



## Annual Report 2020 & 2021



JG|U



Annual Report  
2020 & 2021

## Imprint

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## Opening Remarks

## The Progress of the Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies (2020-21)

**Alfred Hornung**  
**Speaker**

Inevitably, the fourth and fifth year of the Obama Institute had to find new ways of carrying out its ambitious research and teaching agenda under the influence of COVID-19 and its rapidly proliferating variants. More than ever, the transdisciplinary range of its approach proved its relevance and validity to cope with current issues on a global scale. The limitations imposed on all areas of life have a direct connection to the central research objective pursued in the Obama Institute focusing on the "Disruption and Democracy in America: Challenges and Potentials of Transcultural and Transnational Formations," funded by the Ministry of Education, Science, Continued Education and Culture as a high-potential research area of the Johannes Gutenberg University. The disregard of the past president of the United States for medical expertise and his blatant denial of the election results intensified the divisive formations within American society and culminated in the unprecedented incursion of his like-minded supporters into the Capitol Building on



the day of epiphany 2021 in defiance of democratic decision making. In the course of the past two years and encouraged by the efforts of the Biden administration, members of the Obama Institute reacted to these increasing signs of the institution of democracy at risk not only in the United States but also transnationally, employing new digital media for instruction and research communication.

In cooperation with colleagues from Catholic Theology, Romance Languages and Literatures, and Translation Studies we conceived a joint research project on the topic of "Cultures of Democracy and Change: Processes of Deliberation in the Americas." This hemispheric area studies project was further pursued in an online lecture series on "The Status of American



Democracy" in December 2021 with presentations by Obama fellows Moustafa Bayoumi (American Studies, CUNY), Chad E. Seales (History, U of Texas), Sean M. Theriault (Political Science, U of Texas) and the director of the Atlantic Academy David Sirakov (Kaiserslautern). These academic investigations into the changing nature of democracy are an obvious response to current issues of American culture and politics calling for an expansion of American Studies methodologies into the fields of politics and the social media. The need for academics to participate in the public debate is part of the historical setup of American Studies as an interdisciplinary field and poses itself more urgently in view of the resurgence of white supremacy and systemic racism as a transnational phenomenon. In lieu of the conventional programs for the Fourth of July and the Obama Lecture on Thanksgiving, we decided in 2020 to take issue with the current events in the United States by providing our own research and personal statements on the endangered status of democracy in terms of medical and racial issues past and present. On Thanksgiving, the chairs of the Obama Institute used the space reserved for the customary keynote lecture to present their current research projects on "Racial Injustice and Medical Humanities," "Life Writing, the American Dream and Democracy," "Transnational Periodical Cultures: Periodicals and Indigenous Modernity," and "Global Faith and Worldly Power: Evangelical Encounters with U.S. Empire" and outlined their contributions

to collaborative research projects funded by the German Research Foundation, such as the Research Training Group on "Life Sciences and Life Writing" in cooperation with the University Medical Center and the Collaborative Research Project on "Human Differentiation" in cooperation with the Social Sciences and Humanities. Presentations of the awardees of the Obama Dissertation Prize complemented this survey of Transnational American Studies research. Dr. Hannah R. Waits, Postdoctoral Fellow of Global American Studies at Harvard, gave a report of her PhD thesis in American history from the University of California at Berkeley on "The Missionary Majority: American Evangelicals and Power in a Postcolonial World" and Dr. Carlos Nugent, English and Environmental Humanities, reported on his Yale University thesis "Imagined Environments: Mediating Race and Nature in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands." Jannis Buschky received the Hans Galinsky Prize for students for his research paper on "New England History Reconsidered." As part of the annual Obama Lecture, the Obama Institute hosted the first Townhall meeting of the German Association for American Studies (GAAS) on 27 November 2020, in which more than 200 German American Studies scholars participated. Mita Banerjee was a member of the panel on "Diversity, Racism and anti-Racism in Research and Teaching American Studies," Alfred Hornung chaired the discussion on the status of the GAAS and the representation of diversity in its statutory bodies. These virtual meetings

also allowed international guests and members of the Obama Institute's Advisory Board to join in.

In 2021, we invited the internationally acclaimed Civil Rights historian Glenn Eskew from our exchange partner, Georgia State University in Atlanta, to give the Fourth of July keynote address. In his speech "The Ongoing Ideological Struggle: 'To Redeem the Soul of America' and the World" he took up the attack on the US Capitol and its repercussions at home and abroad. For the Obama Lecture on Thanksgiving, we were pleased to change from an online format to a real-life event and feature Daniel Stein, a graduate of the Obama Institute and now professor of American Studies at the University of Siegen, with an impressive presentation on "Graphic Narratives of the Middle Passage." We also welcomed Alessandra Magrin Hass, the recipient of the Obama Dissertation Prize, who presented the insights of her Strathclyde history dissertation on "The Wild West in Italy and in the Italian Imagination: Travel Writing, Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and Popular Culture." The Hans Galinsky Memorial Prizes went to Patrick Simon for his Master Thesis "Toward a Puritan Chresis: Cotton Mather and Noah's Arc in America" and to Paula Alice Kapp for her term paper "The Exceptional Spiritual Autobiography of Samson Occom."

For these past two years, we can again record excellent achievements of the young talents in the Obama Institute. We proudly register the graduation of a number of PhD candidates and of three

colleagues who completed the second doctoral degree, the Habilitation, Dr. habil. René Dietrich with a thesis on "Disruptive Relationality: U.S. Settler Colonial Biopolitics and Indigenous Life Writing", Dr. habil. Pia Wiegink with a thesis on "Reconfiguring the Nation: Transnationalism and Gender in American Abolitionist Literature" in 2020, and Dr. habil. Philipp Reisner with a thesis on "Faith in Verse: Biblical Presence in Contemporary Anglo-American Poetry" in 2021. We also recognize with pride the successful career moves of Dr. habil. Pia Wiegink to a full professorship at the University of Bonn in the excellence cluster on Dependency and Slavery Studies, of Dr. habil. Tim Lanzendörfer to the Heisenberg Fellowship for Literary Theory, Literary Studies, and Literary Studies Education at the University of Frankfurt, and of Dr. Lene Salwalisch to a tenured position at the University of Eichstätt in 2020 and to a Junior Professorship at the University of Trier in 2021.

The book series of the German Association for American Studies, *American Studies: A Monograph Series*, continued to be edited in the Obama Institute, which also has become the European hub of the *Journal of Transnational American Studies* (the second editorial home next to Stanford University), with Sabine Kim serving as managing editor and Alfred Hornung as editor-in-chief. The first two issues appeared in 2021, supported by a team of managing assistants and copy editors whom the Obama Institute invited for a special online event "Young Researchers

in Transnational American Studies: Career Talks" in December. Selina Lai-Henderson (Duke Kunshan University in Shanghai), Aiko Takeuchi-Demirci (Koç University in Istanbul), Sabine Kim (Glasgow), and Vanessa Evans (York University, Toronto) presented their postdoctoral and doctoral research projects and gave advice for young talents for their academic careers.

This Annual Report of 2020-21 documents the impressive output of all members of the Obama Institute in terms of research activities, publications, and innovative digital events in teaching and conference presentations. It also lists some of the excellent achievements of our Bachelor and Master students, doctoral and postdoctoral candidates, who profit from our international network of relations, an extensive direct exchange program with 18 partner universities in North America as well as exchange relations with institutions in Europe, Asia and Australia. The Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies attracts national and international attention for its pursuit of and dedication to the ideas of the 44th president. After four aberrant years, this spirit seems to have returned to the White House with President Joe Biden who courageously tries to overcome the divisions in contemporary American society. On behalf of the Executive Board, I would like to express our gratitude to the members of our Advisory Board and the Affiliate members at the Johannes Gutenberg University as well as the Atlantic Academy for their invaluable support and cooperation. We would also like to thank

the heads of the Johannes Gutenberg University and the State of Rhineland-Palatinate for their collegiate and financial support for our work. Thanks are due to all students and faculty members who empower the Obama Institute with their energy and commitment. Special thanks go to the editorial staff, Dr. Thorsten Kathke and Christine Plicht, who compiled this Annual Report expertly. Last but not least, we owe special thanks to Anette Vollrath and Christine Plicht, who untiringly and proficiently handle all administrative tasks of the Obama Institute.

## A View from Abroad 2020

**Vanessa Evans | York University, Toronto  
Exchange Lecturer at the OI 2018-20**

I am writing this contribution from Toronto, Canada, where I returned late last summer to resume my doctoral studies in the English Department at York University after nearly two years of teaching and researching at the Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies (OI). Much has changed while I've been away: the streets are quieter and these days it isn't just the raccoons who are masked. The year since the COVID-19 pandemic began has been unprecedented in its challenges, forcing many of us to take pause and account for what we value most. I want to take one such pause here and reflect on some positive memories, namely my years abroad in Germany and the exchange experience at the OI, even though they ended with a masked trans-Atlantic flight.

My time in Mainz began in October, 2018, after I applied and was accepted to teach a written English course of my design through the direct exchange program between the OI and York University. I first heard of the exchange in the early years of my PhD and it stood out as a unique opportunity to gain experience as a lecturer in an international context. At York, PhD students and candidates are



given Teaching Assistantships as part of their funding package. While these offer teaching experience, they do not allow you to craft, tailor, or execute the course yourself. Since Course Director positions are hard to come by, I saw the exchange as a chance to gain work experience and—I cannot lie—live in a beautiful city on the Rhine River in wine country. Any fears I had about the transition to life in a new city and department were quickly calmed by Research Coordinator Christine Plicht, who was not only extremely welcoming but was invaluable in navigating the various bureaucracies involved in such a move.

My first year at the OI presented numerous opportunities to expand more than just my teaching profile. Amidst so many

excellent researchers and their inspiring scholarship, and under the wonderful guidance and vision of Prof. Dr. Alfred Hornung, I was able to work on and present the early stages of my dissertation research at both the Mainz and Germersheim JGU campuses. I also gave talks in fascinating classes taught by other exchange lecturers from the University of California (Davis) and the University of Mississippi, which, in turn, taught me invaluable lessons on intercultural collaboration and the embodiment of transnationalism. Since the OI also hosts several outstanding international scholars as Obama Fellows each year, I was fortunate enough to gain feedback on my dissertation project from Obama Fellow Prof. Hsuan L. Hsu (UC Davis). His input informed the trajectory of my dissertation project significantly.

Even though the duration of my original exchange position only covered one semester, the OI proved to foster further exciting teaching and research opportunities. In the spring, I was granted a Research Assistant post with Prof. Dr. Mita Banerjee that led to me securing a Mitacs Globalink Research Award. The funding from the award further supported my research in Mainz alongside Prof. Dr. Banerjee under the Center for Comparative Native and Indigenous Studies. Subsequently and nearing my intended return to Canada, the opportunity to stay and teach several courses as an exchange lecturer for the 2019-20 year materialized and I jumped

at the chance. Thanks to the OI's vibrant exchange program and partnerships with so many institutions and scholars in North America and beyond, I was offered a position that is usually reserved for a young scholar from the University of Mississippi. Since their candidate for 2019/20, sadly, had to cancel due to unforeseen personal circumstances, I was able to profit from the flexibility and pragmatism demonstrated by the OI's leadership in working tirelessly to fill this position with someone from another exchange partner on such short notice.

