

Freie Universität



Berlin

The Good Germans? New Transatlantic Perspectives

BERLIN PROGRAM FOR ADVANCED GERMAN AND EUROPEAN STUDIES
25th Anniversary Alumni Conference
June 29th–July 2nd, 2011



In his novel *The Good German*, Joseph Kanon tells the story of Jake Geismar, an American network correspondent who returns to Berlin to cover the Potsdam Conference and find his lost love. In this thriller of intrigue, corruption and betrayal, the author depicts a ruined city at a historic point in time and ultimately poses the question of complicity and guilt. The novel's title refers to a widely held North American cliché, because it turns out that all Germans are inevitably tainted by Nazi collaboration, but pangs of conscience among several protagonists also show some chance of redemption.

In their academic research, scholars in German and European studies constantly address the ambivalent nature of the German experience. Due to the two World Wars and the Holocaust, the problematic aspects have, however, tended to prevail in recent decades in the perception of much of the Anglo-American media and among many intellectuals. Instead of reinforcing such understandable stereotypes, the conference starts from the opposite perspective and asks, somewhat self-ironically of course, whether there are not also some appealing aspects of German history, society and culture. Without intending thereby to relativize Nazi crimes, such an approach seeks to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the entire range of German experiences in North America and the English speaking world. The conference therefore aims to trace recent scholarship addressing the German model in politics, society and culture within a European context.

The conference will take place at the *Seminarzentrum* (Silberlaube, Room L115) of the Freie Universität Berlin, located at Otto-von-Simson-Straße 26, 14195 Berlin.

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**Berlin Program
for Advanced German and European Studies**

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29TH, 2011

5 p.m.

REGISTRATION

6–8 p.m.

Welcome Addresses

Peter-André Alt, President of the Freie Universität Berlin
Werner Väth, Vice President of the Freie Universität Berlin

Introductory Notes

Konrad Jarausch (Freie Universität Berlin and University of
North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

Harald Wenzel (Freie Universität Berlin, John-F.-Kennedy-
Institut für Nordamerikastudien)

KEYNOTE SPEECH

Transatlantic Ambivalence:

Germany and the United States since the 1980s

Paul Nolte (Freie Universität Berlin, Friedrich-Meinecke-Institut)

Responses by

Johannes von Moltke (University of Michigan, Dept. of German)

Belinda Davis (Rutgers University, Department of History)

Gökce Yurdakul (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin,
Institut für Sozialwissenschaften)

8 p.m.

RECEPTION

THURSDAY, JUNE 30TH, 2011

9 a.m.–12:45 p.m.

PANEL 1: SOURCES OF GERMAN EXCEPTIONALISM

Commentator: Thomas Mergel (Humboldt-Universität zu
Berlin, Institut für Geschichtswissenschaften)

**The ‘German Forest’ as an Emblem of Germany’s
Ambivalent Modernity**

Jeffrey Wilson

(California State University at Sacramento, Dept. of History)

**German Missionaries and the Study of Africa in the
Nineteenth Century**

Sara Pugach (California State University at Los Angeles,
Dept. of History)

11–11:15 a.m. *Coffee Break*

**Exceptional Exceptionalism: Apprenticeship, Artisans, and
their Contributions to German Development, Welfare,
and Historical Self-Understanding**

Hal Hansen (Quincy, MA)

THURSDAY, JUNE 30TH, 2011 (CONTINUED)

Health as a Public Good:

The Positive Legacies of *Volksgesundheit*

Annette Timm (University of Calgary, Dept. of History)

**Genealogies of the “Unpolitical German”: Democratic
Renewal and the Politics of Culture in Occupied Germany**

Sean Forner (Michigan State University, Dept. of History)

12:45–2 p.m. *Lunch*

2–4:30 p.m.

PANEL 2: CREATIVE TENSIONS IN GERMAN CULTURE

Commentator: Claudia Albert (Freie Universität Berlin,
Institut für Deutsche und Niederländische Philologie)

Photographic Returns, 1945-53

Claire Zimmerman

(University of Michigan, Dept. of the History of Art)

**Moving Memories of Post-War Germany and Its Cinema
History**

Sara Hall (University of Illinois at Chicago, German Studies)

Atlantic Transfers of Critical Theory:

Alexander Kluge and the U.S. in Fiction

Matthew Miller (Colgate University, German Studies)

***Heisse Waren (Hot Commodities): Black Music and African
Americanization in Aggro Berlin***

Griff Rollefson (University of California, Berkeley,
Dept. of Music)

4:30–4:45 p.m. *Coffee Break*

4:45–6:30 p.m.

