



GRAZ
INTERNATIONAL
SUMMER SCHOOL
SEGGAU
2016

The Graz International Summer School Seggau is designed for internationally oriented, highly motivated students from all disciplines, who wish to deepen their understanding of current European and international affairs by studying and discussing global developments and challenges within the context of transformation processes and demographic change reflecting aspects of individual, social, political, religious, cultural, literary, regional, economic, cohort and national identities.

The University of Graz organizes the summer school in cooperation with the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE) and the Diocese Graz-Seckau. The Office of International Relations of the University of Graz acts as the coordinating unit. Prof. Roberta Maierhofer (Center for Inter-American Studies) is the academic director.

The program aims at:

- Interdisciplinary co-operation of international teachers and students from different academic backgrounds and nationalities on the cultural, intellectual and historical dimensions of current European and International affairs in view of their positioning in a globalized world.
- Presentation in research and teaching of focus areas of the University of Graz – South Eastern Europe and North, Central and South America.
- Development and education of young leaders of tomorrow in the fields of politics, administration, business, science, culture and religion.

For eleven years already, a vibrant community of students (approx. 80 students from usually more than 25 different countries and academic backgrounds) and professors meets every year in a unique campus atmosphere at Seggau Castle. Students deal with the relevance and effect on global affairs of Europe/EU and the Americas by attending the offered morning and evening lectures, panel discussions, and participating in one of the seminar modules in the afternoon. In 2016, the following interdisciplinary modules are offered:

Politics and Law: Hrvoje Paić (University of Graz, Austria) and Guy Laforest (Université Laval, Québec, Canada)

Media, Society, and Culture: Mirko Petrić (University of Zadar, Croatia)

Ethics and Economics: Luis San Vicente Portes (Montclair State University, USA)

State, Society, and Religion: John Hulsey (James Madison University, USA) and Stefan Storr (University of Graz, Austria)



Narratives of Transgressions: Gerald Lamprecht and Ulla Kriebeneegg (University of Graz, Austria)

Aging, Communication, and Technology: Kim Sawchuk (Concordia University, Canada)

History & Power: Christian Cwik (University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago) and Ursula Mindler-Steiner (University of Graz, Austria)

The overall topic of the 2016 edition is *Transformation, Transgressions, and Trust in Europe and the Americas*, as described by the academic director of the program, Roberta Maierhofer:

The only consistency of today's world is change, often in many directions, unpredictable and triggered by self-determination on different levels, political and natural events, cultural reassessment as well as global trends and affairs. Individuals, states, and regions (be them supranational or infra-national) are constantly engaged in transformation processes. Societies are thus permanently changing. While some countries undergo complex transformation processes towards more democratic and participatory forms of government, others have to re-adjust their political and social models to cope with new challenges. Demographic change in Western Europe and Northern America, the need for young and well educated immigration and a re-thinking of societal coherence in times of diversity (characterized by ethnic, religious and demographic groups) have become key policy issues and social, cultural and political challenges of our times. Nation-building and ever-deeper forms of economic and political integration retrace and dilute borders with immense impact on the individual as well as the collective. Globalization as the free flow of ideas, capital, people, goods, and services reflect a broader more idiosyncratic process of economic development. At the household level this transformation affects the individuals' choices in human capital investment and reproductive decisions. Europe and Northern America are faced with unprecedented demographic changes (the current large movement of displaced persons, migration on many different levels, an ageing population, low birth rates, and changing family structures). Social change and fundamental transformation processes are mostly achieved through transgressions of existing rules and the status-quo. Such processes often lead to more inclusive and democratic societies, as was the case when transgressions resulted in the abolition of slavery, or the acceptance of human rights and inclusion of disenfranchised groups. Thus, societal norms were reframed from illegal to legal, from unacceptable to acceptable. Trust plays a very important role in terms of how and whether we accept social change as a challenge or a threat. Depending on our level of confidence, transformation processes will be accepted as inevitable, or strongly opposed as a threat of the status quo. Today, Europe and America can be seen as facing a crisis of trust, whether in terms of the economic and political structures, political parties and institutions, religious values, relationships and traditions, or the dramatic changes in the demographic set-up.

The summer school will offer the possibility of examining the current debate on transformation, transgressions, and trust in Europe and America by focusing on the current challenges to established forms of government, welfare policies and modes of participation in a radically changed global world, where migration and transnationalism play an important role. Focusing on the emphasis areas of the University of Graz – South Eastern Europe and North, Central and South America – this will provide a basis for an interdisciplinary analysis in terms of opportunities provided and challenges faced in the past, present and future.