All of the above meant a formal leave of absence from my PhD, but the teaching experience I could gain in Mainz (which included both undergraduate and graduate classes in writing, cultural studies, and my own field: Indigenous literatures) would be invaluable. This second year afforded me more time to develop my teaching philosophy and pedagogy both in person and, given the pandemic, online. I also received further mentorship from wonderful faculty members and colleagues which has been irreplaceable. Whether I was researching with Prof. Dr. Banerjee and her team, or co-teaching with Dr. Sonja Georgi, the support and leadership of those I met enriched my time at the OI more than I can say. Fortunately, the relationships we built have grown into ongoing collaboration, which continues even though my stay in Germany had to come to an end. Prof. Dr. Banerjee and I have since begun work on an edited collection on cultures of citizenship

that continues to be an education for me as well as a means to keep up with my former colleagues.

Reflecting from my now daily work-from-home routine in Toronto where life is quiet and familiar, I feel a strong rush of gratitude all over again for my time at the Obama Institute and in Germany more broadly. Exchange opportunities like those I benefitted from can create networks and friendships that extend long after departure. It is my hope that the relationship between the Obama Institute and York is one that future students and faculty continue to take part in. The Riesling doesn't hurt, either!



# 2020-2021

at a Glance



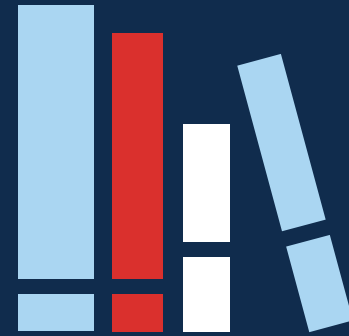
189

Bachelor, Master, and  
Phd Graduations



55

OI Faculty Members



54  
Publications



2

Locations in  
Mainz & Germersheim

4

Conferences



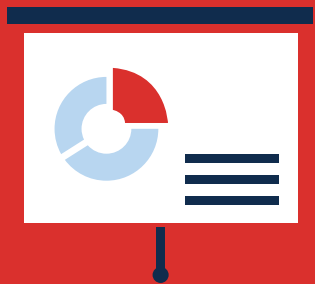
73

Guest Lectures



2079

Students

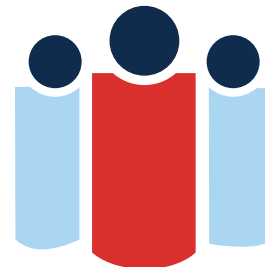
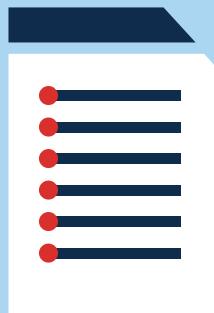


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Presentations Given  
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Different Study  
Programs Benefit from  
OI Course Offers



3

Habilitations

21

International  
Exchange  
Partners





## The Obama Institute

“ The Obama Institute aims to foster an understanding of the U.S. as a vibrant, complex culture in a changing world order, in which different visions of “Americanness” are taken up by communities across the globe.

Prof. Dr. Mita Banerjee

## Mission and History of the Obama Institute

The history of the Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies begins with the institution of the chair for American literature at Johannes Gutenberg University in 1952. After the establishment of the first professorship on the culture of North America in Germany at the University of Berlin in 1930, also in the service of providing useful information for the political regime, American authorities instituted positions at German universities for the study of the United States after the war in Munich and Erlangen-Nürnberg in 1946, and in Mainz in 1952. The choice of Mainz for the third chair of American Studies was certainly connected to the strong presence of American troops in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate in the Southwest of Germany with important air bases in Ramstein and Spangdahlem.

Mainz, the capital of Rhineland-Palatinate, and Wiesbaden, the capital of the state of Hesse across the Rhine River, used to have several barracks until the relocation of troops to the United States in the 1990s. Today there are still 18,500 troops stationed in Rhineland-Palatinate, and Wiesbaden-Erbenheim is the home of the Lucius D. Clay Garrison and became the Headquarters of United States Army Europe (USAREUR) in 2012. When the American troops left Camp Lindsey in Wiesbaden in 1993, they donated their extensive library with digital data bases to Johannes Gutenberg University where it

now forms the USA-Bibliothek in the Georg Forster Building, complementing the holdings of the departmental and university library. The cultural influences of this American presence transformed German society and animated the course of American Studies at Mainz. Hans Galinsky, the first chair and founder of American Studies, followed an all-inclusive and comprehensive approach to American literature and culture from the multi-language colonial beginnings to its modern expressions in the twentieth century with a link to an American language education in German *Gymnasiums*. His successors, Winfried Herget and Oliver Scheiding, as well as his professorial colleagues, Klaus Lubbers, Hans Helmcke, Renate von Bardeleben, and Frieder Busch, followed this path. Together with new professorial appointees, Alfred Hornung, Mita Banerjee, Jutta Ernst, and Axel Schäfer, they transformed the original one-chair basis over the years into a cooperative research platform with an international standing.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, the CHE (Centrum für Hochschulentwicklung) ranking recognized the quality of American studies at Mainz as one of the four research intensive fields of the University. In the research rating of English and American Studies in Germany, administered by the German Council of Science and Humanities in 2010-12, Mainz American Studies, together with the John

F. Kennedy Institute in Berlin, received the highest score in research excellence. In 2012, we also celebrated our 60-year anniversary and organized the Annual Convention of the German Association for American Studies on the topic of "American Lives," with Ambassador Philip Murphy of the U.S. Embassy in Berlin addressing the audience in the opening ceremony. In our talks, we introduced the idea to found an Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies. Both the eminent status of Mainz American Studies and the popular acclaim of the American President Barack Obama in Germany motivated us to pursue the formation of such an institute, similar to the John F. Kennedy Institute in Berlin, but with a different research agenda.

The re-election of the President and his political objectives coincided with major research and teaching goals of our American Studies program: the multi-ethnic constitution of the United States of America, interreligious communication, the importance of life writing, and the transnational dimension of American politics and culture. In addition to the idea of liberty and freedom, one of the major incentives for the foundation of the John F. Kennedy Institute, the proposed Obama Institute would be guided by the idea of diversity underlying the development of American society in the twenty-first century. This also includes research on the activities of his family members at home and abroad, such as Michelle Obama's concerns for health issues and nutrition, the welfare programs of the president's Luo sister Auma in Kenya, and the musical education of children in Chinese orphanages pursued by his Kenyan

brother Mark. The president of Johannes Gutenberg University, Georg Krausch, and the members of the University Council strongly supported the idea of the Obama Institute. To gain President Obama's permission for the Institute, Dr. Hans Friderichs, former Economic Affairs Minister and chairperson of the University Council, served as a liaison with Ambassador Philip Murphy and the White House. In the summer of 2013, the Embassy communicated to us that "President Obama would be pleased to have an Institute named after him." The general agreement was to plan the official inauguration of the Obama Institute after the second term of his presidency. In preparation of this event, we organized an international conference on "Obama and Transnational American Studies" in October 2014, in which Dr. Auma Obama participated as a keynote speaker relating aspects of her German academic education and presenting her Foundation Sauti Kuu, a self-help program for young people in Kenya. We also had to clear several administrative hurdles and get the agreement of the Department of English and Linguistics, the Faculty of Philosophy and Philology, the University Boards of the Senate and the University Council. President Krausch proved to be a great help and saw to it that the "Regulations of the 'Obama Institute' (OI) research platform" within the Department of English and Linguistics successfully passed all bodies and went into effect on December 16, 2016. The appendix lists the members of the Executive Board, Advisory Board Members, and Associate Members.

Alfred Hornung

## Obama Institute Bylaws

**Regulations of the "Obama Institute" (OI) research platform  
within the Department of English and Linguistics,  
Faculty of Philosophy and Philology  
(Resolution of the Faculty Council on November 30, 2016)**

### Preamble

"The Obama Institute (OI) researches the roles of the USA in a changing global world in the most diverse areas, including culture, history, literature, media, economics, religion, medicine, the arts, and music. The research undertaken by the OI is interdisciplinary and transnational and leads the way in the new definition of area studies and cultural studies in the 21st century. In doing so, the OI fills a gap in current research by no longer restricting American Studies to the national borders of the USA. The OI studies not only processes of cultural exchange, but also shifting relations of the most various kinds. Staff from different research groups are currently working collaboratively across disciplines, including scholars of Cultural and Literary Studies, Law, Geography, History, and Sociology."

### § 1 (Tasks)

The OI undertakes interdisciplinary and transnational research on the roles of the USA with the most diverse approaches, including how nation-states such as the USA are redefining themselves at the beginning of the 21st century, how the complex demands of global migration and refugee displacement contribute to new forms of social relations, and how communication – such as between indigenous groups and settler societies – can be opened.

### § 2 (Members)

The work in the areas outlined in § 1 is principally a prerequisite for membership in the OI. Founding members are those members of the Executive Board, Advisory Board, and Associate Members who are named in the appendix to these regulations. The Executive Board will decide on the acceptance of further members (§ 3).



**§ 3 (Executive Board)**

The Executive Board consists of professors from the teaching area American Studies in the Department of English and Linguistics, Faculty of Philosophy and Philology, and from the American Studies, British Studies, and Anglophone Studies divisions, Faculty of Translation Studies, Linguistics, and Cultural Studies.

**§ 4 (Tasks of the Executive Board)**

The Executive Board has the following tasks:

- Advising and deciding on basic matters concerning the OI
- Development of the conceptual direction and the research program
- Deciding the financial and personnel arrangements
- Electing the OI Director
- Advising and deciding on the acceptance and exclusion of OI members.

The Executive Board will meet at least twice per semester.

**§ 5 (Speaker)**

The Speaker of the OI is a member of the Executive Board and is elected by the other members of the Executive Board. The term of office will usually be one year. The Speaker's role will be assumed in rotation by the members of the Executive Board.

**§ 6 (Tasks of the Speaker)**

(1) The Speaker represents the OI externally. The rules of § 79, Subsection 1, No. 1 of the Higher Education Act und § 9, Subsection 1 of the organizational regulations of the Department of English and Linguistics are not affected. (2) The Speaker is responsible to the Executive Board. (3) The Speaker can, in urgent, pressing circumstances effect interim decisions on behalf of the Executive Board. The Executive Board must be informed immediately; the Board can annul the interim decision or measure as long as these were not legally required and third-party rights were not created as a result of the decision. (4) The Speaker shall inform all members of the Advisory Board and all Associate Members concerning the current projects of the OI.

**§ 7 (Advisory Board)**

The Advisory Board is formed of: representatives with American Studies expertise in Rhineland-Palatinate, the Atlantic Academy Rhineland-Palatinate e.V., as well as outstanding researchers in Germany and abroad.

**§ 8 (Tasks of the Advisory Board)**

Via (virtual) conferences once per semester, the Advisory Board advises on questions and issues relating to the research strategies of the national and international collaboration with the Executive Board members.

**§ 9 (Associate Members)**

The Associate Members are Mainz University scholars. They shall establish and ensure the interdisciplinary networking of the OI at JGU.

**§ 10 (Tasks of the Associate Members)**

Associate Members will be consulted on the basis of their research specializations as well as their expertise for advice in ongoing conversations and will work jointly with members of the Executive Board on the development of the research program.

