

EAST *meets* WEST

Cross-Cultural Perspectives
on America's Changing Image

12-13 September 2025, Kosice, Slovakia

2nd Call for Papers

A biennial conference organized by
the Czech and Slovak Association for American Studies

&

the Department of British and American Studies, Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice,
Slovakia

Conference Date: 12-13 September 2025

2nd call open until: 15 June 2025

We invite submissions for the conference, “**East Meets West: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on America's Changing Image**,” which will examine how America's global image has transformed in recent years. In the 21st century, the once-dominant portrayal of the U.S. as a beacon of freedom and democracy is facing major shifts. Historically viewed as a symbol of liberty and opportunity, the United States is now increasingly critiqued, particularly in regions like Central and Eastern Europe, Asia, and beyond.

With rising geopolitical tensions and the growing influence of nationalist and populist movements, the image of the U.S. is under heightened scrutiny. This interdisciplinary conference will explore these evolving perspectives and how they are reflected in contemporary literature, media, and cultural narratives. What does it mean for the U.S. national identity and its global reputation when the long-held narrative of being the "promised land" is questioned? How are cross-cultural exchanges between the U.S. and the East, particularly Central and Eastern Europe, represented in modern texts?

We welcome papers that address these and related questions, offering fresh perspectives on how America's image is being reshaped in today's globalized and interconnected world:

Shifting Perspectives in American Literature, Culture, and Media

How do contemporary American novels, films, and cultural texts reflect growing global critiques of America's role as a world leader? How are these shifting perspectives represented across various cultural forms, and what impact do they have on America's global image?

Philosophical Reflections on U.S. Politics and Identity

How do contemporary philosophical perspectives reflect and critique the evolving nature of U.S. politics, values, and national identity? How do critical theories, including post-postmodernism, critical race theory, gender related theories and eco-philosophy, analyze current social, political, and ethical challenges?

Central and Eastern European Perspectives on America

What roles do literature and media from Central and Eastern Europe play in reimagining America's global image? How do these regions, historically shaped by American influence during the Cold War, now perceive and critique the United States in the context of modern geopolitical changes?

Freedom, Democracy, and the American Dream in Crisis

How has the concept of the American Dream evolved in contemporary cultural narratives? What role does this iconic idea play in shaping America's image both domestically and internationally, and how is it critiqued in today's global culture?

Literary and Cultural Representations of America

How do novels, films, and visual media depict the decline or persistence of America in the 21st century? Are there new symbols or metaphors that represent America's changing role on the world stage?

Transnational Perspectives on American Identity

How do immigrant and diaspora writers in the U.S. contribute to or challenge the shifting global perspectives on American identity? How do cross-cultural narratives portray the complex relationship between Eastern and Western values, and what does this reveal about American identity in a global context?

Interdisciplinary Contributions

This conference invites interdisciplinary insights from the fields of literary studies, cultural studies, media studies, linguistics, philosophy, political theory, international security, and related disciplines. We encourage papers that explore the cultural, historical, and linguistic dimensions of these shifts, with a particular focus on literature, media representations, and cross-cultural dialogues.

Publication

Extended versions of selected papers will be published in a monograph by **Masaryk University Press**, which is indexed in the **Scopus database**. Another possibility of publication will be in Scopus-indexed **Ostrava Journal of English Philology**.

Confirmed Keynote Speakers

[Hua-Yu Sebastian Cherng, New York University, USA](#)



Hua-Yu Sebastian Cherng is the Vice Dean of Research and Equity at NYU Steinhardt, where he leads both the Office of Research and the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Belonging. He also serves as Professor of International Education at New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development.

His research focuses on **comparative perspectives of race, ethnicity, and (im)migration, particularly in the contexts of the United States and China**. His earlier work explored **the role of social support in the lives of marginalized youth**, demonstrating how resources like teacher support are often more vital for non-dominant youth yet less readily accessible. His current research **challenges established educational "truths,"** such as the assumption that high test scores early on predict future STEM outcomes or that college advising is an equalizing force for students of color.

Cherng's scholarship has been published in leading journals such as the American Educational Research Journal, Educational Researcher, Social Forces, and Teachers College Record, and he has garnered over \$8 million in grants from funders such as the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the William T. Grant Foundation, and the Spencer Foundation. His work has also appeared in over 20 mainstream media outlets, including CNN, NPR, TIME, Business Insider, Huffington Post, Metro, and Essence.

