. She speaks Bulgarian and Spanish, and she hopes she would perfect German someday as well. During her BA education many of her professors were respected authors and translators in Bulgaria and abroad, and that sparked her wish to take this path professionally in the future, in an NGO or other organization. Altanay is currently 1st year MA American Studies student at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and believes that has been broadening her perspectives a lot.

Abstract: The aim of this presentation is to dwell on the recent development of mass and social media, specifically regarding politics and NGOs. The conducted research is putting the non-profit organization Avaaz in the spotlight. Avaaz has gained popularity and millions of subscribers in recent years. Altanay will be looking into their advantages and flaws as an institution, and how and why they are involved in international affairs, as well as is it possible for such an organization to seriously affect politics in any way. She will be discussing questions concerning global democracy and democracy in the making through online platforms, do they reflect people's actual opinion, is online political activism support or hindrance to actual political campaigns and democratic ruling, and more.

15:00 - 16:15 Panel 4: Tech, New Media, Modernity

Mona-Lynn Klinginger,

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:

“Democracy in the Age of Algorithms - Echo Chambers, Filter Bubbles and their Effect on our Political Identity”

Bio: Mona-Lynn is a second-year MA student of American Studies at Humboldt University in Berlin. She received her BA in English Studies and Comparative Literature at the University of Bonn. During that time she worked as an assistant editor for a local news program at one of the largest public broadcasting stations in Germany and continues that work in Berlin. She is fascinated by the written and spoken word in every shape or form. Following her graduation, she hopes to pursue a career that combines her interest in literature, sociology and psychology.

Abstract: Exchange of political opinion, to a great extent, shifted to the digital sphere. In recent years, we have been confronted with an increasing number of ‘fake news’, manipulated elections and the emergence of filter bubbles and echo chambers. The technical machinery behind most of them: an algorithm. A recent example was the scandal evolving around the political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica (CA). According to media sources, both the UK and the US government made use of their data analysis methods. Through the illegal collection of Facebook data, CA identified target voter groups and designed customized messaging to influence opinion. On the contrary, algorithms can also be used to create the opposite effect. A software engineer in the US created an algorithm that works against election bias. Mona's presentation shows the different ways algorithms can certainly damage but also greatly benefit our political identity. In a second step, she examines whether these developments have the potential to intellectually isolate our already ‘isolated’ views in times of identity politics.

Kate Dawson,

Oregon State University, MA English Program:

“Docile Body Politic: Citizenship in the Age of Apple”

Bio: Kate is a graduate student at Oregon State University's School of Writing, Literature, and Film. In 2017, she received her B.A. in Communication Studies from Temple University in Philadelphia, where she concentrated in global media studies and intercultural communication. Her research today is largely concerned with film, and she is passionate about understanding how such media construct identities and cultural understandings within individuals and across societies.

Abstract: If McLuhan's aphorism, "the medium is the message," is true, then today's popular modes of social media communication and other smart-tech seemingly reflect a hopeful message for the future of democracy as citizens are granted greater access to information and creative platforms. However, if we consider Thoreau's injunction that "men have become tools of their tools" alongside this aphorism, then we must acknowledge that such media may also be working in us to effect a culture of docile bodies, precluding the type of agency and understanding that is considered key to "good" democratic citizenship. In this research essay, Kate examines the effects of media technologies on the culture of democratic citizenship today by specifically asking how our media technologies make tools of us, and how we then serve the media technology in turn. The primary mode of investigation into these questions is a close reading of a cultural text which I believe to be the harbinger of our modern relationship with media technologies within political society: the 1984 Apple television advertisement introducing Macintosh, the world's first ever mass-market personal computer.

Kinga Pomykacz,

Uniwersytet Warszawski, American Studies Program:

"How Donald Trump's Brand Won the Presidential Elections. The Trump Brand Strategy"

Bio: Kinga is a Master's degree student at the American Studies Center at the University of Warsaw, Poland. As an active student she is involved in many university's projects and events - especially, when it comes to political science conferences. Her research interests include political psychology, political marketing, and leadership studies. Kinga's BA thesis was about "Donald Trump's Personality and How It Influences His Decision-Making?"

Abstract: In a world of big corporations, where names and logos are essential to differentiate between good and bad products, the analysis and planning management called brand strategy was established. But this specific domain of corporations and companies have been taken over by the political objects, like politicians. In the case of Donald Trump, the so-called umbrella brand has emerged from small brand to mega-brand — the Trump umbrella brand spreads over his sub-brands, like foundations, hotels, casinos, but most of all his presidency. In her talk, Kinga analyzes the Trump brand in the framework of an umbrella brand, and how his branding (brand strategy) was created to win the presidential elections.

This political science paper indicates the hypothesis that Donald Trump is a mega umbrella-brand, and his presidency is only a sub-brand. Still, thanks to his brand strategy he won the elections and his brand became stronger than ever.

Alec Calabrese,

Oregon State University, Political Science Program:

"Strategies and Technologies in the Fake News Industry"

Bio: Alec Calabrese is from a small town in the Finger Lakes region of Western New York State. He is a student attending Oregon State University's online campus, where he is working on a bachelor's degree in German language. He has also studied political science in an International Program at Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen during the Summer of 2018.

