

Berlin Program Summer Workshop
Virtual Germans

June 19-20, 2014
Freie Universität Berlin

Call for Papers – Deadline Extended to February 28, 2014

In her travels through Eastern Europe in the 1990s, the writer Ruth Ellen Gruber noted that non-Jews were embracing, creating, and marketing an idea of Jewishness that had little to do with the Jews who had lived in the region before the Holocaust. Through practices and cultural products, these “virtual Jews” had come in dialog with “their own visions of Jews and Jewish matters, and themselves.” In recent years, the historian Winson Chu has adapted this concept to show the enactment of a “virtually German” culture that serves commercial interests, European reconciliation, and cosmopolitan credentials in Poland today.

In 2014, the Berlin Program summer workshop will invite papers that expand upon the idea of “virtual Germans” in a variety of constellations, including Germans and German-speakers who have fashioned new identities for themselves abroad, people living in Germany of diverse backgrounds whose German belonging is contested, as well as constructions of Germanness in the virtual realm of cyberspace and in the classroom. This workshop will pay special attention to the global flow of “Germanness” as well as to its local constructions. By exploring such representations and contestations, we can see how new definitions of Germanness arise and how new inclusions and exclusions are made.

This workshop will seek participants from a broad array of disciplines in German Studies. Topics, both historical and contemporary, may include (but are not limited to):

- **Commerce, Consumerism & Cuisine:** When do German businesses highlight or hide their national background, and how has the concept of “Made in Germany” changed in a globalizing world? How have German celebrities such as Karl Lagerfeld and Heidi Klum shaped notions of German identity abroad? How do certain goods and foods, such as the Döner Kebab, become coded as German, and what are the connotations (authentic, ecological, fair trade, regional) that are invoked?
- **Culture & Entertainment:** How do music, theater and the visual arts rely upon and/or construct German identity? How have national and international audiences received and imitated what they see as German in the arts? How do movies, video games, and historical reenactment, especially those dealing with the Second World War, foster and promote stereotypes of German identity?
- **Diversity:** How have Jews, Turks and others been selectively cast as “Germans,” either in Germany or abroad? Have “new Germans” such as Kevin Prince Boateng, Susianna Kentikian, Wladimir & Vitali Klitschko, Marcel Nguyen, Mesut Özil, and Lukas Podolski become seen as the face of a new Germany? How are they seen abroad in their “homelands”? In non-German speaking countries, how do different communities celebrate, commemorate, and construct their sense of German distinctiveness?

- **Language & Travel:** How have German concepts made their way into other languages, and how have various foreign language “-isms” become used or misused in Germany? How has German culture and language teaching changed with digital technologies? How do different sites mobilize a German past to try to attract German tourists, and what role does “virtual Germanness” play in heritage travel in Germany?
- **New Media & Politics:** How has the internet allowed new expressions of Germanness to arise? How are debates about security and privacy in the virtual world rooted in Germany’s historical experience? How have these discussions impacted German political culture and policy responses to the challenges of virtual communication?

FORMAT: This workshop serves as a forum for Berlin Program fellows and alumni, but also welcomes current doctoral students, recent PhDs, as well as non-tenured and tenured faculty in any field.

APPLICATION, DEADLINE, NOTIFICATION: Submit a 250-word abstract and short, two-page curriculum vitae (including position, department and institution) in one pdf via email by **28 February 2014** to: bprogram@zedat.fu-berlin.de. Accepted presenters will be notified in mid-March.

REQUIREMENTS: Presenters are required to submit a 25-page paper (MLA style) or excerpt (i.e., chapter, article, etc.) and a one-page bio in one pdf for circulation to workshop participants by **31 May 2014**. All workshop participants are asked to read these submissions, as well as a selection of two or three required readings related to the theme, prior to the workshop. Presenters who do not meet the submission deadline will not be able to present their work.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BACKGROUND READINGS: Presenters will be invited to suggest one text (max. 25 pages) for the plenary session reading list.

WORKSHOP LANGUAGE: English.

WORKSHOP VENUE: Freie Universität Berlin.

FEES: Participation in the workshop is free of charge.

TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION: Participants are responsible for organizing and paying for their travel and accommodation. We encourage participants to seek funding from their home institutions or alternative sources to cover those costs. Assistance with logistical matters will be provided.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Dr. April Eisman | Iowa State University

Dr. Winson Chu | University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

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