

Call for Papers

**The Intersections of Whiteness
International Conference**

Ruhr-University Bochum and TU Dortmund University (Germany)
January 11-13, 2017

The protests against racial profiling and racist police brutality in the U.S. and Britain, Donald Trump's alarming comments about Muslims, the Confederate flag controversy in South Carolina, the all-white Academy Award nominations, the organization "Operation Black Vote" feeling compelled to urge people of color not to leave the political field to white people in the wake of the UK General Elections, the reactions of the European Union to the masses of refugees and many Europeans' xenophobic reactions to those seeking refuge: the specters of whiteness are still urgently haunting the western world. According to France Winddance Twine and Charles Gallagher, *Critical Whiteness Studies* is currently in its third stage, riding its third wave so to say, questioning "the tendency towards essentializing accounts of whiteness by locating race as one of many social relations that shape individual and group identity" (2011: 3). While the discipline has established itself as an anti-racist academic and activist practice or mode of intervention, it is still often object to scrutiny for spotlighting whiteness and thus possibly contributing to the continuing dominance of whiteness. In order to dismantle this dominance and to heed Steven Garner's call for awareness of the "pitfalls" of whiteness studies (2007), we believe it is necessary to identify the intricacies of whiteness in western society and culture from a decidedly transnational/global perspective. The first waves of *Critical Whiteness Studies* established the discipline as an almost exclusively US-centered field of inquiry whose methodology and theory-building was consequently to a considerable degree focused on US-American particularities, yet whiteness has since the turn of the century become what Vron Ware calls an "interconnected global system": "it may be produced in one place, but its effects are not containable by cultural or political borders" (2001: 184). This conference aims at making whiteness visible (following Richard Dyer and Valerie Babb). We will do so by discussing the current position of the field and concrete examples that negotiate whiteness with a regional, national and global focus. We are especially interested in the interplay of whiteness and other "social relations that shape individual and group identity" and invite presentations from cultural studies, gender studies, history, literary studies, sociology, anthropology etc. Whiteness, while it is considered a system of privilege, is informed and created by its intersections with other categories of the self and society. Questions we wish to explore, are: Is whiteness intersectional? How is this intersectionality played out in different disciplines, in different cultures, in different media? While the obvious intersections between whiteness and class, gender, sexuality are very productive, we wish to include questions of region, nation, ability, the body, and religion.

Topics for presentations might include, yet are not limited to:

Whiteness and ...

- critical theory
- popular culture (including television shows such as *Fargo*, *Sons of Anarchy*, *True Detective*, *Girls*, *Misfits*, *Being Human*, but also film, music, reality television, etc.)
- comedy (e.g. American standup comedian Louis CK's deconstructions of white male identity, South African comedian Trevor Noah and others)
- the nation (comparative perspectives: e.g. U.S. ↔ U.K., England ↔ Wales)
- the region (e.g. the American South, Eastern Germany, the English countryside)
- feminism (e.g. first- and second-wave, post-feminism, cyberfeminism)
- fatness, dis/ability, healthism
- Marxism
- queer identities
- social networks

Please send **abstracts of no more than 300 words** and a short biographical info to the organizers Evangelia Kindinger (Ruhr-University Bochum, American Studies) and Mark Schmitt (TU Dortmund, British Cultural Studies) at intersectionsofwhiteness@gmx.de.

The **deadline** for paper proposals is **31 July 2016**. Speakers will be notified of their acceptance by 1 September 2016.

Confirmed keynote speakers:

Amanda D. Lotz, University of Michigan

Katharine Tyler, University of Exeter

Vron Ware, Kingston University

Matt Wray, Temple University