

AMERICAN CULTURES OF DISSENT

In 2018, half a century will have passed since the social revolutions of '68. Social protest movements and their respective struggles still stand today as hallmarks for counterculture and equality in the United States. In light of current events, dissent and public protest are seeing a revival. Leftist and liberal movements, such as Occupy Wall Street or Black Lives Matter, as well as nationalist and/or conservative groups, such as the Unite the Right rallies or figures such as Kim Davis, have shown that America is once again at the crossroads of competing visions in a globalized world. Recently, historian Ralph Young has highlighted the "interrelatedness of dissent and what it means to be an American" in his book *Dissent: The History of an American Idea* (2015). Shifting the focus in this way allows us to understand America itself as a project of dissent.

With our Sixth American Studies Leipzig MA-level graduate student conference "American Cultures of Dissent" we invite contributions investigating diverse representations and conceptions of dissent. The conference will deal with, while not being confined to, questions of counterculture(s), critical theory, grassroots movements, oppression, subversion, and the relation between the body politic and 'otherness.' These issues can be examined through the lenses of literary and cultural studies, political science, sociology, historiography, media studies, economics as well as from an interdisciplinary perspective.

Research questions may include but are not limited to:

- How do the concepts of race, class, and gender relate to and have an impact on expressions of countercultures?
- How do questions of sustainability and the environment intersect with political struggles?
- In what ways is the notion of dissent represented and negotiated in American literature, film, TV, music, art, comic, and news media? How do those cultural forms function as agents of resistance?
- What forms and methods has dissent developed and adopted in promoting change, and how is this conveyed?
- How do categories of space and region impact, contribute, and/or limit movements of dissent?
- What is the relationship of dissent towards the concepts of nation, statehood, and government? How has dissent been instrumental to the notion of civil societies and public spheres?

Our conference invites **all interested MA-level graduate students and professionals** from all fields relevant to American studies. Participants will have a chance to present their innovative work to an international audience, allowing for various networking opportunities.

Please **submit your proposal (max. 300 words) for a 20-minute presentation** and include your name, current level of graduate study, research interests, affiliated university and/or current occupation, and e-mail address to **asl-gradconference@uni-leipzig.de** by **January 21, 2018**.

Please note that there will be no conference fee. A limited number of travel grants may be available on a case-by-case basis. For more information please refer to www.culturesofdissent.wordpress.com, contact us via email, or find us on Facebook under "American Cultures of Dissent - American Studies Leipzig Grad Conference."