**Appendix*****Executive Board Members***

Prof. Dr. Mita Banerjee  
Prof. Dr. Jutta Ernst  
Prof. Dr. Alfred Hornung  
Prof. Dr. Axel Schäfer  
Prof. Dr. Oliver Scheiding

***Advisory Board Members***

Prof. Dr. Martin Brückner (U of Delaware)  
Prof. Dr. Rita Charon (Columbia U)  
Prof. Dr. Shelley Fisher Fishkin (Stanford U)  
Prof. Dr. Paul Giles (U of Sydney)  
Prof. Dr. Craig Howes (U of Hawai'i)  
Prof. Dr. Gerd Hurm (U Trier)  
Prof. Dr. Ursula Lehmkuhl (U Trier)  
Prof. Dr. Greg Robinson (U du Québec)  
Dr. David Sirakov (Atlantic Academy Rhineland-Palatinate)  
Prof. Dr. Werner Sollors (Harvard U)  
Prof. Dr. Elizabeth West (Georgia State U)  
Prof. Dr. Charles Wilson (U of Mississippi)

Prof. Dr. Jürgen Wilzewski  
(TU Kaiserslautern)  
Prof. Dr. Zhang Longxi  
(City U of Hong Kong)

***Associate Members***

Prof. Dr. Manfred Beutel  
(Psychosomatic Medicine)  
Prof. Dr. Dieter Dörr (Law)  
Prof. Dr. Heike Drotbohm (Anthropology)  
Prof. Dr. Thomas Efferth  
(Pharmaceutical Biology)  
Prof. Dr. Anton Escher (Cultural Geography)  
Prof. Dr. Dagmar von Hoff (German)  
Prof. Dr. Friedemann Kreuder  
(Theater Studies)  
Prof. Dr. Matthias Krings (Anthropology)  
Prof. Dr. Franz Rothlauf (Economics)  
Prof. Dr. Michael Simon  
(Cultural Anthropology)

## Executive Board

The Executive Board has the following tasks:

- Advising and deciding on basic matters concerning the OI
- Development of the conceptual direction and the research program
- Deciding the financial and personnel arrangements
- Electing the OI Speaker
- Advising and deciding on the acceptance and exclusion of OI members.

The Executive Board will meet at least twice per semester. Its current members are:

### Prof. Dr. Mita Banerjee

Mita Banerjee is professor for American Studies, specializing in nineteenth- and twentieth-century American literature and culture, with a focus on Ethnic and Indigenous Studies. She is a co-founder of the Center of Comparative Native and Indigenous Studies (CCNIS) at JGU, and co-speaker of the research training group "Life Sciences – Life Writing: Boundary Experiences of Human Life between Biomedical Explanation and Lived Experience" funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). Banerjee is the author of, among others, *Race-ing the Century* (2005), *Color Me White: Naturalism/Naturalization in American Literature* (2013), and *Medical Humanities in American Studies* (2018).



### Prof. Dr. Jutta Ernst

As a professor of American Studies, Jutta Ernst is attached to JGU's Gernersheim campus. She is the author of *Edgar Allan Poe und die Poetik des Arabesken* (1996) as well as *Amerikanische Modernismen: Schreibweisen, Konzepte und zeitgenössische Periodika als Vermittlungsinstanzen* (2018). She has also overseen and co-edited various editions, including *The Canadian Mosaic in the Age of Transnationalism* (2010) and *Transkulturelle Dynamiken Aktanten – Prozesse – Theorien* (2015), and has authored a multitude of book chapters, encyclopedia entries, and academic articles.



### Prof. Dr. Alfred Hornung (Speaker)

A research professor of American Studies and English specializing in Transnational American Studies and Life Writing, Alfred Hornung is the speaker of the Obama Institute. He cooperated in the foundation of the Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies at Mainz as a forum of exchange with the universities of the state of Rhineland-Palatinate, the Atlantic Academy, and international partner universities. He is general editor of *American Studies: A Monograph Series* on behalf of the GAAS, editor in chief of the *Journal of Transnational American Studies*, and serves on the editorial boards of several other academic journals. Recent publications are *The Routledge Companion to Transnational American Studies* (2019) and *Al Capone: Der amerikanische Traum und das organisierte Verbrechen* (2021).



### Prof. Dr. Axel Schäfer

Axel Schäfer is professor of American History at the Obama Institute. His research centers on nineteenth and twentieth-century U.S. intellectual and cultural history with a focus on religion and politics, transatlantic social thought, and public policy. He is the author of *American Progressives and German Social Reform, 1875–1920: Social Ethics, Moral Control, and the Regulatory State in a Transatlantic Context* (2000), *Countercultural Conservatives: American Evangelicalism from the Postwar Revival to the New Christian Right* (2011), and *Piety and Public Funding: Evangelicals and the State in Modern America* (2012).



### Prof. Dr. Oliver Scheiding

Oliver Scheiding is professor of North American Literature and Early American Studies. His research focuses on magazine studies, short fiction studies, print culture and material culture studies. He is author of *Worlding America: A Transnational Anthology of Short Narratives before 1800* (Stanford UP, 2015), the monograph *The Early American Novel* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2003). He also co-edited *A Peculiar Mixture: German-Language Cultures and Identities in Eighteenth-Century North America* (Penn State UP, 2013). He is currently co-editing an introduction to magazine studies and working on a monograph titled "Print Technologies, and the Emergence of American Literature" (forthcoming with Wiley-Blackwell). He serves on the board of the American Literature Association and edited the journal *Amerikastudien – American Studies* on behalf of the German Association of American Studies (2011-2019). His research projects in the field of periodical studies have been funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) since 2009 (see GEPRIS).



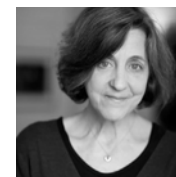
## Advisory Board

The Advisory Board is formed of representatives with American Studies expertise in Rhineland-Palatinate, the Atlantic Academy Rhineland-Palatinate e.V., as well as outstanding researchers in Germany and abroad. Via (virtual)

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(University of Delaware)



Prof. Dr. Rita Charon  
(Columbia University)



Prof. Dr. Shelley Fisher Fishkin  
(Stanford University)



Prof. Dr. Paul Giles  
(University of Sydney)



Prof. Dr. Craig Howes  
(University of Hawai'i)



Prof. Dr. Gerd Humm  
(Universität Trier)



Prof. Dr. Ursula Lehmkuhl  
(Universität Trier)



Prof. Dr. Jürgen Wilzewski  
(T Universität Kaiserslautern)



Prof. Dr. Greg Robinson  
(Université du Québec)



Dr. David Sirakov  
(Atlantische Akademie)



Prof. Dr. Werner Sollors  
(Harvard University)



Prof. Dr. Elizabeth West  
(Georgia State University)



Prof. Dr. Charles Wilson  
(University of Mississippi)



Prof. Dr. Zhang Longxi  
(City University of Hong Kong)

## Obama Fellowship

Through the Obama Fellowship program, the Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies invites outstanding international scholars to lecture and work at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. The Fellowship offers financial support, office space, and facilities for visiting scholars. Fellows spend a significant amount of time at the Obama Institute, usually between two and four weeks. They pursue their individual research, but are expected to participate in graduate teaching, as well as offer a public lecture and make themselves available to postgraduate students.

### Obama Fellows 2020-21

#### Cristina Stanciu

(Virginia Commonwealth University)

All other Fellowships have been postponed to 2022, when, hopefully, travel restrictions ease and in-person visits and research stays are possible again.

### Previous Fellows

#### 2019

**Ian Afflerbach** (U of North Georgia)

**Hsuan L. Hsu** (U of California, Davis)

**Richard King** (em., U of Nottingham)

**Walter Benn Michaels**

(U of Illinois at Chicago)

#### Mathias Nilges

(St. Francis Xavier U, Nova Scotia)

#### Elizabeth Tandy Shermer

(Loyola U, Chicago)

**David K. Thomson** (Sacred Heart U)

**Denise Uyehara** (Performance Artist)

**Elizabeth West** (Georgia State U)

#### 2018

**Celeste-Marie Bernier** (U of Edinburgh)

**Michael Boyden** (Uppsala U)

**Suzanne Ferriss**

(em., Nova Southeastern U)

**Mark Noonan** (CUNY)

**Markus Reisenleitner** (York U)

**Laura Stevens** (U of Tulsa)

#### 2017

**Craig Howes** (U of Hawai'i at Manoa)

**Michaela Hoenicke Moore** (U of Iowa)

**Nina Morgan** (Kennesaw State U)

#### 2016

**Patrick Erben** (U of West Georgia)

**Rebecca Harrison** (U of West Georgia)

**Sandy Isenstadt** (U of Delaware)

**Alan Lessoff** (Illinois State U)

**Charles Wilson** (U of Mississippi)

#### 2015

**Greg Robinson** (U du Québec)

**Martin Brückner** (U of Delaware)

**Shauna Morgan Kirlew** (Howard U)

## Obama Dissertation Prize

Each year, the Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies awards the Obama Dissertation Prize for outstanding Ph.D. work in the field of transnational American studies. The recipient will be announced in September. They will be invited to Mainz to present their dissertation project and receive their award as part of the talks taking place around the Obama Institute's annual Thanksgiving Obama Lecture.

Eligible for submission are dissertations completed at either a German or a foreign university in transnational American Studies and related fields, such as Early American Studies, Indigenous Studies, Life Writing, Ecology, Transnational History, Asian American/Pacific Studies, Material and Media Studies, Religious Studies, International Politics, and Economy. Unpublished manuscripts of dissertations, defended in the last two years, written in German or English, will be evaluated by an international panel to select the awardee.

### Awardee 2021

**Alessandra Magrin Haas**

(University of Strathclyde)

"The Wild West in Italy and in the Italian Imagination: Travel Writing, Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and Popular Culture"

### Awardees 2020

**Carlos A. Nugent**

(Yale University)

"Imagined Environments: Mediating Race and Nature in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands"

and **Hannah R. Waits**

(Harvard University | Ph.D. from University of California, Berkeley)

"The Missionary Majority: American Evangelicals and Power in a Postcolonial World"

### Previous Recipients 2015-19

See [obama-institute.com/opportunities/obama-dissertation-prize/](https://obama-institute.com/opportunities/obama-dissertation-prize/)



## Selected Awardees' Reports

**Carlos A. Nugent | Yale University  
(Literature)**

In January 1970, a ship full of moldy grapes set sail from Malmö to Hamburg. The ship had originated in Northern California, where the Mexican Americans and Filipino Americans of the United Farm Workers (UFW) were fighting for economic and environmental justice; the grapes had become moldy because a white UFW representative had sought solidarity with dockworkers in Britain, Norway, and Sweden. It is unclear whether this representative, Elaine Elinson, managed to connect with her counterparts in Hamburg; with the grapes becoming bitterer by the day, it is unclear whether she even felt the need to try. [As ever, the archives of socio-ecological struggle do not contain every last answer.](#) However, by connecting the U.S.–Mexico borderlands to European heartlands, these archives are animated with the sort of multilingual, multiethnic, and multinational ties that animate the Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies—the sort ties that make me honored to receive one of this year's dissertation awards.

Titled *Imagined Environments: Mediating Race and Nature in the U.S.–Mexico Borderlands*, my dissertation explores human and more-than-human communities that the U.S. has held since its war against



Mexico. With a multiethnic and multilingual approach to literary studies, it engages with novelists like Willa Cather, essayists like Fabiola Cabeza de Baca, and activists like César Chávez. Meanwhile, through archival research, it examines promoters who encouraged whites to claim homesteads, periodistas who emboldened Latinxs to protect pueblos, and leaders who helped Natives fight for sovereignty. By following these figures through the borderlands, my dissertation recovers a range of imagined environments—my term for the frameworks through which human groups have represented, related to, and resided in their more-than-human worlds. While many of these imagined environments have come to seem normal and even natural, I

argue that they have functioned as sites of relational racialization; in my first chapter, I explain why Latinidad has taken shape through land loss, and in my second chapter, I show how whiteness has co-evolved with western water infrastructures. Through these interventions in comparative ethnic studies, I chart a new course for ecocriticism, or environmental literary criticism. In my third chapter, for instance, I describe how literature has fueled environmental activism—how it has helped us love places we have never been and care for creatures we have never met. In my fourth chapter, by contrast, I argue that literature has entrenched environmental unconsciousness—that it has allowed us to disguise (or disregard) our use (and abuse) of the planet.

