



## **Disruptive Imagination and Resistance in Europe and the Americas: State – Society – Religion**

As challenges and crises multiply, a sense of resignation and helplessness spreads. Climate change, war, inequality, poverty, hunger, and pandemics pose existential threats to our lives and the stability of our societies. Faced with such a threat, the response is meek. How could we go about things differently? There seems to be a dearth of alternatives. However, such a lack is indicative of a secondary crisis, namely that of the imagination. Maybe there are alternatives but we are simply too comfortable within the frameworks dictated by the status quo to imagine them. The task of the imagination is, therefore, to unsettle this comfort. Imagine in order to disrupt, disrupt in order to resist. Because, once disruptive imagination shatters the comforts of intellectual complacency, new avenues of action might open up: resistance against injustice and exploitation, on the one hand, and resistance against one's own hopelessness and resignation, on the other.

GUSEGG 2024 will offer a platform for the contributions of academics of various backgrounds and disciplines on this one topic. This pluralism reflects the breadth and depth of the question posed by the title. Disruptive imagination is not an isolated, individual task but a social, processual, systemic one. The input has to come from as many sides as possible and the output can only ever be provisional. No one answer will be found. One aspect of the possible disruptiveness of the imagination is its open-endedness. To embrace the imagination as a vehicle for resistance is to embrace this open-endedness, which means abandoning all illusions of definiteness and accepting the heterogeneity of experience. This is the only way the challenges of today can be met. Or can you imagine another?

Thus, GUSEGG 2024 will present research on how disruptive imagination and resistance in Europe and the Americas are addressed socially, politically, culturally, and economically, and what this means for states, societies, and religions. In order to develop strategies and methods to meet the challenges of our times, this summer school suggests engaging in academic contemplation and interdisciplinary exchange. Such investigations offer us the opportunity of developing disruptive intellectual approaches and ideas, as we can gain insights into the many forces that make us believe that the challenges we face are essential, natural, or inevitable. Therefore, the suggested analysis offers us not only an understanding of our own positions on an individual, a regional, national, and global level, but also the possibility of moving from a passive position to active involvement in addressing conflict, challenge, and change, and offer insights into the dynamics and structures that govern us and shape as individuals and groups. Focusing on the emphasis areas of the University of Graz – South Eastern Europe and North, Central and South America – this program will offer a basis for discussing global and continental challenges as well as opportunities that such academic engagement provides.

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