Abstract: In this presentation, Alec will examine the growing Fake News industry. Its creators use a variety of strategies and technologies to make their articles look convincing. To recognize it we examine some of these strategies.

16:30 - 18:00 Panel 5: Identity, Activism, Resistance

Henry Lyonga Njimapie,

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:

“Shame in the African-American and African communities in diaspora: A Transatlantic Perspective”

Bio: Henry creative-writer, former creative content manager and outreach person for Spacebase Berlin. He is an author and a first year Masters student of American Studies at the very esteem Humboldt University. He graduated with a Bachelors in English, American Culture and Sociology at the University of Kassel and Wolverhampton. Henry grew up underneath the heels of Mount-Fako, at a place called Mutengene, in Cameroon, west-Africa. Currently, he is based in Berlin. His work and writings focuses on the idea of self and space in the German Diaspora.

Abstract: Henry’s interest to share and speak on this subject is to understand on a theoretical level where guilt and shame comes from, the guilt and shame felt by black folks, and how to better manage it and in so doing, become a more useful component to the democratic culture. He focuses on two diasporas: The African-American diaspora and the African diaspora in Europe, particularly in Germany. The reason for choosing these two communities as a focal point of his talk has to do with the fact that in thinking of a collective national identity as presented by Anderson, we must bear in mind that this sense of national identity is one that is difficult for black people to buy into. For most people of color, being black in white spaces comes with a certain sense of shame of not belonging and/ or feeling as part of the bigger picture. This feeling of not belonging can be traced back to slavery. Henry argues that shame in the African-American and African communities could be linked to the transatlantic slave-trade. By arguing this, he highlights the social implications of shame. By the end of the presentation, we will see that shame is a treat to not only African American and African Communities but also to the future of democratic cultures.

Hannah Mara Schmitt,

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:

“The Future is Female: Do Women’s Marches Have the Potential to Change the Future of Democratic Cultures in Europe and the United States?”

Bio: Hannah is a first year M.A. student at Humboldt University Berlin. Having completed her international independent research at New York University in January 2018, she received her dual-subject bachelor’s degree in June from University of Cologne where she majored in German Linguistics & Literature and English Studies. Throughout her bachelor’s program she has developed a keen interest in women’s studies as well as feminist theory, and ever since dedicated herself to the topics of gender equity and women’s empowerment. In her bachelor’s thesis titled *‘How Women Give Themselves a Voice’* she explored the significance of humor as the main factor of female agency in feminist short stories. She has worked as a freelance journalist in TV broadcasting and is currently devoted to her

job in the communications and events department of the German Startups Association, which is representative and voice of startups in Germany. Committed to establishing a founder-friendly environment through opening up the dialogue with decision-makers in politics, the organization operates on a national as well as international level, also with the goal to bring more women to the table of decision-making.

Abstract: Since Donald Trump has been elected U.S. President, public protests have become ubiquitous not only in the United States, but worldwide. On January 21, 2017, the day after his inauguration, Women's March on Washington caused millions of people to gather in cities and towns across the world to stand together for human rights. What initially started as an unprompted protest, is now not only known to be the largest single-day demonstration in recorded U.S. history, but also one of the most popular movements for women's rights. Therefore, Hannah will explore Women's March in the context of grassroots movements in order to evaluate if a specific characteristic that makes this movement especially effective can be identified. If it is true that the participation in mass protests impacts electoral outcomes, then Women's March undoubtedly has exceptional potential to transform the political scene and the agenda of global politics. Women's March seems to provide the basic ground for following transformative actions and can lead to the emergence of other progressive groups. Moreover, it fosters collective action and coalition-building, which are to be considered of high significance in the success of political movements that aim to bring about social change. However, no social justice movement develops without conflict, and disagreements around Women's March existed from the beginning. Despite it being recurrently accused of Anti-Semitism, Hannah still believes that if the tensions around and within the Women's March community can successfully managed to be navigated, it holds an immense potential for rebuilding the future of democratic cultures as it creates opportunities for expanding and leveraging political power not only in the streets and at the ballot box, but in parliaments as well. If Women's March, for example through an intersectional lens, is able to make its approach more transparent, accessible and in particular intersectional, it certainly can pave the way for a female, for a diverse, and for an equal (political) future.

Ebrahim Sharifat,

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:

“The Faceless Feminists: The Strange Case of Ahwazi Arab Feminists Caught Between Two Struggling Forces”

Bio: Ebrahim is in his first year of the Master's programme in American Studies at Humboldt University. After finishing his Master's degree in English literature in Tehran and translating five books from English into Persian, he decided to move to Berlin and focus on his studies related to feminism, nation building, marginalization and censorship.

Abstract: Ebrahim's research attempts to draw a comparison between feminism in the U.S and an underground feminist movement in Ahwaz, Iran. When one hears the word feminist, one cannot help but to associate the concepts of political movements, ideologies, and social movements with it. Feminism as such is in essence an outward and outspoken movement. Nonetheless, feminism has a variety of different manifestations in the Middle East. This new phenomenon is not an outspoken movement; neither is it social since these feminists have no active role in the society. It is rather an underground social media movement which doesn't follow any established, extant ideology. It exists only

in social media and the materials are published totally anonymously. The aim of Ebrahim's presentation is to introduce this new phenomenon and to explain how Instagram has become the only means of expression and self-assertion for the marginalized Ahwazi Arabs in general and the Ahwazi feminists in particular.