Like the moldy grapes that went from Malmö to Hamburg, my dissertation has travelled in several directions: in 2019–20, it received the annual award for best dissertation in the English Department at Yale University; in 2020–21, it became the basis for a book manuscript I am revising as part of the Mellon Fellowship of Scholars in the Humanities at Stanford University; finally, for 2021–22, it helped me receive a tenure-track appointment in English, American Studies, and Latinx Studies at Vanderbilt University. Among its many twists and turns, my dissertation wound its way to the online awards ceremony of the Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies. Presenting my dissertation was a thrill—I enjoyed thinking with scholars whose work I have admired for years, and I loved learning from the other prizewinner, the brilliant Hannah

R. Waits. But while the online ceremony was organized past the point of perfection, it could not compensate fully for the in-person interactions that I would have otherwise had with the members of this incredible community. In the future, I look forward to visiting Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, and to meeting several of my colleagues in person. For now, though, I will think back to those moldy grapes: appearing in Chapter Four of my dissertation, they give me hope that U.S. Americans, Germans, and all other peoples can come together to survive on our increasingly perilous planet. Through transnational ties, may we begin to imagine forms of community in which we do not divide ourselves in such destructive ways!

**Hannah R. Waits | Harvard University  
(Ph.D. from University of California,  
Berkeley)**

In April 1979, colorful balloons floated through Giessen, Germany bearing stylized text that declared "I Found It!" / "Ich hab gefunden!" while splashy billboards repeated the slogan and urged readers to dial a hotline number to find out more. The people staffing those phone lines were American missionaries, ready to tell Germans how to convert to evangelical Protestantism. Giessen was the chosen site for the German launch of the Here's Life campaign, a mass international evangelism effort that American missionaries replicated in cities across Europe and around the world. Mapping the networks of these and other international missionary efforts by American evangelicals forms the core of my dissertation, and I am honored to have this research recognized with the Obama Dissertation Prize.

My dissertation, *The Missionary Majority: American Evangelicals and Power in a Postcolonial World*, demonstrates how millions of Americas have participated in global missionary work since the mid-20th century, what conflicts and clashes that missionary work created around the world, and how this global activism by Americans fed back into and shaped US society and politics. I rely on archival research by analyzing over 1,000 boxes of never-before-seen internal records from the largest US evangelical mission organizations, the world's biggest NGOs. I discovered that from



the 1940s-2000s, missionaries continually returned to the US and taught American evangelicals about a decolonizing and postcolonial world, thereby teaching white conservative Christians how to adapt to US society in the post-civil-rights era. Most of all, missionaries taught US evangelicals how to entrench racial hierarchies within a logic of inclusive and tolerant community, thereby creating the spiritual blueprint for colorblind racism in the US. I conclude that missionaries were the key intermediaries between the growing soft empire of American influence abroad and the conservative resurgence at home in the United States.

2020 reminded us about the power of international networks both physical and virtual, as we entered into a global pandemic

and transformed most of our lives into digital forms. Over the year I attended weddings, funerals, birthday parties, classes, faculty meetings, and conferences all from my desk at home. I was thrilled to receive the opportunity to present my dissertation research at the 2020 Obama Lecture, and since the lecture always occurs on Thanksgiving, I had the unique experience of attending the gathering virtually while the aromas of roasting turkey and baking pies wafted into my office from the kitchen. It was wonderful to learn from the Obama Board members about all of the exciting and generative work happening at the Institute, and I loved learning about the fantastic research completed by the other Obama Prize winner, Carlos Nugent. I only regret that we were not able to continue our conversations through in-person gatherings. I hope to visit Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz and meet with Obama Institute colleagues in the future!

## Hans Galinsky Memorial Prize

Prof. Dr. Hans Galinsky (1909–1991) was the founder and first chair of American Studies at Johannes Gutenberg University, which he held from 1952 to 1977. He established the field of American Studies in Mainz from a comprehensive and multilingual perspective, covering the literatures, languages and cultures from the colonial period to modern times in the twentieth century. His research became the basis for his dedication to teaching, which he considered an essential part of his engagement in the subject. In close cooperation with the Ministry of Education and teachers of English, he implemented an ambitious curriculum, including the use and practice of American English at *Gymnasiums* in Rhineland-Palatinate. In addition, he used his personal relations to American and Canadian colleagues to create the direct exchange program. His special area of interest was the colonial period, to which he also dedicated his post-retirement with a planned five-volume history of Colonial American literature, of which four have appeared (1991-2000).

He decreed in his will that he did not wish any flowers or wreaths for his grave. Instead, the money should be collected as the basis for a fund to be used to reward excellent work by undergraduate or graduate students in the field of Colonial

American literature, language, and culture. The money was put in a trust administered by the Hans Galinsky Memorial Prize committee, consisting originally of Hans Galinsky's successor, Prof. Dr. Winfried Herget, Dr. Karl Ortseifen, and Prof. Dr. Alfred Hornung. The committee agreed that all student papers and theses on any aspect from the beginning of the colonial era to the end of the Early Republic would qualify for submission. In more recent years, the members of the Executive Board of the Obama Institute have selected the awardees.

The Hans Galinsky Prize is awarded once a year to the winner and a runner-up at the annual Karl Dietz Memorial and Obama Thanksgiving Lecture.

### Recipient 2020

#### Jannis Buschky

"New England History Reconsidered" (Term Paper)

### Recipients 2021

#### Patrick Simon

"Toward a Puritan Chresis: Cotton Mather and Noah's Ark in America" (Master's Thesis)

#### Paula Alice Kapp

"The Exceptional Spiritual Autobiography of Samson Occom" (Term Paper)

## Prof. Dr. Gustav Blanke and Hilde Blanke Prize

Every year, the Prof. Dr. Gustav Blanke und Hilde Blanke-Stiftung awards cash prizes to promising junior scholars in American Studies at JGU's Gernersheim campus. Named after Univ.-Prof. Dr. Gustav H. Blanke, who headed the American Studies department in Gernersheim from 1967 to 1979, the Blanke Foundation was established by Blanke himself in 1999 on the occasion of his 85th birthday. Since then, it has given out annual awards to junior scholars (M.A. and doctoral students as well as post-docs) whose individual research projects reflect the goals and the spirit of Blanke's life work: examining the beginnings, the development, and the global impact of the United States of America as well as documenting the efforts of the U.S. to strengthen relations among the nations.

After Blanke's death in 2001, the name of his wife was added to the official name of the foundation, yet its goal has remained unchanged. The foundation's board, which selects the winners of the awards, consists of the JGU Chancellor, the Dean of FB 06, former and current members of the American Studies faculty in Gernersheim, as well as the former mayor of the city of Gernersheim.

### Recipients 2020

#### Ronja Denker

"These People Are Cursed: Family Structures, Gender Representation, and Traumatic Experiences in David Robert Mitchell's *It Follows*, Robert Eggers's *The Witch*, and Ari Aster's *Hereditary*"

#### Jonas Riede

"Political Framing bei Fox News: Analyse der Klima- und Migrationsdebatte während der Präsidentschaft von Donald Trump"

### Recipient 2021

#### Tatjana Neubauer

"The Mediatization of the O.J. Simpson Trial: From Reality Television to Filmic Adaptation"

## Obama Lectures

Each year, the Obama Institute holds two special lecture events, which take place around the time of two of the most important U.S. holidays. The guest lectures, talks, and student presentations at these events demonstrate the broad scope and the vibrancy of our scholarly engagement with U.S. history, literature, and culture.

### 4th of July Obama Lecture

In the summer, we invite a keynote speaker to give a lecture on a topic related to our work in Transnational American Studies. In 2020, Prof. Richard King, American Studies historian at the University of Nottingham spoke on "Loyalty, Patriotism, and Nationalism in Times of Crisis". In 2021, Prof. Glenn Eskew, American historian at our exchange partner Georgia State University in Atlanta, gave a lecture on "The Ongoing Ideological Struggle: 'To Redeem the Soul of America' and the World". Our guests spark lively discussions with students, faculty, and Obama Fellows, before the 4th of July fireworks set the stage for further celebration.

### Thanksgiving Obama Lecture

On Thanksgiving, we also give thanks and award the Obama Dissertation prize and other awards to outstanding (graduate) students for their contributions to our field. In addition, a keynote speaker presents excerpts of their work and a glimpse into current developments in American Studies research.

## Offices, Awards, and Placements

### Offices

#### Prof. Dr. Mita Banerjee

- Deputy Director of the Johannes Gutenberg University Gutenberg Research Council.

### Awards

#### Prof. Dr. Alfred Hornung

- Honorary Chair, Professor of Shandong University in Jinan, China to pursue his work on Confucius and America
- Super Global Professorship of Keio University, Tokyo, Japan

#### Tatjana Neubauer, M.A.

- Fulbright Dissertation Fellowship, six months at Columbia University, New York City, USA

#### Dr. habil. Pia Wiegink

- Best Article Award Amerikastudien/ American Studies
- Rob Kroes Award (European Association for American Studies) for the best unpublished manuscript in American studies by a European scholar for the year 2020

### Placements

#### Dr. Denijal Jęgić

- Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Department of Communication Arts at the Lebanese American University, Beirut

## Appointments

### Appointments

#### Dr. habil. Florian Freitag

- W2 Professor of American Studies at the University of Duisburg-Essen (two-year appointment)

#### PD Dr. Tim Lanzendörfer

- Heisenberg Fellow for Literary Theory, Literary Studies, and Literary Studies Education (Goethe University Frankfurt)

#### Dr. Nele Sawallisch

- 2020-21: Senior lecturer ("Akad. Rätin") at the chair of American Studies at KU Eichstätt-Ingolstadt
- 2021-: Assistant professor of American Literature ("Juniorprofessorin"; tenure track) at the University of Trier

#### Dr. Pia Wiegink

- 2019-21: Professor of American Studies at the University of Regensburg, Germany (substituting for Prof. Dr. Udo Hebel during the term of his presidency at the University of Regensburg)

#### Prof. Dr. Pia Wiegink (2021-)

- Professor of American Studies at the Cluster of Excellence "Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies" (University of Bonn)

#### Dr. Anita Wohlmann

- Associate Professor in the Department of the Study of Culture at the University of Southern Denmark in Odense





## Teaching at the OI in 2020-21

In our teaching at the Obama Institute, our goal is to involve our students in all projects of the institute. On the undergraduate level, we want to familiarize students with all aspects of American history and culture, from historical beginnings – Native American oral cultures and traditions as well as the beginning of Puritan settlement – to the present moment. Our courses are designed in such a way that they explore multiple media and genres (literature, short stories, films, comics, popular culture, political rhetoric, history of ideas) to

delve into the vibrancy of American cultural production both past and present. We invite our more advanced students to participate in current research projects at the Obama Institute through a variety of frameworks such as student conferences or internships. Moreover, we introduce new teaching and learning techniques into the American studies classroom, such as video presentations and mock trials, writing exercises and problem-based learning.

## Selected Teaching Projects

### Teaching Project and Exhibition Blätterwelten / Paperworlds

#### Exhibition:

**November 3, 2021 – January 28, 2022**

Main Campus Mainz, Schule des Sehens

**April-July 2022:** Campus Germersheim

Despite the continual digitization of print media, self-published zines and indie mags are experiencing a real boom worldwide. This development counters the widespread assumption that increasing online consumption is displacing magazine reading. On the contrary, independent magazines benefit greatly from the internet or influence digital media through creative print designs that emphasize their visual and haptic elements. They also set an example for commercial magazines, even serving as a benchmark for innovation.

