

## **Distance and Diversity in Times of Crisis: Literary Expressions and Artistic Responses**



### **UdS American Studies Graduate Forum (Hybrid: on-site and on-line)**

**Saarland University, Saarbrücken, October 15-17, 2020**

**Venue: Campus Building C 9 3 and on Zoom**

### **Call for Papers Deadline: August 31, 2020**

In cooperation with the German-American Institute Saarland, the Chair of North American Literary and Cultural Studies at Saarland University (UdS) will hold a 3-day UdS American Studies Graduate Forum (on-site and online) that invites advanced Master students, doctoral candidates, as well as junior and senior scholars to present their papers in a workshop-style setting. The forum will also offer participants a chance to discuss their research with peers as well as with more advanced scholars. This year, we invite submissions dealing with issues of diversity, distance, and crisis.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion have become catchwords in the past years, but the current pandemic has put these issues in stark relief, as it has become clear that the Covid-19 pandemic is disproportionately impacting disadvantaged groups. New perspectives are emerging as this health crisis has aggravated disparities, shining a light on more subtle forms of diversity, such as issues surrounding child-care and caregivers. The current pandemic has exposed deep social divisions in our societies, drawing the attention to the many challenges of marginalized communities.

The imposed actions to prevent the spread of the virus, summarized under the catchphrase 'social distancing,' have aimed at ensuring a minimum physical interpersonal distance, often engendering a side effect of increased onerous and stressful situations, leading, in turn, to affective, emotive, and emotional distance and re-orientations. At the same time, as people all over the world are struggling with the very perceptible and experienceable force of this 'social distancing,' global distances have been dismantled and the world has moved more closely together in the virtual world, as the offer of online events increased considerably.

The Uds American Studies Graduate Forum 2020 offers a setting in which a decidedly humanities-driven, cultural studies and literature studies approach to issues of distance and diversity in times of crisis will be discussed. Focusing on literary and artistic expressions of and reactions to various forms of crises, ecological crises as well as health crises, this workshop seeks to highlight cultural representations that call for gender and racial equity, and a commitment to LGBTIQ issues.

Topics can include but are not limited to:

- the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion, especially in our current pandemic times
- distancing & forms of artistic/artist expressions
- the impact of physical distancing on disadvantaged communities
- coming to terms with crisis-inflicted traumas
- emerging (virtual) community-building practices
- distancing & new forms of protest
- cancel culture & identity politics

**In order to submit a proposal, please send an email, including a title, a 250-word abstract, and a short biographical note to**

**[amerikanistik@mx.uni-saarland.de](mailto:amerikanistik@mx.uni-saarland.de) by September 10, 2020.**