Azadeh Ghanizadeh,

Oregon State University, MA English Program:

"Muslims in Germany: Immigration, Diaspora, and Strategies of Acculturation"

Bio: Azadeh Ghanizadeh is a graduate student at the Oregon State University School of Writing, Literature, and Film. She received her undergraduate degree in philosophy at the University of Oregon and wrote her honors thesis on gender, Islam, and coloniality. She is broadly interested in global ethics and international relations, examining these topics through a critical race theory and feminism framework. Her family moved to the United States in 1999 as refugees, influencing her interest in how meaning is created and uncovered through language. These interests converge at the intersection of transnational feminism, decolonial theory, and Islamic philosophy. Her research centers on woman's situation in differing patriarchies—both secular and religious—and queries the viability of universal ethical answers to radically divergent gender inequalities. Her current work examines new and emerging mechanisms of power, the vagaries of whiteness, and the role of the cosmopolitan humanities in the maintenance of inequality. To this end, Azadeh's research is bound up in the politics of knowledge—that is, who gets to speak on behalf of whom and from what locations and terrains knowledge is admitted as valid or rejected as invalid.

Abstract: As migratory flows from third to first world nations increase, cross-cultural encounters are increasingly tense and fueled by concerns about integration. These tensions center around integration into the host nation's civic structure and norms gesturing to the problems and possibilities of acculturation in our increasingly globalized world. Where many believe that these tensions are the result of insurmountable differences in the culture(s) of Muslim immigrants who relocate to Western nations, these tensions are bound up in a combination of forces far surpassing simple matters of cultural syncretism or integration. Misguided policies on the part of German immigration services combine with an elusive Saudi-funded missionary movement to increasingly subdue and alienate an already vulnerable Muslim immigrant community. Combining with this, masculinist versions of Islam are propagated by Saudi-funded organization who leverage the vulnerability of displaced Muslims to serve their own interests. Against this layered and shifting predicament, a community of scholars, activists, and NGO's locate discourses of women and gender in Islam as the exact site of resistance against both white supremacy and patriarchy. Islamic feminism address both the masculinist, Wahhabist missionary movement and biased Western acculturation policies, reminding both believers and non-believers of the vibrant, dynamic, and ever-present participation of women in the maintenance of the on-going Islamic legacy and in the promotion of a world in which many cultures and many ways of being are regarded with respect and credulity.

Rachel L. Cushman,

Chinook Nation / University of Oregon:

“Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism and Democracy through an Indigenous Lens”

Bio: Class of 2010, University of Oregon, Ethnic Studies – Applying to Law School. Rachel L. Cushman, is an enrolled member and Councilwoman of Chinook Indian Nation (CIN). The focus of her tenure is restorative justice, as well as infrastructure stability and growth for her community. Cushman travels regionally, nationally and internationally advocating for CIN, American Indian issues and environmental protection efforts. She has been a guest speaker at universities, human rights organizations, political events and more. Cushman and CIN are in a decades long battle for federal recognition and currently have an active lawsuit open against the Department of the Interior and Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Abstract: Cushman’s presentation discusses the effects of colonization on her people, Chinook Indian Nation, and their resilience to maintain their traditional perception of the world – that of cosmopolitans. Cushman argues that nationalism and capitalist-led globalization will destroy democracy.

18:00 Closing Remarks

7. SECOND SYMPOSIUM CONFERENCE SCHEDULE, HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITY BERLIN, MAY 10, 2019

At Humboldt-University Berlin, students that were not able to join the field trip presented their papers on May 10, 2019. The conference also included reflections by those who were able to attend.

Conference Program

Introduction

Introductory Remarks

Review of Vienna Trip

Nadja Riegler,

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program. Student Organizer

Nadja earned her Bachelor's degree in English, American and Polish Studies at Potsdam and Warsaw University. After completing the program, she worked as a translator for audiovisual media, mainly for film and television, specializing in subtitling and audio description. She has been working for the Berlin Film Festival and the Arsenal, Institute for Film and Video-Art for seven years until today. In between all that, she felt the urge to return to university and now attends the MA American Studies program at HU. Obviously, her main interest are cultural studies and film culture but also, since she was growing up surrounded by Americans, having family in the U.S., she has always been interested in questions of transatlantic exchange. It goes without saying that Nadja is, also in her private life, consuming American art and media with a special passion for American Independent Film and Indie Music. Nadja is commuting between Berlin, where she is very grateful to be able to live and Northern Bavaria, where she grew up.

Carlota Surós,

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program. Student Organizer

Carlota is an English Studies graduate holding two Masters from Spanish universities (a M.A. in Museum Studies and Critical Theory and a M.A in Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies). She is currently pursuing a third Masters in American Studies at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Carlota has also completed her first pre-doctorate year on Comparative Literature and Sociology at the Open University of Catalonia, Spain. Her interdisciplinary background and love for research has brought her to work extensively in the art field as a curator and cultural manager, as well as working with several media and publishing houses as a freelance writer, researcher and translator. Her main academic interests fall into the intersection between urban sociology, feminism, human geography, critical theory and postcolonial studies, which she applies to cultural practices such as music or contemporary art.

