

America constitutes not only a geographic entity, it is an idea that is communicated throughout the nation as much as all over the globe. The American nation has been formed not just through forces political and economic. Since its very beginning, the idea of the nation-to-be was strongly influenced by philosophical and cultural discourses. The American Revolution created an entity that would call on the responsibility of each citizen to help shape the nation, to contribute rather than just to be governed. Such participatory democracy, however, heavily relies upon an educated public able to partake in the continuing processes of creation, maintenance and re-creation required by democracy.

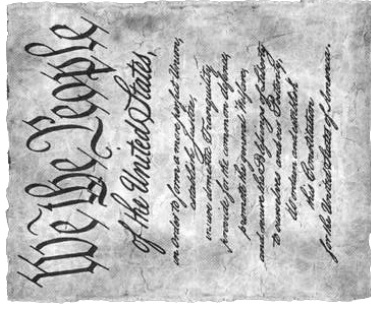
Based on the assumption of the specific nature of US-American democracy, our Fifth Annual Students Conference will take a look at US-American Media and their functions in the production of cultural knowledge at home and abroad. It will particularly address the subsequent issues: How is the democratic system communicated through the media that picture America? How are divergent voices integrated or included? Is the abundance of law-and-order texts just a coincidence in a jury-reliant justice system? What role do more recent shows like *The West Wing* play in a democratic system?

What happens once texts that are imminent to a specific culture are transmitted globally? When John Wayne meets Karl May and Sergio Leone? Moreover, what about constructions of the world "outside", a possible backlash that may be seen in global politics and global institutions being mimicked in movies like *High Noon* or shows like *Babylon 5*? How are more or less specifically American themes like the frontier and horror films centering on the American nuclear family perceived in radically different cultural structures? How do non-American born American artists differ in their representation of America? How self-reflexive is America, how self-reflexive is Europe about its perceptions of America?

In which way is the emergence of a global culture accompanied by the emergence of global means of cultural production, such as the partial de-localization of texts through the internet, and internationally co-produced franchises like *Farscape* and *James Bond*? Does America thus provide a global cultural language with enabling as well as overwhelming if not omnipresent structures?

Students of all faculties are invited to present original or seminar papers on the topic, join the discussions or just listen.

[www2.hu-berlin.de/amerika/projects/picturingamerica](http://www2.hu-berlin.de/amerika/projects/picturingamerica)



## Friday, May 20, 2005

UL 6, R 2103

### 11:00 - 12:30: Session I

Antje Dallmann, Philipp Kneis  
*Opening of the Conference*

Heike Toewe  
*The Use of Spectatorship in Spike Lee's Bamboozled*

Michael Lattek  
*Abduction & Adoption: Searching for the "Western Contamination" of The Big Lebowski*

### 12:30 - 14:00: Lunch

### 14:00 - 16:00: Session II

Screening *Nip/Tuck* Episode + Discussion

Manuela Mangold  
*From Imagination to Image: The Dissection of the Body in CSI and Nip/Tuck*

Dominik Bertram  
*Big Brother is All Around*

### 16:30 - 18:30: Session III

Florian Stenschke  
*USS Media: Entertainment - Enter/America?*

Screening *West Wing* Episode + Discussion

Philipp Kneis  
*Communicating Democracy: Entering the American Republic Through the West Wing*

19:00 - 20:30: Reception,  
Art Presentation, Poetry Reading

## Saturday, May 21, 2005

UL 6, R 2103

### 11:00 - 12:30: Session IV

Mara Dettmann, Susan Eckelmann  
*American Exceptionalism - Holocaust Exceptionalism? An Analysis of the Public Response to the Exhibition "Mirroring Evil"*

Eddie Bruce  
*Surviving September 11th or Snapshots in the Dark? A Critical Consideration of two Professional Photographers as Portraits of Denial*

### 12:30 - 14:00: Lunch

### 14:00 - 16:00: Session V

Screening *X-Files* Episode + Discussion

Daniela Djordjevic  
*The X-Files and Paranoia*

Richard Martin  
*Fictional Representations of the American Criminal Justice System*

### Concluding Discussion

We thank the American Studies Program at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin for their continued support and assistance.