This exhibition shows that indie mags serve as imaginative spaces and exhibition sites for society. In doing so, *Blätterwelten/*



*Paperworlds* gives us insights into an extremely material-rich and sometimes activist publishing practice. Conceived as a walk-by exhibition, it illustrates by way of example the four areas print & digital, language, cover, and time & everyday life.

Students of two seminars on journal research played a significant role in the selection of the exhibits, the exhibit descriptions, and the production of video-clips.

For the exhibition's digital material see:  
[www.transnationalperiodicalcultures.net/paperworlds-blatterwelten/](http://www.transnationalperiodicalcultures.net/paperworlds-blatterwelten/)

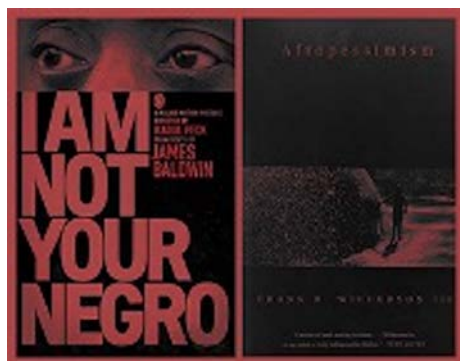




### Master Colloquium "Domesticating Stories: The Civil Rights Movement and Indigenous (Hi-)Stories"

The 2021 colloquium was student-organized. A group of American Studies graduate students had the opportunity to choose the colloquium's topics and texts. Lisa Brau-Weglinski, Jannis Buschky, Marina Rußkamp, and Susi Schank are graduate students of American Studies interested in new ways of approaching Indigenous and African American Studies. This resulted in the focus on the ways many often conflicting historical stories have been domesticated into a coherent narrative of U.S. history. With our syllabus, we aimed to challenge and obliterate this static and unilateral narrativization of the past.

Therefore, we selected a range of texts which engage Indigenous (hi-)stories and the Civil Rights Movement as a variety of subject matters and methodologies which fight for a place in our collective memories. Because we feel that this thematic grouping serves well as an umbrella for some of the most important fields we have studied during our time at the JGU, we assembled these texts, often separated in other seminars, to think about both their similarities and particularities. Each week, students responded to a focus question in the moodle forum and a moderator led the discussion rounds.



### GAAS Visiting Instructor/ DAAD Gastdozentur: Hugh Sheehy

Winter 2021/22

Prof. Hugh Sheehy (Ramapo College, NJ)

<http://www.hughsheehy.net/>

In the fall of 2021, the Obama Institute welcomed Professor Hugh Sheehy, author and Professor for Creative Writing and Literature at Ramapo College, NJ. Professor Sheehy spent the winter semester 2021/22 as a teaching fellow of the German Academic Exchange Service (GAAS/*Gastdozentur DAAD*) at Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz, where he offered seminars on the American short story as well as a creative writing workshop. His visit was sponsored by the German Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung*). Professor Sheehy offered our students a unique round of courses and workshops that allowed them to engage with American literature by approaching it from a maker's perspective. Damien B. Schlarb served as project coordinator for his visit.

Professor Sheehy is the author of several award-winning short stories and two forthcoming novels. His collection of stories, *The Invisibles* (University of Georgia Press, 2011), has won the 2012



Flannery O'Connor Award and has since been translated into French. His fiction has appeared in magazines such as *Five Points*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Glimmer Train*, *The Antioch Review*, *Crazyhorse*, and *Copper Nickel*, as well as in *The Best American Mystery Stories*. His critical work has been published in several outlets, including the *L.A. Review of Books*. He sits on the advisory board of the *Hong Kong Review*. In his teaching, Professor Sheehy focuses on creative writing of long- and short-form prose as well as poetry.



Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst  
German Academic Exchange Service



### Career Talk Series

#### "Young Researchers in Transnational American Studies"

##### 01: Journal Editing at the *Journal of Transnational American Studies*

On Tuesday, Dec 7, 2021, Professors Mita Banerjee and Alfred Hornung hosted the first event of a new series of career talks aimed at our students of American Studies. Each meeting is supposed to give insight into different fields of academic and non-academic trajectories, career paths, and workplaces that young people can expect or envision to pursue and set foot in after studying in programs such as American Studies at the Obama Institute.

During the first zoom meeting, four PhD students and Postdocs, who are associated with the Obama Institute, talked about their research and their editorial work for the *Journal of Transnational American Studies*. In 2021, the Obama Institute became the second editorial home of the journal, thus joining the team at Stanford University. Each of the four guests gave a short overview of their current research:

- Vanessa Evans (Toronto): "Transindigenous Literature and Social Justice"
- Sabine Kim (Glasgow): "Waste and Wealth: Indigenous People"
- Selina Lai-Henderson (Shanghai): "W.E.B. Du Bois in China"
- Aiko Takeuchi-Demirci (Istanbul): "The Birth Control Movement: Age and Gender"

**Career Talks**  
December 7, 2021  
2-4 p.m. (CET)  
Online on zoom  
<https://ui06web.zoom.us/j/88302349541>

**Young Researchers in Transnational American Studies**

**01 | Journal Editing at JTAS**

**New Career Talk Series**  
Please join us for the first event of our new Career Talk Series Young Researchers in Transnational American Studies.

On December 7, 2021, we will hear from four researchers who dedicate part of their work time to editing the *Journal of Transnational American Studies* (JTAS). JTAS has two editorial homes – one at Stanford University and the other at JGU's Obama Institute – and the team behind it works from all over the world.

Let's hear about what challenges arise when editing an academic journal and what opportunities the work can hold for young researchers!

**Professor Alfred Hornung and Professor Mita Banerjee** will host this event. If you have further questions about the event, please contact Christine Picht ([cpicht@guim-mainz.de](mailto:cpicht@guim-mainz.de)).

**Vanessa Evans, M.Litt.**  
York University, Toronto, Canada

**Dr. Sabine Kim**  
Obama Institute Associate

**Dr. Selina Lai-Henderson**  
Duke Kunshan University, China

**Dr. Aiko Takeuchi-Demirci**  
Stanford University, USA

[www.obama-institute.com/news](http://www.obama-institute.com/news)

Later, they took questions and discussed with the audience their careers, challenges, experiences, and their envisioned paths for the future.

The Obama Institute is planning to continue this series in 2022 with two more events, one of which will invite alumnae/-i who now work in non-academic enterprises and businesses.

### Schreibsommer 2020 = 1. Digital Summer Writing Program at JGU

For the second year in a row Damien Schlarb hosted the workshop "Academic Writing in English" as part of a university-wide summer writing program ("Schreibsommer"; funded by JGU's *Zentrum für Qualitätssicherung* and their L.O.B. (Lehren - Organisieren - Beraten) learning platforms; backed and certified by the German *Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung*). Given the particular challenges of the initial digital semester, the organizers adapted their course offerings and redoubled their efforts to support students in their efforts to become more proficient academic writers through a series of workshops, events, and individual coaching that would fit their schedule and match current writing projects. This year, the summer program was also part of a larger, strategic effort of preserving and strengthening learning communities across campus in times of quarantine and isolated learning experiences.

Damien Schlarb headed the Obama Institute's contribution to this program. His workshop, which was held in English, addressed academic writing as a process: the group discussed how to write to connect to others, how to attend to generic and disciplinary conventions, and how to give, receive and implement feedback. The course addressed writing from a humanities perspective, focusing on genres such as abstracts, personal statements, and argumentative research essays. Participants brought their current writing

projects and proceeded in two phases: First, they discussed globally the conventions and strategies associated with academic writing. They talked about managing time, generating valid research questions, formulating thesis statements, performing research, analyzing text, composing prose, positioning their argument in relation to that of others, receiving feedback, and the painful task of revising their own writing. In phase two, students broke into smaller work groups and began implementing these strategies. Using their own work, they not only gained insights into what it means to implement strategies and comply with assignments, but they also discussed which tactics to apply when life happens and these strategies fail. The workshop closed out with a peer review round that discussed short, sample paragraphs from current writing projects that the groups had established.





## Teaching at Germersheim

Teaching American Studies at JGU's Germersheim campus draws on the various research projects currently conducted by the faculty members and simultaneously reflects the department's focus on educating translators and interpreters. Students learn the necessary tools to translate a variety of American texts from different fields and sectors into German (e.g., literary, legal, economic, and medical, among others) and are provided with the crucial cultural and literary competencies to transfer the culturally specific ideas and concepts these texts draw on.

Seminars and lectures in American Studies cover a wide range of topics and genres: e.g., Jutta Ernst, "Mobile America"; "American Literature and Culture I: Beginnings to 1865"; "Magazines and Avant-Garde Cultures"; Michael Lörch, "Apocalypse in American Literature and Culture"; "American Fascism: Then and Now"; Sabina Matter-Seibel, "'Mixed race or mixed up?': Multiracial Identities in the United States"; Ines Veauthier, "The Perks and Perils of Stereotypes in American Literature and Culture"; "Bossy Barbie: Conflicting Images of Women in American Literature"; Tatjana Neubauer, "This Is What It Means to Say Phoenix, Arizona: Reservation Life and Identity in Sherman Alexie's The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven and Smoke Signals". Due to our special focus

on Canadian Studies, many classes take an explicitly comparative North American perspective (Sabina Matter-Seibel, "Asian North America: Diversity, Language, and Translation (USA and Canada)"; Klaus Schmidt, "Studies in Comparative North American Literature II: Specters of American Fascism in U.S. and Canadian Literature and Film").

Our faculty members also adapt interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and collaborate on joint projects (e.g., Jutta Ernst and Alison Martin, "Exhibiting Magazines: Curation and Translation").

On Monday evenings, students are invited to join the Research Colloquium in North American Studies to discuss their current research projects and any concomitant issues or questions.

American Studies classes at JGU's Germersheim campus are part of the following programs:

### **B.A. Sprache, Kultur, Translation**

(Language, Culture, Translation)

### **M.A. Translation**

### **M.A. Konferenzdolmetschen**

(Conference Interpreting)

**The Germersheim faculty graduated 17 B.A. and 18 M.A. students in 2020 and 22 B.A. and 18 M.A. students in 2021.**

## Bachelor of Arts in American Studies (Mainz)

The Bachelor's Program of American Studies offers a wide range of courses. In six semesters, students immerse themselves in the central fields of American literature, culture, history, language, and media.

### **The B.A. program is structured in two phases of introductory (GMK) and advanced modules (AMK):**

**GMK I:** Language and Communication

**GMK II:** American Studies

**GMK III:** Cultural Studies

**GMK IV:** Cultural Studies and Professional Orientation

**GMK V:** Culture, Media, and Literature

**AMK I:** Advanced Language and Communication

**AMK II:** Regional and Transnational American Studies

**AMK III:** Early American Literature and Culture: 16th–19th Century

**AMK IV:** American Literature and Culture from 1900 to the Present

The introductory modules (GMK I–III) will familiarize students with the basic methodologies and subject matter of American literary studies and American

cultural studies. In addition to expanding their proficiency in English, students will explore a broad range of literary texts and historical documents, as well as cultural artifacts from all eras of American history. In advanced cultural studies classes (GMK IV–V), students will study topics related to historical and current developments in American society, politics, culture, and media. In the course of the first two years of their studies, students will also become familiar with relevant methodologies for doing American Studies.

In the advanced courses of the Bachelor program students deepen their knowledge of American literature and culture in topical seminars and conclude their course of studies with a B.A. thesis on a topic of their choice.