Dominik Michaelis,
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program. Student Organizer

Dominik holds a vocational degree as a kindergarten teacher, has spent his twenties working at a geek culture store, as a Kindergarten teacher and cleaning rails at night, and only started his academic training in his early thirties. This trajectory of eclecticism in his interests brought him to studying Amerikanistik and Kulturwissenschaft at HUB, as they were the two most free and least rigid courses in terms of subject matters and methodology. During his undergraduate studies he developed an interest in mythologies - literary, political and otherwise -, French theory, history of ideas, and political narratives. He started tutoring English, German, History, and Political Science on the side and, through this, rekindled his love for teaching.

Being glad that he had found such a free and nourishing intellectual environment in the HU Amerikanistik, he did not have to think twice about pursuing his master's here, which allowed him to participate in last year's symposium in New York. This experience in turn motivated him to co-organize this year's symposium. At the moment he is working on his Master's Thesis about the history of American right wing extremism and its relationship to its German counterpart.

Panel 1 – Narratives, Discourses, Rhetorics

Janina Metten,
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:
“The Tip of the (Melting) Iceberg. Climate Change Rhetoric in Germany and the US”

Bio: Janina Metten is a first year M.A. student in American Studies at Humboldt-University. She received her Bachelor of Arts in German Literature at the Humboldt-University in 2018. In her B.A.-thesis she researched and catalogued a 19th century German periodical and examined how discourses of emigration and the other were constructed within the wide variety of articles within the publication. Now, in her master program, she is especially interested in the significance of cultural objects, critical race theory and queer studies.

Abstract: The AfD and other far-right political movements are often characterized as “populist” and anti-elite, particularly in their climate change denialism. However, this presentation will argue that so-called anti-elitism is not the only force driving right wing climate rhetoric. By comparing the AfD and Trump, this presentation will provide a fuller context for right wing climate rhetoric, with a particular focus on its relationship to nationalistic imaginary and anti-immigrant sentiment.

Franziska Barisic,
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:
“Conceptions of Nationalism in a Globalized Society”

Bio: Franziska Barisic is a third-year American Studies master's Student at Humboldt University. After attaining her bachelor's degree in American Studies and Social Sciences at Humboldt, she was awarded a scholarship to study and teach Culture and Language at DePauw University, IN (academic year '17/'18) where she achieved Dean-Listings. Franziska herself has two cultural backgrounds – German and Croatian – and values international exchange, growth and communication greatly.

Abstract: In our increasingly globalized world, questions on national, and especially international identity have become more prominent. Recent events, like the European “Brexit” and U.S. President Trump's successful “Make America Great Again” campaign, have shown that there seems to be a shift away from international and back to national identifications within deeply interconnected societies. In her presentation, Franziska will highlight different concepts of (national) identities and sense of belonging in a modern context.

Enrico Frahn,

**Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:
“Polarizing Narratives — A Transatlantic Immigration Issue”**

Bio: Enrico Frahn is a second-year master's student in the American Studies program at Humboldt University Berlin, where he has also earned his bachelor's degree in American Studies. He is working in the marketing department at an immigration agency that specializes in visa services for the United States. As a green card holder, Enrico has gained his first experiences as an immigrant in the U.S., and he plans to move across the pond after graduating. Therefore, he is not just academically, but also personally invested in the topic of immigration.

Abstract: Immigration has arguably always been a hotly debated topic. But over the last half decade, we see an increasingly polarizing political discussion on both sides of the Atlantic, which has turned immigration into a, if not the main, challenge for democratic cultures in the 21st century. In his presentation, Enrico will explore a selection of historical and contemporary European and American narratives on immigration, critically examine how they are constructed, and discuss how they influenced certain shifts in the prevailing European and American view on immigration

Jessica Walter,

**Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:
“Anti-Immigration Rhetoric in the USA: The Language of Inspiring Fear”**

Bio: Jessica Walter is a first-year MA student of American Studies at Humboldt-University. Prior to settling in Berlin, she spent nearly two years in Taipei, learning Mandarin and teaching English at various institutions. In her research, she is primarily interested in subversive strategies in contemporary film and literature that undermine conventional narratives of race, gender, sexuality and class. She wrote her BA thesis on the alternative representation of black, queer masculinities in Barry Jenkins' film *Moonlight*.

Abstract: The language of Donald Trump's presidential candidacy and presidency is characterized by incendiary anti-immigrant rhetoric. Invocations of danger, disaster and disgust are spread by his supporters as racial biases and prejudice against people outside of a presumed White American frame become increasingly popularized. This language has constructed aspects of U.S.-American thinking with every so-called “wave” of immigration, while elucidating the self-perception of white American-born Trump supporters as pure, innocent and vulnerable. In contrast, immigrants, particularly Latinx people, are imagined as the total “other”: dirty, criminal and an overall threat. Conservative news outlets and pundits exacerbate this perception. In this discourse, Latinx immigrants are likened to natural disasters – i.e. a flood – whose entry into the country signifies total destruction of White-Anglo-Saxon Protestantism. The ensuing moral panic and the artificial threat elicits the need

to be protected, to which the sitting president can respond by presenting himself as the protector, or even the hero.

