

About the Conference

The American Dream is considered to be one of the most influential ideas of American culture. It represents wealth, progress, and equality of opportunities. But what has become of the "Land of Opportunity" today? Is the American Dream and its "Promised Land" a reality or a myth?

These and other issues are not only relevant to scholars such as Robert Putnam or Peter McClelland but also to students of American Studies. For this reason, Bachelor students from the Heidelberg Center for American Studies are hosting this conference which is organized by and directed towards undergraduates and graduates. Through this event, aspiring scholars are given the possibility to apply their knowledge and contribute to a discussion addressing current topics related to the American Dream and America's struggle to live up to its promise. This conference places a strong emphasis on an interdisciplinary approach and thus invites students from different universities and subjects to contribute their expertise.

Is the American Dream gender specific or racially discriminatory? Is social mobility open to all classes of the American society? We invite you to discuss these and other questions with us on July 1 and 2 at the Heidelberg Center for American Studies.

HCA
Heidelberg Center
for American Studies

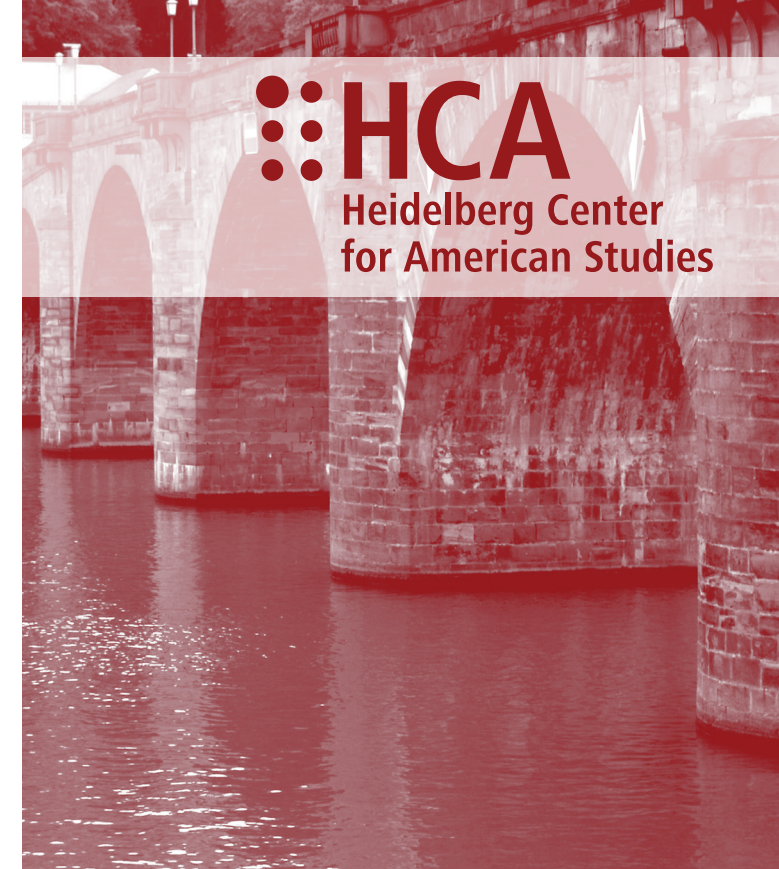
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WAKING UP TO REALITY

AMERICA'S STRUGGLE TO REALIZE THE PROMISED LAND

An Interdisciplinary Student Conference at the
Heidelberg Center for American Studies

Friday, July 1 & Saturday, July 2, 2016



Ruprecht-Karls-Universität
Heidelberg, est. 1386

Friday, July 1

13:30 Welcome and Opening Remarks

13:45-15:00 Keynote Address:

“Embodying the American Dream - Makeover, Beautification, and Bodies in the United States of America”

Susana Rocha Teixeira
Ph.D. Student at the English Department, Heidelberg University

15:30-17:30 Panel 1:

Gender/Sexuality & the American Dream

“An Indispensable Support that Proves Elusive? - Affirmative Action for the LGBTQ-Community”

Hannah Borne
(B.A. Student, Heidelberg Center for American Studies)

“Discriminated, Disowned, Disenfranchised - Homeless LGBTQ-Youth in the United States of America”

Maria-Claudia Scheckeler
(B.A. Student, Heidelberg Center for American Studies)

“What is Your Gender Identity? Sexuality Within the Context of the University”

Franziska Weis (B.A. Student, Heidelberg Center for American Studies)

Saturday, July 2

9:00-11:00 Panel 2:

Class & the American Dream

“What Becomes of the Promised Land? - Poverty, Class, and the Ecological Crisis of the American Dream”

Eva Rüska (Ph.D. Student, Environmental Governance, University of Freiburg)

“Selling the American Dream - A Price-Tagging Policy in the Run for the Presidency”

Jessica Wädt (B.A. Student, English, American, and German Studies, University of Würzburg)

“‘It’s a Thin Line Between Heaven and Here’ - Class Struggle in *The Wire*”

Victor Wloch (Ph.D. Student of English Studies, University of Cologne)

“From Rags to Wrecked - The Struggle of the Middle Class portrayed in Jonathan Franzen’s *The Corrections*”

Emma Wolf (B.A. Student, Heidelberg Center for American Studies)

11:30-13:30 Panel 3:

Race & the American Dream

“Affirmative Action at U.S. Universities - Reverse Discrimination or an Effective Way to Promote Equality?”

Hanna Thiele (B.A. Student, Heidelberg Center for American Studies)

“A System of the Privileged, by the Privileged, for the Privileged: Ta-Nehisi Coates’ *Between the World and Me* and the Whiteness of the American Dream”

Anna Franziska Schulze (M.A. Student, American Studies, Humboldt University of Berlin)

“The Media(tisa)tion of the Slave Experience – Prosperity or Perdition?”

Caroline Schröter (Ph.D. Student, English Department, University College Cork)

13:30-14:30 Lunch Break

14:30-16:30 Panel Discussion:

The American Dream in the 21st Century

Criticism of the American Dream is becoming ever more predominant in the academic discourse. Scholars such as Robert Putnam have recently argued that the American Dream is in crisis, or even dying. What kind of people can still succeed in the American society today? Is upward mobility only possible for white, heterosexual men? How does one’s social, ethnic, and economic origin influence the chances to live the American Dream? These and other questions will be topics of the panel discussion.

Moderator:

Marie Harnau (B.A. Student, Heidelberg Center for American Studies)

Participants:

Christopher Gilliam (B.A. Student, Heidelberg Center for American Studies)

Zachary Holler (M.A. Student, Heidelberg Center for American Studies)

Clarissa Ryan (B.A. Student, Heidelberg Center for American Studies)

Charlotte Stöckmann (B.A. Student, Heidelberg Center for American Studies)