

## **Youth Subcultures in the USA**

**Teacher Seminar, 13 April 2010**

**Speaker: Wolf Seiler, M.A., LMU**

Organizer Amerika-Haus-Bibliothek, B.A.Z. Amerika-Haus

The idea of youth and adolescence as separate stage of life was invented in the late nineteenth century in the wake of industrialization and urbanization, and became prominent as a social and cultural phenomenon after the Second World War. Media and marketing agencies in the prospering Western societies quickly discovered teenagers and their newly gained spending power as consumers. Self-conscious of their new status, young people soon cultivated different styles, musical tastes and oppositional ideas, and organized in distinct youth subcultures. Participation in those subcultures provided youth with an identity outside that of social institutions such as family, school or work, and an opportunity to define themselves against the mainstream.

This seminar will provide an introduction to the concept of youth subculture and some of its basic theoretical assumptions. We will take a closer look at a variety of historical and contemporary American youth subcultures such as Gangs, the Beat Generation, Hip Hop or Punk. They will not only be placed within their respective historical contexts, but we will also touch upon issues such as race, class, gender, identity, resistance and commercialization.

9.00

- Introduction
- The origins of youth culture
- Theories/ concepts of youth subculture
- Discussion

### **10.30 Coffee Break**

11.00

- Early American Youth Subcultures: Gangs in Chicago
- The Countercultures of the Beats and Hippies
- Hip Hop Culture and African-American Identity
- American Punk: white male youth from Suburbia?
- Time for Questions, Discussion

13.00 End