Daphne Beers,

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:

“Refugee Rhetoric across the Atlantic:

Differential Word Choice in Trump’s Tweets and Perspectives on Migrancy”

Bio: Daphne Beers is a master’s student in the Amerikanistik program at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Brown University and a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Pittsburgh. She’s interested in postcolonial studies, queer theory, and individual and collective trauma survivorship. Her main research interests concern the function of literature in forming cultural memory and how narratives of violence are told and re-told in public space. When not at university, Daphne can be found tending her indoor herb garden or singing in rehearsal with the Neuer Kammerchor Berlin.

Abstract: Refugees, activists, and scholars of rhetoric in both Germany and in the United States have commented on a noticeable increase since 2015 in dehumanizing language in mainstream media regarding people requesting refugee status in Europe and in North America. Debates about the use of particular language, e.g. “refugee” or “asylum seeker” or “migrant,” to describe people crossing borders in flight from violence and/or persecution in news media have raged on both sides of the Atlantic. President Donald Trump’s Twitter feed is a powerful and influential voice in this media landscape. In her presentation, Daphne will use strategies of discourse analysis to investigate Trump’s use (or lack of use) of these charged words, seeking to understand how they function differentially within discourses of American ideas of deservingness.

Panel 2 – Politics, Challenges, Analyses

Shuaifan Qi,

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:

“Youth Participation in Politics”

Bio: Shuaifan Qi is in her first year of the Master’s programme in American Studies at Humboldt University. After finishing her bachelor’s degree in Translation and Interpreting between Chinese and English and German as a second foreign language in China, she decided to come to Germany to learn German and English and culture. She works as a marketing communication coordinator for a Chinese trade corporation, and she hopes to plough herself into intercultural communications between China and the World.

Abstract: More recent generations of youth have been found less politically engaged in transatlantic countries, such as in the USA and UK. An explanation to this decreasing tendency of youth politic participation is that faced with a transformation of a more consumerist mode of politics, youth are more interested in localized, immediate and individual-concerning issues. Further factors, like one’s socioeconomic status, the technology of Web 2.0, Youth Policy and the Role of Gender also have a great impact on youth politic participation. Through understanding how civil participation of youth is affected, we can better understand why youth appear to be ‘disengaged’ in politics.

Pia Niemann,

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:

“Political Under/Overrepresentation of Millennials in Politics/Political Activism”

Bio: Pia Niemann is a second semester M.A. student in American Studies at Humboldt University. She received her B.A. in Business Administration and Anglophone Cultural Studies from the University of Duisburg-Essen in 2018, finishing her degree with her Bachelor thesis on the reappraisal of the 9/11 attacks in contemporary popular culture and the philosophy of heroism. She is particularly interested in the fast-paced nature of popular culture, a passion that also came in handy with her work for a radio station. Furthermore, Pia is fascinated by dystopian literature and movies and knows everything about Marvel’s superheroes by heart.

Abstract: Pia’s key question for her presentation following the guiding topic of “The Future of Democratic Cultures” is how millennials understand, live and change the meaning of democracy. With her presentation Pia wants to question why millennials are overrepresented among political activists, but underrepresented in general politics. She then follows the argument that rather than being driven by political reforms, millennials want to systematically change society and the internal structure political dialogue is composed of. Therefore, she pursues the question how millennials change and also widen the understanding of democracy worldwide.

Harrison Teeter,

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:

“The Differences in Voting Administration and Their Effects on the Voting Populace”

Bio: Harrison Teeter was born in Palo Alto, California, where his parents basically named him after a southern grocery store chain without ever having done prior research. He attended King City High School, where he moderately excelled, yet, more importantly, developed a distinct passion for filmmaking. By a combination of the skin of his teeth and the pity of some admissions adjudicator, he was accepted into California State University, Long Beach, where the culture shock was so overwhelming that he decided to become queer and leave the country. Blessed with support from DAAD, Harrison studied for a year at Universität Heidelberg where he developed a keen interest in the nature of human kind. Following his undergraduate studies, he undertook two internships with the German Bundestag, where he did some really exciting stuff as well as some really boring stuff. Afterward, he high-tailed it to Spain, where he spent a year trying to teach Spanish youth how to not say they are from “eh-Spain.” He was mildly successful. Following that, he embarked on a cross-country trip through the US with his best friend to reach the great state of North Carolina, where he would begin work on a master’s degree in Political Science: Transatlantic Studies at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. It was there that he became enamored of America. However, this program would bring him back to Berlin where he would once again be rejected by the love of his life, but delighted in and bemoaned what he was discovering about the world’s ways, all the same. The following presentation comes out of the summation of countless hours of work required for a degree so few people attain. The main point of which can be boiled down to the old adage, “you can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make it drink.” This is something his parents taught him when he was five years old...how easily those of us in academia forget how simply the world works sometimes. He would like to return to artistry, where he belongs.