**From the winter term of 2019/20 through to the summer term of 2021, the Obama Institute graduated 66 Bachelors of American Studies as well as nine Bachelors in the joint Mainz-Dijon American Studies program.**

## Master of Arts in American Studies (Mainz)

The American Studies Master's Program is designed to emphasize research-oriented perspectives on American language, literature, culture, and their theories. It builds upon the B.A. program in American Studies at Mainz University, but also welcomes applications of students from American Studies programs in Germany, Europe, and other parts of the world.

American Studies has seen a number of major changes in theory and practice in the last decade. Its traditional emphasis on the language, literature, and culture of the United States has been expanded both conceptually and methodologically. Reaching beyond the continental geographical focus of the United States, the more recent concept of Transnational American Studies includes new regions of language and literature, branching out into Atlantic, Caribbean, and Pacific Studies.

The Mainz M.A. program responds to these new developments and encourages students to explore the transnational dimensions of American Studies. The program offers a broad spectrum of courses and the opportunity to conduct research on American literature and culture from pre-colonial times to the 21st century with areas of specialization in comparative indigenous studies, early American studies, and transnational life writing. It maintains

long-established exchange programs and international cooperation with North American, European, and Chinese universities. The program also includes a special module on interdisciplinary studies allowing students to expand their research into cognate fields for a broad-based perspective on the Americas. The M.A. program especially emphasizes the need for students to experience the United States firsthand and is committed to offering students the possibility of studying at one of our partner universities in the United States, Canada, or China.

### The M.A. program consists of several modules:

**Modul 1:** Methodology

**Modul 2:** Early American Studies

**Modul 3:** Cultural Studies

**Modul 4:** Modern American Literature and Media

**Modul 5:** Advanced Research and Professional Orientation

**Modul 6:** Advanced American Literature and Media Studies

**Modul 7:** Advanced Interdisciplinary Research

**Modul 8:** Advanced Research and Thesis Preparation

Based on students' previous B.A. experience, modules 1–6 focus on cultural and literary studies in research-oriented courses. Students discuss methods, theories, and techniques of academic research. One of the central aims of the M.A. program is to introduce students to different forms of textual and cultural analysis and to involve them in current research projects.

In the second year, students engage in a larger guided research project that combines different historical, thematic, and methodological approaches. At the same time, the M.A. program enables students to further develop their own professional goals in orientation sessions geared towards a career outside or inside academia.

Study abroad is recommended for the second year and highlights the importance of an international training program for students seeking a Master's degree in American Studies.

**From the winter term of 2019/20 through to the summer term of 2021, the Obama Institute graduated 34 Masters of American Studies.**

## Ph.D. in American Studies

The institute hosts a vibrant Ph.D. program, bringing together scholars from Germany, the U.S., Canada, and China. In addition to the conventional topics of American Studies, our Ph.D. students specialize in life writing research, indigenous studies, early American studies, material culture studies, and transnational American histories. Our Ph.D. students benefit from our partner institutions as well as from the international Ph.D. programs we are associated with.

### Individual Doctoral Studies

Depending on their research interests, students contact one of our program's professors. After admitting the candidates, the professors serve as supervisor and mentor. The duration of an individual doctorate usually ranges from three to five years. Depending on the requirements of the project, funding is possible for a period of up to three years. This is provided by Stiftung Rheinland-Pfalz, Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes, DAAD or foundations such as Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, and others.

### DFG Research Training Group (2015/2) "Life Sciences–Life Writing"

In addition to individual doctoral study, candidates can also attain their doctorates in structured Ph.D. programs resembling those in Anglo-American countries. A team of supervisors is responsible for supervising doctoral candidates. The program offers a curriculum of accompanying courses which are interdisciplinary in focus and promote the acquisition of "soft skills" and additional qualifications. The systematic and intensive supervision offered in our program "Life Sciences – Life Writing" allows candidates to complete their doctoral studies within three to four years.

### Binational Ph.D. Mainz–Atlanta

For individual doctoral studies we offer a dual degree in American Studies jointly supported by Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and Georgia State University, Atlanta. The five-year program includes a mutual student exchange for 12 months as well as full integration in course work and teaching in the academic programs of both universities. The program is subsidized by both departments and is open to all graduate students who have earned a Master's degree in American Studies.

### Ph.D. candidates can also participate in the following exchange programs (10–12 months):

Columbia University, New York City  
(contact: Professors Banerjee and Hornung)

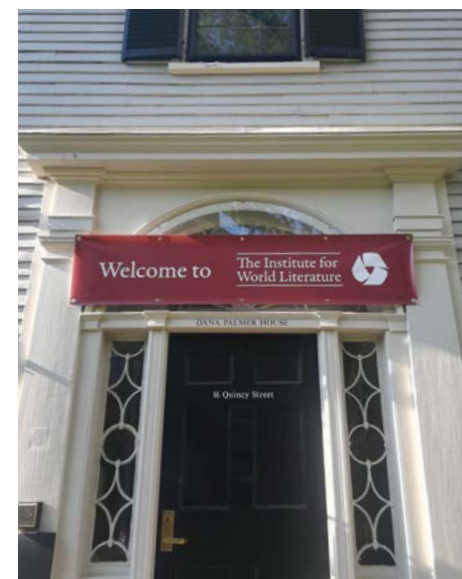
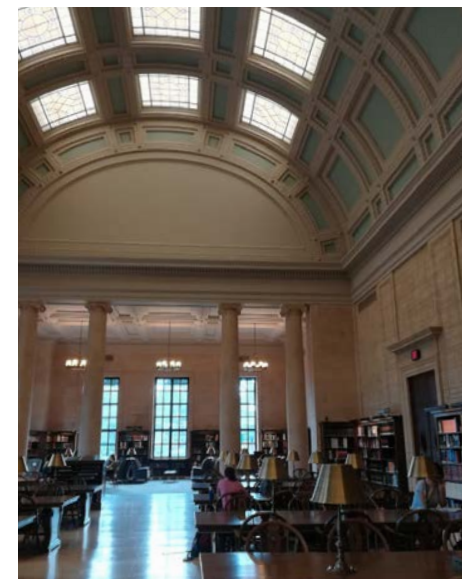
University of Mississippi, Oxford  
(contact: Professors Banerjee and Hornung)

University of California, Davis  
(contact: Professor Scheiding)

### Harvard University Institute for World Literature (IWL) Summer School

The Obama Institute is a member of Harvard University's annual IWL summer school program. This global program offers four weeks of coursework led by the world's most renowned literary scholars and hosted by different universities worldwide, alternating with Harvard University every third year. Through our membership, we can offer up to two PhD students the amazing opportunity to join an international group of young scholars for a short but intensive term abroad.

In 2020, due to the pandemic, our PhD students participated in an online event instead of going to Belgrade University, Serbia. In 2021 the Obama Institute was looking forward to hosting the IWL in Mainz. Sadly, the event had to take place online once more, but we are keeping our fingers



## Study Abroad

The Obama Institute offers its students a wide variety of ways to go abroad during their studies, whether in the B.A., M.A., B.Ed., or M.Ed. programs, as well as as part of our Ph.D. training. We actively promote our students' applications to national funding programs such as those run by the German Academic Exchange Service and the Fulbright Commission, and regularly place our students in those programs, and we participate in the European ERASMUS scheme. But beyond that, the Obama Institute also offers a number of unique opportunities to go abroad that are based on the initiative of the institute's professors and teaching staff. With the Mainz Direct Exchange program, which annually sends nearly twenty students from all levels of our teaching program abroad to study at selected universities in the United States and Canada, the Obama Institute offers one of the most exciting exchange opportunities in American Studies. In addition, the annual Summer School, which takes a group of students on a research trip through the American South as part of their Culture Studies course work, regularly exposes students to what is to most a different and less-well known America.

The Middlebury College invites applications of Mainz American Studies graduate students to participate in the Bread Loaf School of English for an intensive six-week program from mid-June

to mid-August on its campuses of Bread Loaf in Vermont or Monterey in California. The participation of up to five students is graciously sponsored by the State of Rhineland-Palatinate. For more information consult [www.middlebury.edu/blse](http://www.middlebury.edu/blse).

We believe that the opportunity to study abroad is crucial to a successful education in a literature, history, and culture program, and even more so in a teaching program. It is not just about finding additional opportunities to speak the language you are learning, or to participate actively in the culture you are studying; it is also about learning about the different traditions of American Studies in other academic cultures. Therefore, our exchange programs are not limited to the United States, although that remains a natural focus. ERASMUS exchanges also lead our students to universities in Britain, France, Denmark, Poland, and other European countries, whose own traditions in the studies of the humanities are capable of rounding out the experience of studying American Studies in Germany.

### Direct Exchange Program

The Direct Exchange Program, established in 1956, is a unique opportunity for American Studies students at Mainz, connecting them directly with partner universities in the United States and Canada. The various exchange opportunities we offer—from

simple undergraduate studies with tuition waivers to teaching/research assistantships for graduate-level studies—enable students to experience the United States and Canada firsthand. Based on years of cooperation, the Direct Exchange Program is a tailored and competitive program. Currently, the institute offers direct exchanges with the following American and Canadian partner universities:

- Austin College, Sherman, Texas
- Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine
- Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario
- California State University, Chico, California
- Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts
- Columbia University, New York City, New York
- Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia
- Hood College, Frederick, Maryland
- Kansas University, Lawrence, Kansas
- Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont
- Mississippi College, Clinton, Mississippi
- Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops, British Columbia
- University of California, Davis, California
- University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky
- University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi
- Washington College, Chestertown, Maryland
- York University, Toronto, Ontario

At Germersheim, exchange opportunities exist with the following universities in the U.S. and Canada:

- Kent State University, Kent, Ohio
- Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont

- Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee
- Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois
- Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops, British Columbia

### Erasmus Exchange Program

The EU-funded ERASMUS program enables students to spend a semester or two at a different European university free of tuition, and pays a small monthly stipend. The Obama Institute's ERASMUS partner universities for student exchanges currently are:

- Universität Bern, Berne, Switzerland
- Université de Bourgogne, Dijon, France
- University of Brighton, Brighton, UK
- Université de Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland
- Universiteit Gent/Ghent University, Belgium
- Università degli Studi di Padova, Padua, Italy
- Uniwersytet Warszawski/University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland
- Universität Wien, Vienna, Austria

In addition, the Institute also has lecturers' exchanges with several universities:

