

Fulbright Scholar Programs

2010-2011 GERMAN STUDIES SEMINAR

“The German *Sozialstaat* Re-Visited: A System in Turmoil”

Like the United States, Germany has been severely affected by the global financial crisis. Saving banks and establishing stimulus plans to keep the economy going have put enormous pressure on the welfare state “made in Germany”. The bail-out plans of the German government may have saved the system, but most likely at a very high price for the German tax payer.

For decades, the promises of the German “Sozialstaat” and the “generations’ contract” (dating back to the 1950’s: the young generation’s taxes pay for the old generation’s pensions and medical care) have established a uniquely German social conscience and sense of security for the young and old. For some years though, a changing demography and age structure, permanently high unemployment, and exploding costs in the health sector have stirred public debate as to whether this peculiar German approach is sustainable in an increasingly global and competitive world. This public discourse has gained tremendous momentum across party lines, generations, and constituencies under the impact and potential long-term effects of the financial crisis on the system. It raises great concern about their future among younger citizens, and fear among the 20 million retirees whose pensions are paid from the federal budget.

In this larger context, the German Studies Seminar will discuss demographic developments in Germany, and how they challenge the social security system, the employment market, and the political system with more than one-third of the voters now being retirees. How has German reunification affected the “Sozialstaat”? Do the expectations in the system differ in East and West Germany? What role do changing values play for the future of the social welfare system and how important are family and education for societal coherence in Germany? What relevance has life-long education in an aging German society? Will the long-time ‘generations’ contract’ turn into an explosive ‘generations’ conflict’?

ELIGIBILITY: Scholars from U.S. universities, colleges and community colleges who hold full-time teaching appointments and meet other academic requirements (Ph.D., Ph.D. candidacy or other equivalent degree or qualifications) are eligible. We invite U.S. scholars from the various disciplines to participate in the seminar. We expect the 2010 seminar topic to be of particular interest to scholars from German and European Studies faculties as well as those of the political and social sciences generally.

LANGUAGE: The seminar will be conducted in English.

GRANT LENGTH: 2 Weeks (June 6–19, 2010)

BENEFITS: The award includes round-trip air travel; program travel within Germany; lodging and partial per diem; and health insurance coverage (for the duration of the seminar). After the conclusion of the seminar, participants may prolong their stay in Germany/Europe at their own cost and responsibility to pursue individual research projects. Participants may not be accompanied by dependents for the duration of the entire program. Participants will be asked to submit a brief report and evaluation at the conclusion. For additional information please visit the German-American Fulbright Commission website at www.fulbright.de or the CIES website at www.cies.org.

DEADLINE: November 1, 2009

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