

# CALL FOR PAPERS

**In cooperation with  
the Society for the Study of the American Short Story,  
the American Literature Association, and the Obama Institute**

## **The American Short Story: New Horizons**

**Johannes Gutenberg-University, Mainz, Germany  
October 5-7, 2017**

**Program coordinator: Oliver Scheiding**

**Organizing Committee:  
James Nagel, Olivia Edenfield, Elke D'hoker,  
Jochen Achilles, Dustin Anderson, Damien Schlarb**

Throughout its history, the American short story has been praised either as a highly polished gem or condemned as literary fast food. Despite such rise-and-fall predictions, the short story has always been a demanding form. Its narrative economy in terms of time and space records decisive, intimate moments of life that give the American Short Story a broad social resonance. As such, the short story offers a vibrant field of research. There is a renaissance in progress not only in terms of the short story's productivity but also in terms of innovative theoretical questions. The current state of research is, however, probably best described as "ripening."

The conference "The American Short Story: New Horizons" invites both panels and papers that address fresh and original questions relevant to studying the American short story: how the genre works as performance in itself; how it conveys a theory of culture in which aesthetic structures and the presentation of cultural problematics interrelate; how the short story and the practices of text-making are related to the cultures of print in which textual circulation and economic exchange are homologues; how we can read the short story as an expressive form alongside its material dimensions, its vitality of forms (i.e., short-short fiction, flash fiction), and the multiple meanings of such concepts as authorship and genre; how we can reassess the short story as a field to map out exchanges not just among authors, but also among editors, publishers, reviewers, readers, and the physical text, with its advertisements, illustrations, and editorial changes. The conference thus seeks to explore the American short story as a coming together of the enduring narrative practice of compression and concision in American literature, presently culminating in a digital culture in which brevity rules.

### Suggested Topics:

- History of the American Short Story
- American Short Story and Ethnicity
- Gender/Sexuality Studies and the American Short Story
- American Short Story and Literary/Cultural Theory
- American Short Story and Linguistics
- American Short Story and Psychology
- American Short Story and Religion
- Early Short Narratives prior to 1800
- American Short Story and Periodicals
- American Short Story and Graphic Narratives

- American Short Story and Print Culture/Material Culture
- American Short Story and Translation/Translators
- American Short Story and Storytelling
- New and old Forms: Short and Short-Short Stories
- American Short Story Cycles
- The American Short Story and Life Writing
- American Short Stories and Authors
- Flash Fiction and Microfiction
- American Short Story and Visual Arts/Film
- American Short Story and Digital Research
- American Short Story and the Digital Age
- American Short Stories and Globalization
- American Short Stories and Transnationalism
- American Short Stories and Medical Humanities
- American Short Story and Literary Periodization/Movements
- American Short Story and MFA Programs
- American Short Story and Music/Theater
- Editing and Anthologizing the American Short Story
- Publishing and Reception of the American Short Story
- American Short Story and Pedagogy
- American Short Story and Genres (Novel, Novella, Essay etc.)
- New Literary Histories on American Short Stories (1980s to the Present)

#### Proposals:

Panels and roundtables have three presenters, although some may have more. Proposals for pre-arranged panels should include a 250-300-word description of the topic and full contact information for all members of the group. The person submitting the proposal is the chair of the session. He or she may also be a presenter, but need not be.

All persons wishing to give a paper at the conference, including all members of pre-arranged panels, should give a one-paragraph abstract of the paper to be presented along with a biographical paragraph giving the credentials of the presenter to address this topic. Individual papers should be scheduled for 20 minutes.

The organizing committee screens all proposals and abstracts, issues acceptances, and arranges the presentations on the program. It will form panels to accommodate papers not included in pre-arranged groups.

**Please submit all proposals and abstracts to Oliver Scheiding ([scheidung@uni-mainz.de](mailto:scheidung@uni-mainz.de)) by June 30, 2017.**