- University of Warwick, Warwick, UK
- University of Kent, Canterbury, UK



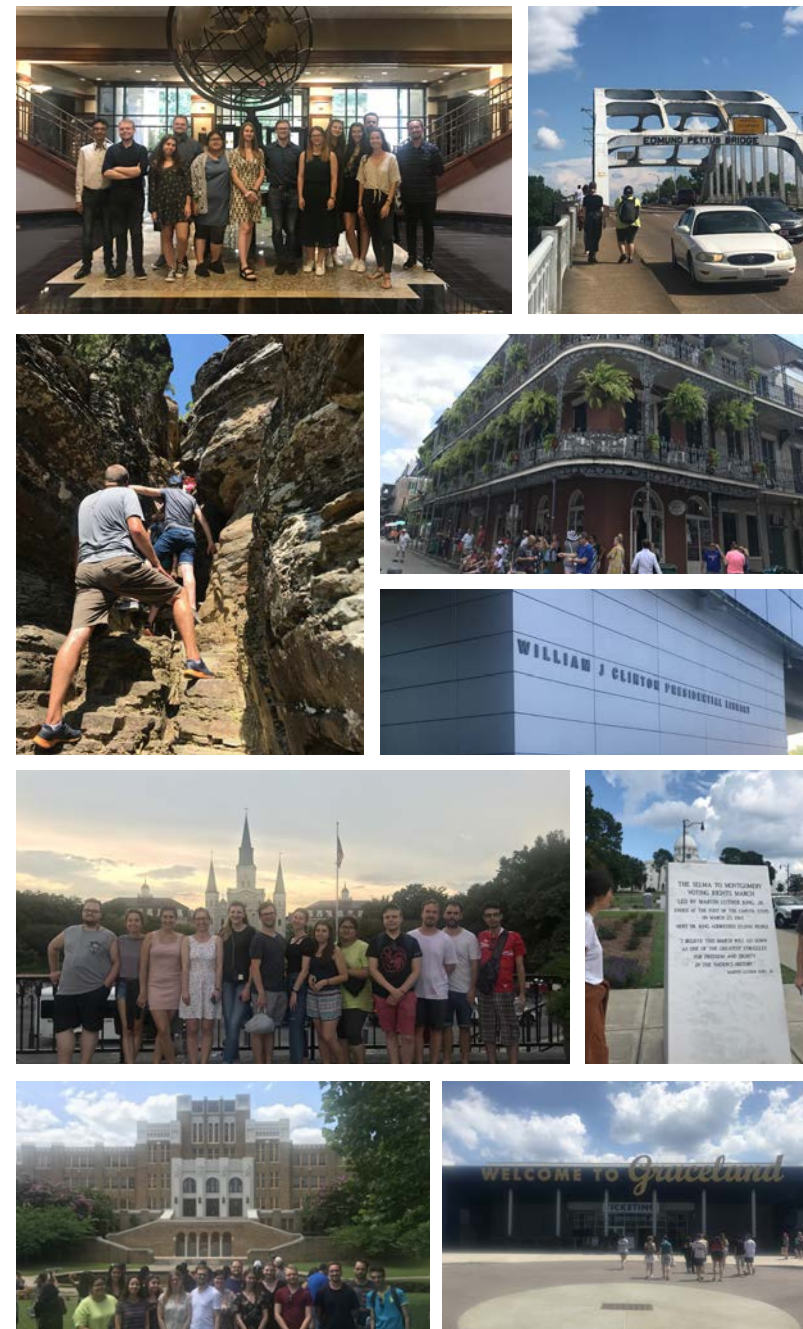
## Summer School 2020/2021

The American Studies Summer School has been an ongoing program at the Obama Institute since 2013. Established as a collaboration between Prof. Dr. Alfred Hornung at JGU and Dr. John Richard Duke, Jr., from Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas, the Summer School takes JGU students through the American South, exploring the African American Civil Rights Movement, Southern Literature and Culture, as well as Southern Food and Music. Participants travel through Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, and Tennessee, before finishing up the program in Washington, D.C.

Besides providing a unique on-site learning experience, the American Studies Summer School puts students in touch with local music, food, and people. As the program provides a unique learning experience, we were especially saddened to have had to cancel it for two years in a row, due to the pandemic. Although we were initially hopeful to be able to take up the program again in 2021, safety concerns led us to the decision to cancel it once more. The students who have been selected as participants will be given the chance of joining in 2022, if the situation allows for the trip to take place.

The American Studies Summer School is co-organized by Nina Heydt and Julia Velten. They selected sixteen outstanding students for their three-week adventure who very much hope that we can make the program happen in 2022. The planning and coordination of the summer school would not be possible without the outstanding work and support of Dr. John Richard Duke, Jr. who has been a reliable partner throughout the troubled times of the pandemic. It is through his ongoing commitment to this program, the Obama Institute, and our students that this program is such a unique academic but also social experience that we hope participants will get to enjoy again soon.

**Pictures on the right:** Impressions from the American Studies Summer School 2019







## Research at the OI in 2020-21

The Obama Institute is dedicated to transnational research into American history, literature, and culture. It builds upon the commitment of "traditional" American Studies to interdisciplinarity, but extends it to studying the entanglements of American histories with intercultural transfers across oceans, continents, and regions. Broadly speaking, the transnational project has two main dimensions. First, it offers a research perspective that, while still regarding the state

as a significant actor, examines circulations, interactions, and connections beyond the nation-state. This involves the study of the movement of peoples, ideas, technologies, literatures, and institutions across national boundaries. Second, anchored in a postmodern and postcolonial outlook, transnationalism seeks to "dis-integrate" U.S. history and culture. This includes exploring all forms of diversity and inclusion implicit in American national narratives. Transnationalism's focus





on connections and circulations thus seeks to give voice to those who are not represented by nation-states. Based on this understanding the Obama Institute sees itself as a meeting place and a research space for transnational American Studies. It maintains one of the strongest American Studies research programs in German-speaking countries. It offers full coverage of research into the history, literature, and culture of the United States, from the colonial period to the 21st century, including issues of translation and adaptation.

Our research areas highlight the Institute's wide range of activities. Early American Studies, which includes DFG-funded research projects on American periodicals and magazine fiction, promotes research projects that explore the textual and material grounds on which the many cultures – both Western and Non-Western – meet in the Atlantic and Pacific worlds. The Center for Comparative Native and Indigenous Studies is designed as a platform to bring together scholars and students who work on Indigenous issues in a global context. The research training group "Life Writing/Life Sciences" explores the narrative practices that underlie explanations and models derived from both empirical data and social experiences. Projects in Political and Intellectual History focus on topics such as migration and social policy, transnational social thought and politics, and nationalism and internationalism in American society. Research on Religion and American Culture explores the global history of American evangelicalism and the

relationship between religion and politics, as well as religion and media. Material Culture Studies is a research initiative that connects the Institute to other disciplines, such as book history, art history, and sociology. And the collaborative research project Transnational Periodical Cultures contributes to the burgeoning field of periodical studies, exploring magazines, newspapers, and other forms of serialized mass media in transnational contexts.

In addition, Obama Institute scholars are part of the research cluster Georg Forster Forum (before: SoCuM – Social and Cultural Studies Mainz), which facilitates the interdisciplinary cooperation between social sciences and culture studies via research groups, conferences, international guest lectures, and doctoral dissertation grants.

The Obama Institute also cooperates with the Medical School and American Studies at Columbia University, New York in Narrative Medicine programs and the creation of a Medical Humanities research platform. The Obama Institute sees itself as a node connecting scholars in American Studies and beyond. It invites the cooperation of scholars throughout the international academic community who are interested in manifestations of transnationalism in a multiplicity of contexts.

In 2019, the Obama Institute received a research grant on the topic of "Disruption and Democracy in America: Challenges and Potentials of Transcultural and Transnational Formations" that will support our research until 2023.

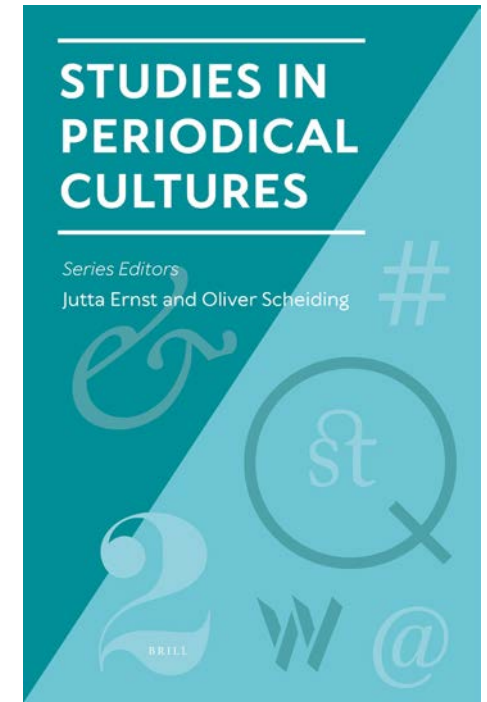
## (Online) Conferences

### Transnational Periodical Cultures: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

January 29-31, 2020

Organized by Jutta Ernst and  
Oliver Scheiding

In recent years, periodical studies has developed into a burgeoning field of research, not least thanks to major digitization initiatives which have enabled researchers to engage in close and distant readings. Qualitative and quantitative approaches have emerged, helping to transform periodical studies into an autonomous discipline, but also raising many questions about how to read and handle the massive output of periodicals since the eighteenth century or how to grasp the specific aesthetic and cultural dimensions of the medium. Currently, periodical studies seem to privilege historical readings focusing on certain periods (i.e. Victorianism or modernism) and specific magazine genres (i.e. little magazines, illustrated weeklies). Contemporary developments in the periodical market such as the resurgence of independent magazines and related global creative communities, which pose new questions and call for innovative approaches that exceed traditional analyses of content, editorial, and seriality, have still hitherto



been largely ignored. A widening gap in the field of periodical studies is thus emerging between scholarship and practice, which the conference organizers sought to bridge by, first, inviting contributions from the broadest possible timeframe, second, by initiating a truly interdisciplinary dialogue, and, third, by integrating current editors and other present-day practitioners into the research questions examined.

Promoting a "relational turn" in periodical studies, "Transnational Periodical Cultures: Interdisciplinary Perspectives" addressed a number of problems that concern what we propose calling 'periodicity,' i.e., magazines, newspapers, and other forms of serialized print media, examined in conjunction with both their affordances as material objects and their agency in the context of transnational production, distribution, and reception, thus including periodical-organized events, blogs, cooperations with concept stores as well as multifarious readerly and social practices. In addition to comparing both past and present developments, this conference strove to reassess periodical studies by linking it to linguistics, literary and cultural studies, translation studies, journalism and communication studies, economics, social media studies, design studies, archival studies, history of the book and print culture studies, art history, fashion studies, sociology, ethnic studies, and political science.

For the full program, please visit:

<http://www.transnationalperiodicalcultures.net/conference-program-transnational-periodical-cultures-interdisciplinary-perspectives/>

Sponsored by: DFG, JGU, ZIS

## Labor and Capital in U.S. History

### Annual Meeting of the Historians in the German Association of American Studies (DGfA/GAAS)

**February 26, 2021**

Organized by Axel R. Schäfer, Anja-Maria Bassimir, and Torsten Kathke

Due to the pandemic, the regular annual meeting of the historians in the German Association of American Studies was postponed and a one-day online meeting held instead. Organized by Axel Schäfer, Anja-Maria Bassimir, and Torsten Kathke, the online conference featured keynote presentations by Julie Greene (University of Maryland) on "Workers of the World: U.S. Empire, Class, and Capitalism," and Eileen Boris (University of California, Santa Barbara) on "Neither Free Nor Slave: Migrant Domestic Workers, The Employment Agency, and Reproductive Labor Under Capitalism." Further, an online business meeting was held during which the DGfA/GAAS performed a test of the voting software used for the election of officers during the DGfA's general meeting a few weeks later.

For 2022, the Mainz organizing team initially pursued a regular, in-person meeting of the historians in the German Association of American Studies. Considering the shifting circumstances of the ongoing pandemic, that conference's call for papers for 2022 was subsequently changed to anticipate



a hybrid format. This will allow for a full slate of panels and discussions but with minimal in-person contact to mitigate health risks. The 2022 conference will feature keynotes by David Roediger (The University of Kansas) "Is the US a Middle Class Nation? Past and Present" and by Elizabeth Faue (Wayne State University) "Fighting for It Under a Different Name": Collaboration and Conflict, Labor and the New Social Movements."