DISTINGUISHED LECTURE

Bridges and Barriers:

Reflections on Transatlantic Academic Exchanges

David Barclay

(Kalamazoo College & German Studies Association)

Responses by

Helga Haftendorn (Freie Universität Berlin, Center for
Transnational Relations, Foreign and Security Policy)

Tom Haakenson

(Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Dept. of Liberal Arts)

Rolf Hoffmann

(German-American Fulbright Commission)

Wedigo de Vivanco

(Ernst-Reuter-Gesellschaft der Freunde, Förderer und
Ehemaligen der Freien Universität Berlin e. V. &
de vivanco consulting international)

FRIDAY, JULY 1ST, 2011

9 a.m.–12:45 p.m.

**PANEL 3: POSTWAR GERMAN REDEMPTION:
A MANUAL FOR SUCCESS?**

Commentator: Martin Sabrow

(Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung Potsdam)

Reconfiguring Antifascism in Postwar Berlin:

A Study of Actors and Places of Myth Making

Clara Oberle (University of San Diego, Dept. of History)

**“Lasting Reform Must Come From Within”: Education
and Democratization in Adenauer’s Germany**

Brian Puaca (Christopher Newport University, Dept. of History)

**Human Rights without Pluralism: the East German
Example and the Problem of Democratization**

Ned Richardson-Little (University of North Carolina at
Chapel Hill, Dept. of History)

11–11:15 a.m. *Coffee Break*

**Vergangenheitsbewältigung – Deliberate Policies,
Unintended Consequences, and Global Proliferation**

Julian Dierkes (University of British Columbia,
Institute of Asian Research)

**Redemptive and Reflective Cosmopolitanism in
Reunited Germany**

Michael Meng (Clemson University, Dept. of History)

12:45–2 p.m. *Lunch*

2–5:30 p.m.

**PANEL 4: THE RESILIENCE OF THE GERMAN MODEL IN
POLITICS, ECONOMY AND SOCIETY**

Commentator: Gert Wagner (Deutsches Institut für
Wirtschaftsforschung and Technische Universität Berlin)

The Good Germans: Not a Foregone Conclusion

Katja Weber (Georgia Institute of Technology, Sam Nunn
School of International Affairs)

The ‘German Model’ in Renewable Energy Development

Carol Hager (Bryn Mawr College, Dept. of Political Science)

**Intergenerational Returns from a Move to Germany?
Comparing the Educational Performance of Youth on
Both Sides of the German Border**

Renee Luthra Reichl (University of Essex, Institute for Social
and Economic Research)

3:30–3:45 p.m. *Coffee Break*

FRIDAY, JULY 1ST, 2011 (CONTINUED)

How do Bailouts fit within German and American Models of Capitalism?

Mark Cassell

(Kent State University, Dept. of Political Science)

The European Sovereign Debt Crisis: Is Germany to Blame?

Brigitte Young (Westfälische Wilhelms Universität Münster, Institut für Politikwissenschaft)

7:30 p.m.

CONFERENCE DINNER

at *Hostaria del Monte Croce*, Kreuzberg

by invitation only

SATURDAY, JULY 2ND, 2011

10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

EXCURSION:

PLACES OF TRANQUILITY/SPACES FOR REFLECTION

In cooperation with the Center for Metropolitan Studies, Technische Universität Berlin

Meeting point: Soviet War Memorial (Tiergarten), Straße des 17. Juni

12:30–2 p.m. *Lunch*

2–5:30 p.m.

PANEL 5: WALL MEMORIES AND CELLULOID TRACES

Venue: Kino Arsenal at Potsdamer Platz

Commentator: Dorothee Brantz (Technische Universität Berlin, Center for Metropolitan Studies)

The Berlin Wall as a Site of Memory since 1989

Hope Harrison (George Washington University, The Elliott School of International Affairs)

(In)visible Migrants: Public Memory and German Nationhood in the Shadow of the Berlin Wall

Jeffrey Jurgens (Bard College, Dept. of Anthropology)

SCREENING:

Cycling the Frame (1988)* and *The Invisible Frame (2009)

The conference will conclude with a screening of these acclaimed films that follow Berlin's border landscapes at different points in time.

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