

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

READING GROUP »Engagement«

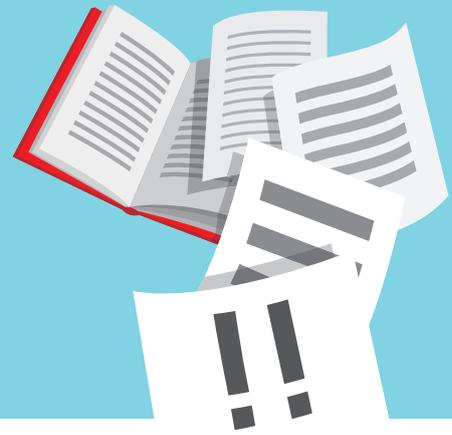
24.–27.06.2019, Leipzig (max. 20 participants)

and

FSGS-SUMMER SCHOOL 2019

»The Politics of Literature – Literature and Politics«

01.–04.07.2019, Berlin (max. 30 participants)



This year's FSGS Summer School is conceived as a contribution within the Excellence Cluster Temporal Communities. By raising the question of the political dimensions of literature and, more specifically, of literature's potential for political intervention, as well as addressing the issue of the performative and intermedial aesthetic strategies of literature from a transcultural perspective, the Summer School explores temporal communities independent of spatial or temporal boundaries. Rather, this year's Summer School is concerned with how literature and the circulation of texts become constitutive for the development of temporary networks. We are also interested in literature's potential for generating spaces for the negotiation of political critique and social change. The Summer School will address this role of literature as a social and political practice and discuss the relationship between literature and politics with regard to how literature becomes effective as a form of cultural expressivity in action.

In times of transregional upheavals and the revival of nationalist movements and governments, the debate about literature and politics has gained new momentum. The international Summer School, hosted by the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School of Literary Studies, aims to develop new approaches to questions concerning the relationship between literature and politics by rethinking the debate within current political contexts.

Through discussions, lectures, and workshops with German and international experts, the Summer School 2019 »The Politics of Literature – Literature and Politics« attempts to both remap transnational and multilingual perspectives on this discourse as well as develop new ways of thinking and analyzing the relations between literature and politics today. Looking beyond the framework of the debate's Western situatedness, we seek to problematize and open up the binary opposition of ›engaged‹ or ›committed‹ vs. ›autonomous‹ literatures.

The three-day reading group »Engagement«, held by Prof. Dr. Robert Kaufman (Berkeley), Dr. Robert Zwarg (Marbach), Prof. Dr. Anne Eusterschulte (Berlin) and Sebastian Tränkle (Berlin) in Leipzig, will take place in the week prior to the Summer School. Its aim is to establish a common base for the Summer School by a close reading and discussion of central texts that preceded Theodor W. Adorno's essays »Commitment« and »Reconciliation under Duress«:

writings, for instance, by Jean-Paul Sartre, Ernst Bloch, Georg Lukács, and Bertolt Brecht. Against the background of these texts, the reading group will also discuss poetic works by Paul Celan and others to further develop an understanding of the relationship of literature and politics.

We will open the four-day Summer School in Berlin with a panel on the historical debate around the term »engagement« as it was shaped by Jean-Paul Sartre and Theodor W. Adorno in the 20th century. With reference to these key documents as well as the discussions out of which they arose, we will investigate the relationship of literature and society that each of these contributions presupposed and analyze what it means for literature – or art in general – to be »political« or »engaged« from the perspective of Marxism and Critical Theory. What are the new forms, opportunities, and production processes of literature that might be capable of upholding a political potential and a power of resistance? Can ›engagement‹ still be a productive term within the realm of literature?

The second panel will address questions about the importance of international institutions vis-à-vis literature and politics. Through a close reading of texts by Jacques Derrida and by looking at two case studies: the International Writers Parliament and the Unesco Collection of representative works, we will discuss questions such as: What are the notions of literature and politics that become manifest in these contexts? How are these notions connected to cosmopolitanism? And what role do these institutions play, for instance, in production and canonization processes?

In the third panel, we will analyze patterns of power in the processes of literary production. The discussion will evolve from the premise that the creative moment of fiction writing is an inherently political one. We will trace the writer's choices regarding identity markers such as class, race, gender, sexuality and migration. The questions we will ask will involve both a theoretical discussion and a practical creative writing component. They include: How are authenticity and legitimacy conceptualized when minority writers are the subject of discussion? How can we understand the specific tensions that develop in the publication markets for minority writers? How are these tensions connected to these writers' particular claims with respect to articulating the experience of marginalization, on

the one hand, and to the audience's expectation that these writers exclusively address that experience, on the other?