Abstract: German and American societies reveal distinct differences in how they approach the right to vote and how to empower their citizenry to participate in elections. From contrasting policies ranging from functionally different government structures, distinct methods of voter registration, alternate methods with which each country attempts to encourage enfranchisement, wide disparities in participation rates based on levels of affluence, and divergent understandings of the role of the state in public life as well as fostering political participation, the United States and Germany reveal notable differences in how they administer elections. The disparity, however, reflects the level of engagement each respective citizenry has with their political institutions, which are closely reflected in each state's level of voter turnout.

Katja Riedel,

**Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:
"Populist Authoritarianism"**

Bio: Katja Riedel is a first year M.A. student in American Studies at Humboldt University. Before she received a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies and Social Science from Humboldt University, Katja spent some time in the US, experiencing the American culture and exploring her academic fields of interest. She is interested in American and English history, especially the Romantic era, and in International Relations.

Abstract: The Brexit referendum and the US presidential election in 2016 sent shock-waves around the globe, evoking fears that there is a rise of powerful populist authoritarian movements. Many countries are being more and more polarized by populist authoritarian leaders. In a 2018 report, Freedom House warns that Democracy is in retreat. Katja's presentation focuses on the rise of populist authoritarianism and its cause in the US and the UK. With a special focus on the 2016 US presidential election and the Brexit referendum, Katja uses the economic insecurity- and cultural backlash theory to get to the roots of populist authoritarianism. Empirical research highlights the importance of immigration in both theories, therefore Katja uses immigration as a major example throughout her presentation. Immigrants are scapegoats, repeatedly blamed for countries' economical and social problems such as low wages, reduced employment and increased crime, which can be exploited by populist authoritarian leaders.

Peter Jakob,

**Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:
"A comparison of campaign strategies:
The Brexit referendum and the 2016 US presidential election"**

Bio: Peter Jakob (HU) is pursuing his master's degree in American studies at Humboldt-University Berlin. He obtained his bachelor's degree in Special Education and English & American Studies in 2016 at the Julius Maximilian University of Würzburg before moving to London, England. His main research interests include critical race theory and queer theory.

Abstract: The 2016 Brexit vote and the 2016 US election are two examples for long-established political arrangements facing a revolt across Europe and the US. This presentation will analyze differences and similarities regarding the campaign strategies and how they made Brexit and Donald Trump's presidency happen. This will include a closer look on how national identities have played a

significant role but also how the past of these two countries has been incorporated in these campaigns. A comparison on how different generations have been targeted will be a part of this presentation as well.

Eric Rummelhoff,

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:

“The Role – and Potency – of Executive Action in US and Spanish Politics”

Bio: Eric Rummelhoff is a student of Amerikanistik at Humboldt-Universität. He has a degree from San Jose State in English Literature with a Focus in Creative Writing where he worked as Lead Poetry editor for the literary magazine “Reed”. He has lived in the United States, Panama, Germany, and most recently Spain.

Abstract: Executive power has become the hot topic of conversation in recent times due to the elections of new rightwing politicians and the ousting of Prime Ministers due to corruption. In Spain and the United States, this trend is clearly apparent. Many pundits will say that the executive branch has historically been weak, but is this true? Giorgio Agamben in his series of books “Homo Sacer” outlines the ways in which the executive branch of government has a dark potentiality that can lead to totalitarianism. In this presentation, we will be looking at the recent actions of Donald Trump in his declaration of a national emergency along the southern border and those of Pedro Sánchez in Spain with his use of the Decreto-Ley.

Daniel Ferrer,

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:

“NATO and Democracy – Has Western Defense against Communism Failed?”

Bio: Daniel Ferrer is a first-year MA student of American Studies at Humboldt University. He finished his bachelor’s degree at the University of Augsburg, majoring in English and American Studies and minoring in German Studies. His study focus lies in African American cultural and sociolinguistic studies, especially in linguistic expression of African American culture in music. As a German-American with Afro-Latin roots, he is also academically and privately invested in transatlantic relations between Germany and the United States.

Abstract: With NATO celebrating its 70th birthday April of 2019, it is important to reflect on its accomplishments, but also failures during the eventful decades following WWII. While the treaty was originally designed to defend Western ideals against communist Soviet influence, much has changed in terms of NATO’s objective. Borders have moved, leaders have changed, politics have shifted. Due to President Donald Trump as the voice of the United States – the most pivotal nation in the treaty – criticizing the efficiency and necessity of NATO, its stability seems weakened. To conclude whether NATO is still relevant and vital for Western democratic ideologies to survive, it is crucial to analyze how it is tangibly connected to democracy in the first place. The presentation will focus on highlighting measures taken – or not taken – by NATO to manifest democracy, but also on reevaluating its necessity for a united transatlantic West based on the importance of NATO for current members.

Panel 3 – Tech, Media, Society

Yejia Li,

**Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:
“On the Effect of Social Media on the 2016 Presidential Election”**

Bio: Yejia Li is a second semester M.A. student at American Studies. She obtained her undergraduate degree in English and American literature in China. Her undergraduate thesis focuses on the animal images in Edgar Allan Poe’s Gothic novels. It’s been her first time to study abroad and in a totally different study atmosphere. From the symposium courses last semester, she has learned through texts and discussions the different voices and how other students inspired her to take a different perspective to the situation in her own country, to find her own stance and to uphold it.

