

BETWEEN UTOPIA AND DYSTOPIA: VISIONS OF GERMANY

2016 Germanic Graduate Student Association Conference
At The Ohio State University

Friday April 1st

2:00 Light Refreshments

2:15 Opening Remarks

2:30 – 5:15 Panels 1&2

5:45 Plenary Speaker – Dr. Alex Holznienkemper

Saturday April 2nd

9:30 Coffee and Breakfast

10:15 – 12:45 Panels 3&4

2:30 Keynote Speaker – Dr. Phillip Wegner

4:00 Closing Remarks

Mershon Center

1501 Neil Ave



Coined by Sir Thomas More in 1516, the word “utopia” — an amalgam of the ancient Greek *οὐ* (not), *τόπος* (place) and the classical Latin suffix *-ia* — describes, in its eponymous work, an imaginary island with a perfect social, legal, and political system. Despite the island’s perfection, More’s work leaves open the question of whether this non-place is truly ideal.

How is Germany’s identity imagined, both from inside and outside its borders, as a utopia or as its negation, a dystopia? At the same time, how does the notion of utopia help us understand German writers’ and artists’ visions of places beyond their country’s borders? The questionable aspects of utopia may also become visible in cultural contact, contact that prompts alterations of experiences, practices, and worldviews.

