

6<sup>TH</sup> GRADUATE CONFERENCE OF THE YOUNG SCHOLARS FORUM  
OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR CANADIAN STUDIES  
IN GERMAN-SPEAKING COUNTRIES (GKS)



26 – 28 June 2009 in Passau, Bavaria

The Graduate Conference of the Young Scholars Forum of the Association for Canadian Studies in German-Speaking Countries (GKS) is the most important platform for young scholars from Germany, Austria, Switzerland to present their research in Canadian Studies. The 6<sup>th</sup> Graduate Conference, which took place in Passau, Bavaria, from 26 to 28 June 2009, has once again been a great academic and organizational success.

Prof. Dr. Klaus Peter Walter, Professor for Romanic Literatures und Regional Studies at the University of Passau, opened the conference in the name of the University of Passau in the auditorium of the International House. Then Prof. Konrad Groß addressed the audience as a representative of the GKS. Marion Kühn and Miriam Richter welcomed everyone on behalf of the Young Scholars Forum. The keynote lecture was given by Prof. Dr. Alfred Hecht (Viessmann European Research Centre, Wilfrid Laurier University, Ontario, Canada), who holds a guest professorship at the Christian-Albrechts-University of Kiel for the summer term 2009. Prof. Hecht talked about the topic of “The Canadian Geographic, Religious and Ethnic Mosaic,” presenting research on variation in the geographic and ethnic-religious differences in Canada, based on the theoretical concept of the so-called “Human Capital Investment.” The keynote lecture was met with great interest and was further discussed during the reception, which was co-sponsored by the Canadian embassy in Germany.

During the next two days, 14 young scholars presented their research and work-in-progress. Since Canadian Studies at the University of Passau has a strong francophone focus, the number of papers on anglophone and francophone topics was – for the first time in the history of the Young Scholars Forum – almost equal, which resulted in a very productive exchange between researchers. A further innovation of the 6<sup>th</sup> Graduate Conference has been the inclusion of Bachelor-theses into the conference program, in line with the Bologna resolution. The presented papers covered a broad range of disciplines, from anglo- and francophone literatures to cultural studies and linguistics to history and political science. Papers were arranged into thematic panels, which enabled the discussion of topics from several perspectives and disciplines: "Concepts of Canadian Identities," "Mirroring Diversity/Multiculturalism," "Changing Political Contexts," and "Culture(s) as Textual Space." The presentations were given in German, English, and French and encouraged lively discussions among the audience, which appreciated the very professional atmosphere of the conference.

The academic conference program was enriched by a well-organized social program, which furthered the informal exchange between the conference participants. During lunch at a Pizzeria on campus and a very nice dinner in a Bavarian restaurant, as well as during a guided sightseeing tour and the scenic boat trip on the last day of the conference, participants were able to make contacts and also learn about Passau and its history.

The organizers wish to express their warmest thanks to the University of Passau, to the Association for Canadian Studies in German-speaking Countries, and to the Canadian embassy in Germany for their generous financial and institutional support.