Abstract: According to Pew Research Centre, social media has become a main platform where most Americans receive news. With the heighten of social media activity and the increase of media participation, this American generation are becoming more involved in politics. Yejia Li is interested in the question that how likely was the result of 2016 U.S. presidential election influenced in a new era of participatory democracy attained from social media through analyzing the social media characteristics and behaviors

Anna Vollmer,

**Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:
“Cambridge Analytica as a Prime Example of the Manipulation
of Democratic Decision-Making”**

Bio: Anna Vollmer is a first year M.A student of American Studies at Humboldt-University. She was born in Hamburg, Germany but lived abroad throughout most of her childhood and adolescence, more precisely in Buenos Aires, Argentina and Windhoek, Namibia. Shortly after moving back to Hamburg to complete her secondary education, Anna took a trip to Berlin and felt so drawn to the city’s cultural diversity as well as its wide array of cultural attractions that she decided to study and perhaps even settle down here. She currently holds a Bachelor’s degree in English and Spanish, which she acquired at Humboldt-University. Her research interests include critical race theory, modern Jewish culture and history, twentieth century American literature and film, as well as different branches of psychology.

Abstract: In 2018 the now defunct big data analytics and political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica – which had been involved in the Trump presidential as well as the Brexit campaign – rose to international prominence after it was revealed that they had harvested millions of Facebook users’ data without their consent to subsequently target voters with highly personalized ads. As more and more political parties across the globe are employing big data tools to reach and influence potential or undecided voters, it is crucial that citizens are made aware of the practices of mass data collection and online political microtargeting, and how these two phenomena can render them vulnerable to manipulation. By taking a closer look at the key figures behind the Cambridge Analytica scandal and the company’s strategies, Anna will illustrate how exactly the combined misuse of big data and big money could be threatening democracy, and propose ideas as to how democracy can be safeguarded in the Digital Age from the governmental to the individual level.

Lars Wendig,

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:

“The European Song Contest – A (Flawed) Example of International Cooperation”

Bio: Lars Wendig is an MA student of American Studies here at Humboldt University. He was vocationally trained to become an 'expert for services in media and information'. He went on to study Library and Information Science, and English Studies at HU, during which some of his academic work was included in a Festschrift for internationally celebrated librarianship academic Petra Hauke in 2016. With his thesis on "Censorship of Queer Content on YouTube" he became a Bachelor of Arts and now continues his MA studies here at HU. In his free time he produces equally entertaining and educational online video content which combines his academic and private interests in the influence of contemporary formats and media on society, most recently with an interview-based mini-documentary about misconceptions of the Eurovision Song Contest.

Abstract: Similarly to the early institutions that today make up the European Union, the Eurovision Song Contest was created in 1956 to bring war-torn Europe together annually with a friendly music competition. Apart from controversial contributions certain allegations come up every year on the conduction of the contest, which countries are and are not included, as well as accusations of neighbour voting based on political bias and agenda. Lars is going to provide insight into the circumstances of these issues. Additionally, he will explain and elaborate why the concept of the ESC still works as a culturally binding element for Europe and theorise on how and why the concept of the ESC is being copied in other regions of the world.

Laura Dutt,

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:

“Sport Diplomacy:

The Utilization of Sport as a Soft Power in the Context of Sport Mega-Events”

Bio: Laura Dutt is a first year M.A. student in American Studies at Humboldt University. She moved to Berlin in 2014 to start a Bachelor's degree in American Studies and Information Science, also at Humboldt University. As an undergraduate, she spent a year abroad in Bangor, Wales. Her interests include political cinema, international relations and feminist theory.

Abstract: Throughout history, sports and politics have been constantly intersecting. The Olympics Games, for instance, were created on the basis of the Olympic Truce, which called for a time of peace and dialogue between states during the Games. Ever since then international sport events have become a space for political negotiations and symbolic acts of diplomacy. Against the backdrop of expanding sport mega-events, such as the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup, sport has assumed an even greater status as a soft power in recent years. As a result, sport diplomacy has a significant influence on international relations and politics. The purpose of this presentation is to address the continuous use of sport as a tool for transnational negotiations and political publicity and evaluate its influence on international politics and democratic cultures.

Panel 4 – Identity, Representation, Resistance

Jessica Von Roye,

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:

“What obstacles do low income earners in the USA and Germany face when it comes to voting?”

Bio: Jessica van Roye (HU) is pursuing her Masters in American studies at Humboldt-University Berlin. She finished her bachelor’s degree in translation in 2017 from Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz. After a six-months internship as a research assistant at the Theatre, Film and Television Department of the University of York she decided to combine personal interest with academic motivation and wrote her bachelor’s thesis about American culture in Horror movies, which continues to be her field of interest.

Abstract: Democracy only works if it does not actively exclude a certain group of people. In her presentation, Jessica is going to introduce the different obstacles low-income earners across the USA and Germany face, that keep them from voting. Voting law is regulated by state and therefore leads to unequal conditions even when it comes to federal elections. These unequal conditions often leave poor people disadvantaged. While comparing the main obstacles that are being placed in front of low-income earners in the USA and Germany, the goal of the presentation is to think of ways to make a democratic election fair again.