He earned his PhD in Education Policy and Sociology from the University of Pennsylvania, and before returning to higher education, Cherng taught algebra and geometry at a public charter school and Upward Bound in San Francisco. He also co-founded a technology start-up based in Shanghai. He holds a bachelor's degree in Brain and Cognitive Sciences from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

[Stephen Wooten, University of Oregon, USA](#)



Stephen R. Wooten is a sociocultural anthropologist whose research interests include: **political ecology, food and culture, and local food systems**. Dr. Wooten has been conducting ethnographic field research in Mali since 1992 and is currently involved in an **international study of agroecological transitions around the world**.

His research publications include: "Colonial Administration and the Ethnography of the Family in the French Soudan" in *Cahiers d'études africaines*, "Antelope Headdresses and Champion Farmers: Negotiating Meaning and Identity through the Bamana Ciwara

Complex" in *African Arts* and "Losing Ground: Gender Relations, Commercial Horticulture and Threats to Local Plant Diversity in Rural Mali" in an edited volume entitled: *Women and Plants: Gender Relations in Biodiversity Management and Conservation*, "The World Began With Farming: Creativity and Resilience in West African Savanna Agriculture" in *Mande Studies*, and "Cooking More than Food: The Social and Cultural Products of Women's Alimentary Agency in Rural Mali" in *Anthropology of Food*. His book *The Art of Livelihood: Creating Expressive Agri-Culture* explores the creativity of rural Bamana farmers. In his latest book, *Cooking Culture: Women's Culinary Agency and Everyday Creativity*, Wooten examines the power and significance of women's daily foodwork. Dr. Wooten, a three time Fulbright awardee, has been at UO since 2001.

[Michaela Weiss, Silesian University, Czech Republic](#)



Michaela Weiss is Associate Professor at the Department of English and American Studies at the Institute of Foreign Languages at the Silesian University in Opava, Czech Republic. She teaches courses on English and American literature, Literary Theory and Criticism, and Creative Reading and Writing. Her main areas of interest include **American Jewish literature, graphic novels, and women's studies**. She has published monographs *Jewishness as Humanism in Bernard Malamud's Fiction* (2010) and *Tradice a Experiment: Americká židovská próza v období modernismu* (Tradition and Experiment: American Jewish Prose in the Modernist Era, 2020) and chapters concerning metamodern literary strategies, gender

identities, graphic novels, and dystopias. She co-edited a series of conference proceedings *Silse* (2010–2023) and a monograph series *Modern Approaches to Text Analysis* (2017), and *Text Analysis and Interpretation* (2019). She is currently working on a book *Community, Geography, and Language in the Works of Irena Klepfisz*.

[Matej Cívik, University of Pardubice, Czech Republic](#)



Matej Cívik is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellow at the Department of Political Science at Central European University in Vienna. He specializes in **contemporary political philosophy** and publishes on (1) **political challenges in contemporary societies**, including the regulation of conspiracy theories, the interplay between emotions and political values and the (possible) legal and practical containment of extremism; (2) **political legitimacy, tacit consent, the relationship between social values, self-understanding of citizens and legitimate rule**; and (3) **normative ethics, the nature of duties and obligations, the role of expectations in ethics and duties to one's future self**. His work has appeared in journals such as *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, *European Journal of Political Theory*, *Journal of Ethics* or *Topoi*.

Submission Guidelines

We invite submissions from a broad range of disciplines, including but not limited to international relations, literature, cultural studies, history, and media studies. Papers that engage critically with cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspectives will be given priority.

Proposals should include:

- A title and abstract (300-500 words) outlining the focus and argument of the proposed paper.
- A brief bio (150 words) of the author, including institutional affiliation.
- Please submit your abstract and bio via e-mail to:
eastmeetswest.kosice2025@gmail.com

Important Dates

- **Extended abstract submission deadline:** 15 June 2025
Conference date: 12-13 September 2025

Venue

The conference will be held at Moyzesova 9, 040 01, Platón building, Faculty of Arts, Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Slovakia.

Registration fees

Standard registration fee: 100 EUR

Members of CSAAS: 90 EUR

PhD students: 80 EUR