

This conference explores the complex dynamics involved in the 'Americanization' of popular and consumer cultures across Europe with a focus on the years 1945-89. A central concern is to advance scholarship on 'Americanization' by asking for the experience of Central and Eastern Europe. Here 'Americanization' figured within a political, cultural, and economic context that defined itself in sharp contrast to 'America.'

Throughout the Cold War years, American goods and lifestyles traveled across political boundaries, generating (and gratifying) different desires and fantasies; they have since become icons in intense political debates in which 'America' serves as a signifier for variously accentuated notions of capitalism and/or modernity.

The conference situates itself within recent scholarship that no longer conceptualizes 'Americanization' as a unidirectional transfer of goods and policies merely 'affecting' passive recipients, but as a set of complex processes of cultural mixing, a cultural praxis of appropriation. A wide range of case studies will therefore address 'Americanization' not by defining its contours, but by understanding it from the various ambivalences of its boundaries, parameters and modes of engagement. Our international contributors will discuss such ambivalences as working on three levels: the dynamics of cultural transfer, the practices of appropriation, and the ways in which theorizing these phenomena itself becomes entangled in some of the generalizations at stake.

The conference is part of an ongoing research and teaching project involving faculty and advanced students at Leipzig University.

Conference Fee:
10.00 / 5.00



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Popular and Consumer
Culture in Central
and Eastern Europe