**Maite Seidel,
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:
“I Vote I Count. Voting Rights and Mental Disability”**

Bio: Maite Seidel is a first year M.A. student of American Studies at Humboldt University in Berlin, where she also received her B.A. in American Studies and Spanish. As an undergraduate, she spent a year abroad in Salamanca, Spain. She furthermore interned at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin, which is why she is very interested in international relations, particularly between the U.S. and Germany. Her further research interests include incarceration and criminal justice in the U.S., and the representation of Latinxs in popular culture, especially in film.

Abstract: In a political system in which all power emanates from the people, voting is the most meaningful instrument of political participation. Hence, it would appear that a democratic government can only be legitimate if it guarantees all of its citizens the right to vote. In fact, however, many formal democracies on both sides of the Atlantic currently disenfranchise a substantial part of their population: people with mental disabilities. Lack of mental capacity is frequently cited to justify this exclusionary practice. Taking into account the way in which stigma influences attitudes towards marginalized groups, this presentation will point out the continuity between the mechanisms that have historically excluded women and people of color from the democratic process and those that are currently discriminating against people with mental disabilities. Reflecting on the meaning of voting capacity and the implications of human dignity and inclusivity, this presentation will claim that the integrity of democracy can only be maintained by granting people with mental disabilities full and unconditional political participation.

Denise Gamon,

**Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:
“Equality and Citizenship. Gender Disparities in the European Union”**

Bio: Denise Gamon is a second-year M.A. American Studies student at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. She received her bachelor's degree in elementary education and English, writing her B.A. thesis on the potential of implementing constructivist theory in education. She is currently working on a research project centered around same sex women* and breast cancer, focusing on histories and discourses of the body, sexuality, and the self.

Abstract: Political and social equality, as a guiding principle for contemporary liberal democracies, presupposes a particular, that is a gender-neutral, understanding of the citizen as the subject of democracy. In practice, however, democratic institutions have long been defining citizenship as comprising universalized male interests and experiences, which ultimately has resulted in the systematic exclusion of women and gender non-conforming people's voices from democratic politics and decision-making processes. By using the example of the European Union, the presentation will discuss this substantial contradiction, the disparate relationship between the theory and practices of democracy with regards to gender. I am arguing for a reconceptualization of 'citizen' that instead concurs with a concept of 'equality' that is not gender-neutral but gender-just, encompassing women's and non-binary people's views and interests.

Harley Aussoleil,

**Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:
“The Bad Gays. Investigating How White Nationalist Groups
Instrumentalize Queer Intolerance as a Foreign Muslim Import”**

Bio: Harley Aussoleil is in her fourth and nearly final semester of the American Studies graduate program. She works as part of the curatorial art collective COVEN BERLIN and is currently participating in a competition to design a LGBT*QI+ memorial in Düsseldorf. Her masters research will likewise investigate public art memorials to LGBT*QI+ communities in Germany and the USA. She likes chocolate, “that gay shit”, and writing her own biographies in third person.

Abstract: Over the last ten years across Western Europe and the USA, we have seen the increasing visibility of homosexuals in extremist white nationalist parties and movements, like in the Alternative für Deutschland. What seems foundational to these movements is the invented threat of homophobia from Muslim immigrants as foreign agents of intolerance within a country. Accordingly, these nationalist groups are constructed as stewards of queer tolerance and acceptance that serve to protect a white nationalist brand of homosexuality from outside danger.

This presentation will explore this new movement of out gay and lesbian white nationalists as they have risen to visibility, how they respectively manifest in Germany and the USA, sites of confluence between the two, and the threat they pose to liberal democracy.

**Jasmin Annmary Kusumalayam,
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, American Studies Program:
“Music as Political Protest Against the Racist Status Quo”**

Bio: Jasmin Annmary Kusumalayam was born and raised in Bochum, North Rhine-Westphalia. She received her B.A. in Kulturwirt, which is a combination of Anglophone Studies as well as Economics at the University of Duisburg-Essen in 2016. Being passionate about music and issues of race, she wrote her bachelor’s thesis about the influence of Kendrick Lamar’s persona, as well as his music on African-American culture. She moved to Berlin in 2017 and is currently a second year M.A. student of American Studies at Humboldt University.

Abstract: The United States of America, as well as Germany, both were confronted with major elections including populist candidates/parties, such as US President Donald Trump, and the German right-wing party Alternative für Deutschland. Triggered by their verbal legitimization of rising hostility towards foreigners, there has been an increase in the number of hate-crimes since 2016, according to The Washington Post and the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung.

It is difficult to speak up against a system whose current leader reveals racist attitudes. However, Audre Lorde’s approach in reacting to racism with anger and channeling that anger, in a healthy and constructive way, so that it becomes a positive source of energy, knowledge and power may be helpful in challenging the status quo. Music has always played a huge part in declaring oppression and daily struggles within minority group’s cultures. Therefore, the central question of the presentation will be how today’s music is mirroring and/or protesting the political climate and its consequences

Concluding Remarks