The fourth panel poses the central question: How can literature satisfy the demands both of an autonomous form of expression and of political action? As a case study the panel aims to reconstruct and reflect the clash between the aesthetic and the political in Germany between 1815 and 1848. Taking fragmented Germany before its unification in 1871 as our starting point, we will debate the dissident literature of the *Vormärz* as it was shaped by policies of censorship and repression. What do these dynamics of literary production and dissidence teach us with regard to the present-day debate on politics and literature?

The fifth panel focuses on poetry and its functions within protest movements. Scrutinising poetry performances held in the act of protest, it aims to examine poetry's potential contributions to the ideas of ›rebellion‹ and ›resistance‹, as well as the other way around. Considering the significant impact of the '68 student revolts on the culture of rebellion, as well as on the cultural and artistic spheres, the panel also seeks to understand the nature of the political in poetry and take stock of the development of political poetry after 1968. The panel draws on poems and songs

performed by the '68 student movements as well as more recent ones, such as those which were sparked by the Occupy Wall Street and Gezi Park movements.

The sixth and final panel will ask in how far theories of politics and literature that evolved within specific historical and cultural contexts can be relevant to the current debate. It draws specifically on the Arabic literary discourse and its concept of *iltizām* (commitment), which evolved within the so-called ›Arab cultural revival‹ of the 19th and 20th centuries. Given that ›commitment‹ in Arabic literature has been interpreted first and foremost within this specific historical and geographical context, the panel seeks to rethink *iltizām* within a contemporary framework, particularly focusing on the past decade which was shaped by the so-called ›Arab spring‹, a period of political upheaval in which literature played an essential role.

Applications are welcome from international doctoral students, postdocs and advanced MA students in literary studies and the humanities for whom questions of literature and politics, or the politics of literature, constitute a central part of their research projects. The working language will be English. Participants are encouraged to present their own projects during the Summer School.

KEY DETAILS

Dates 24.06.–04.07.2019

Up to 20 participants will first meet in Leipzig to attend the Reading Group ›Engagement‹, before travelling to Berlin where the Summer School will take place with up to 30 participants. In addition, participants are also invited to attend the separate, but thematically overlapping conference ›Poetic Critique‹, held in Berlin from 27.–29.06.2019.

Locations

24.–27.06.2019 LEIPZIG

Reading Group ›Engagement‹ (max. 20 participants)

01.–04.07.2019 BERLIN

FSGS-Summer School ›The Politics of Literature – Literature and Politics‹ (max. 30 participants)

Participating Experts

PD Dr. Patrick Eiden-Offe (Berlin), Prof. Dr. Tarek El-Ariss (Dartmouth), Prof. Dr. Anne Eusterschulte (Berlin), Prof. Dr. Martin Halliwell (Leicester), Prof. Dr. Robert Kaufman (Berkeley), Olumide Popoola (London), Prof. Dr. Gisèle Sapir (Paris), Sebastian Tränkle (Berlin), Dr. Robert Zwarg (Marbach)

Application

Please apply with a CV (tabular, 1–3 pages) and a letter of motivation (1–2 pages) indicating:

- a positioning statement: How does your project relate to the question we want to discuss?

- a description of your interests in and expectation from both the Reading Group and the Summer School.
- if you want to join the Reading Group and the Summer School (reference code: 2019 L/B) **or** the Summer School only (reference code: 2019 B)

Please submit your application in **one** PDF file only.

Costs

400 EUR fee

for the Reading Group and the Summer School (reference code: 2019 L/B)

320 EUR fee

for the Summer School only (reference code: 2019 B)

The fee includes lunch, refreshments and coffee as well as the opening and closing reception. The participants are asked to make their own arrangements for their accommodation in Berlin. In cases where candidates can prove that they have no financial support (through their home university, travel grants etc.), the costs for travel and accommodation might be covered upon request. In certain circumstances, the participation fee may also be remitted.

Application Deadline 2 April 2019

Contact fsgs@fu-berlin.de

www.fsgs.fu-berlin.de/SummerSchool2019