## Immersion and Video Games Speaker Series

**December 2021 – February 2022**

Organized by Damien Schlarb  
playing.uni-mainz.de

This transdisciplinary speaker series explored the conceptual value of immersion for the study of video games in the humanities and the social sciences. It brought together international scholars, thinkers, and makers, who approached the concept from various academic traditions, including English, Philosophy, Communication Studies, and Computer Science. The concept of immersion in the context of video games points to larger questions underpinning contemporary discussions about social cohesion, community, leisure, creativity, work, and education. Yet the moral valence of immersion remains ambivalent: Concerns about the detrimental effects violent games or games with addictive gambling mechanics, for instance, become juxtaposed with utopian visions in which games function as panacea to societal problems. The speakers in this series pondered questions such as, What is the conceptual structure of immersion? Does the term "immersion" hold explanatory value? Can new thinking be inspired by compelling, immersive games? Can the aesthetic experiences of one's own agency in games be meaningful? Funding and additional support for the speaker series were provided by the Research Center



of Social and Cultural Studies in Mainz (SoCuM) and its transdisciplinary youth research group "Immersive Spaces."

### Speakers

Christopher Thi Nguyen (Assist. Prof. Philosophy, University of Utah) – Games and the Art of Agency" (09.12.2021)  
Noah Wardrip-Fruin (Prof. of Computational Media at the University of California Santa Cruz) – "Playable Logics and Immersion" (13.01.2022)  
Melanie Fritsch (Jun.-Prof. Media Studies, Heinrich Heine University, Düsseldorf) – "Music and Immersion in Video Games" (21.01.2022)  
Timothy Welsh (Assist. Prof. English, Loyola University, New Orleans) – "Metaverse, Metafiction" (27.01.2022)  
Sarah Thorne (Assist. Prof. of Communication Studies, Newfoundland and Labrador's University) – "Immersion & Interactivity in Games" (04.02.2022)  
Gordon Calleja (Assoc. Prof. Institute of Digital Games, University of Malta) – "Immersion, Incorporation, Play" 09.-11.02.2022 (Campus Visit)

**SoCuM**  
Research Center of Social and Cultural Studies Mainz

## The Status of American Democracy Lecture Series

**December 10, 2021**

Organized by Alfred Hornung

The Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies organizes a lecture series by internationally renowned fellows of the Obama Institute and eminent critics of current crises and challenges of democracy as visible in the United States of America and elsewhere. For long, American democracy has served as an exemplary model for the introduction and practice of democratic principles which have inspired and determined transnationally the growth of nations. Germany is certainly one of the prime examples.

In his publications, Barack Obama has repeatedly addressed issues of democracy in crisis and questioned for whom democracy works at home and abroad. „And so the world watches America ... to see if our experiment in democracy can work" and he continues to believe „in the possibility of America—not just for the sake of future generations of Americans but for all of humankind" (A Promised Land).

After a welcome and an introduction by Alfred Hornung, OI Executive Board members Jutta Ernst, Mita Banerjee, and Axel Schäfer introduced the following guest speakers:



### Moustafa Bayoumi

(Brooklyn College, City University of New York)

"That's the thing about the Americans. They'll believe anything but the truth.: What reading Guantánamo Bay Literature Can Tell Us About the Future of American Democracy"

### David Sirakov

(Atlantic Academy Rheinland-Pfalz)

"The Populist Moment: Populism and Polarization in the US"

### Sean M. Theriault

(The University of Texas at Austin)

"American Politics and the Midterm Elections 2022"

### Chad E. Seales

(The University of Texas at Austin)

"The System Will Not Be Labeled: Industrial Food and American Democracy"

## Selected Research Projects

**Humandifferenzierung**  
(DFG Sonderforschungsbereich/  
Collaborative Research Center)  
Johannes Gutenberg University and  
Leibniz Institute for European History, Mainz  
(SFB 1482/1; First Funding Period: 2021-25)



In terms of our research, the Obama Institute is proud to report a major success. The German Research Foundation (DFG) has approved the establishment of a new Collaborative Research Center (SFB) "Categories of Human Differentiation" in the social and cultural sciences at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (JGU) and the Leibniz Institute for European History Mainz (IEG)—and Mita Banerjee, Oliver Scheiding and Axel R. Schäfer are principal investigators within this cluster.

The SFB addresses an elementary phenomenon: that people continuously categorize themselves and others. Human differentiation means first the external differentiation of humans from animals and artifacts such as robots, then the division of people into categories and groups such as ethnicities, nations, linguistic and religious communities, and finally the internal social

differentiation based on characteristics such as age, gender, disability or performance.

The results of human differentiation usually appear in public discourses as given characteristics of people. In contrast, the SFB aims to raise awareness of the fact that people and social groups only acquire their characteristics by being differentiated in social practices. The research focus is on the question of how historical and contemporary societies categorize and spatially separate their members, thus making them "others" to each other and suggesting social affiliations and identities to them. The goal is to develop a general theory of human differentiation that determines its sociocultural functions.

The SFB thus seeks to bring together a specialized and separated variety of research branches on the categorization of humans in a new overarching field

"Studies in Human Categorization". This will no longer focus on individual distinctions—such as those based on gender, ethnicity, or religion—as has been the case in the past. Instead, the interplay of the many different affiliations of people is in focus.

The 20 subprojects of the Collaborative Research Center take up central aspects of the overarching question in the three work areas "Bodies and Performances," "Mobility and Ordering Processes," and "Human Boundaries and Infrastructures." Because of the social significance of its research questions, the SFB includes a separate public relations project that aims to make its results accessible to non-academic audiences.

The SFB will be funded with a total of about 10 million euros for an initial period of four years. Researchers from sociology and ethnology, American studies and linguistics, theater, media culture and translation studies at the JGU, and history at the IEG are participating.

For further information on the SFB see:  
<https://humandifferenzierung.uni-mainz.de>

**SFB 1482 Humandifferenzierung  
(Studies in Human Categorization)**

Project A04

**Successful Aging: Best Agers at the  
Intersection between Differentiating  
Age and Achievement**

Principal Investigator: Mita Banerjee  
(Funding 2021-2025)

This project explores how human differentiations in terms of "age" and "performance/achievement" converge in current discourses on "successful aging". It discusses (self)representations of "successful aging" in different media in order to ascertain what effects the new choreography of "age-indifferent forms of aging" may have on normative constructions of age. On the one hand, extreme old age is connoted as positive in discourses of "best aging"; on the other hand, however, elderly high achievers may be seen as an implicit counter-narrative to "normal" aging, which is often associated with deficiency and disability.



**SFB 1482 Humandifferenzierung  
(Studies in Human Categorization)**

Project A06

**Curated Bodies: Aesthetics and Human  
Differentiation in Lifestyle Magazines**

Principal Investigator: Oliver Scheiding  
(Funding 2021-2025)

The research project focuses on lifestyle magazines as spaces proliferating images of bodies in the mass-medial performance of human differentiation. The performative processes of categorizing people are predicated on the media-specific aesthetics of genres in magazines and their materiality. Magazines are powerful medial infrastructures of cohesion and mediation circulating the societal dynamics of human differentiation and creating opportunities for readers to tentatively imagine and define body- and lifestyles, identities and communities. The project hence introduces the role of aesthetics into the mechanics of human differentiation.



## SFB 1482 Humandifferenzierung (Studies in Human Categorization)

Project B06

### Migration and Welfare States in the USA: Global and National Dynamics in Bureaucratic Human Differentiation

Principal Investigator: Axel R. Schäfer  
(Funding 2021-2025)

The project explores the genesis of categories of human differentiations as part of the consolidation and dissolution processes of modern statehood. Using the USA as an example, it examines the bureaucratic sorting of people in immigration and social policy between the World Wars. In particular, it studies the way social scientists, civic reformers, trade unionists, immigrant activists, government officials, and business lobbyists used their analysis of migration to formulate the knowledge base for the policies underlying the welfare state. The project's main interest is in the "master categories" of human differentiation these actors used in both policy arenas – such as ethnicity, race, gender and class, but also religion, profession, age, (dis)ability, health, or productivity. At the same time the project directs our attention to the global origins of modern forms of U.S. state building and political culture. This entails exploring how immigration regimes and social welfare states ushered in a reordering of the boundaries of inclusion/exclusion, principles of recognition/empathy, and systems of mutual care in the context of



the accelerating global flow of capital, commodities, and people, particularly since the late nineteenth century. The aim is to show how processes of human differentiation, nation-building and globalization have historically constitute each other.

## Periodicals and Indigenous Modernity: Building a Text Corpus of American Indian Newspapers and Magazines, 1890-1930

Oliver Scheiding  
(SCHE 1616/12-1; Funding 2020–2023)

This research project examines Native American periodicals and how they function as particular media formats to shape society and culture. Current research understands periodicals as serialized and aesthetic artifacts serving both as means of socialization and for establishing textual communities. Moreover, communication and media studies focus primarily on content, topic and the overall subject matter of periodicals. Scholarship tends to overlook, however, the indigenous periodicals' aesthetic and material dimensions to address questions of sovereignty and modernity. Despite the central role of periodicals as public institutions that fulfill social functions, innovations in print and public communication specific to indigenous periodicals have yet to be empirically and theoretically integrated into the fields of periodical studies and Native American studies. The project aims at differentiating Native American periodicals as aesthetic products and curated artifacts (i.e. the magazine as an experience not as a commodity), addressing questions of collaboration, interaction, and ethnic differentiation in a period of social and technological transition. The project



seeks to find out more about what makes Native American periodicals a powerful middle ground to affect the wider culture and mediate various types of indigenous modernity.

For more information and publications see:  
<https://indigenoussamericanperiodicals.uni-mainz.de>



### Life Sciences – Life Writing: Experiences at the Boundaries of Human Life between Biomedical Explanation and Lived Experience (DFG Research Training Group)

Mita Banerjee with Norbert Paul  
(GRK 2015; Funding 2014-2023)

From the twentieth century to the twenty-first century, the conditions of human life have changed dramatically due to political, socio-economic, ecological and cultural influences. Simultaneously, the interpretative models and spaces of action in medicine have shifted from observing and influencing biological processes towards the biological and technological shaping of health and disease. Examples are manifold: assisted reproduction, prenatal diagnostics, organ transplantation, longevity and dying – in all of these boundary experiences, the role of medicine has changed fundamentally and has influenced the ways in which we conceptualize and deal with human life. These developments have also resulted

in new approaches to explaining and understanding human life and life narratives in social and cultural studies (life writing).

The graduate program converges the areas of life sciences and life writing and sees them as complementary approaches to understand, explain and act in boundary experiences of human life. To achieve this convergence, joint concepts need to be established. The graduate program focuses on three research areas – corporeality, ability, temporality – which function as three conceptual spaces, within which biomedical explanations, literary and cultural analyses, and human experience interact. The interdisciplinary approaches are linked by narrative practices, which function as the conceptual and methodological background against which boundary experiences of human life are studied from diverse disciplinary angles, such as medicine, neonatology, psychotherapy, pharmaceutical biology, molecular biology, social sciences, cultural anthropology, history, philosophy, ethics, German studies and American studies.



**DFG** Deutsche  
Forschungsgemeinschaft

### Indigenous Modernity and Non-Fiction Writing: Native American Periodicals 1890-1920

Frank E. Newton  
(PhD researcher in DFG project SCHE  
1616/12-1)

This research project explores Native American periodicals and their particular material and cultural history between 1890 and the 1920s. It examines their material print arrangements (i.e. language, design, pictures, photographs, etc.) and how they function as vehicles to express an indigenous modernity. Current research understands periodicals as serialised and aesthetic artefacts serving both as means of socialisation and for establishing textual communities. Moreover, communication and media studies focus primarily on content, topic and the overall subject matter of periodicals. However, scholarship tends to overlook the indigenous periodicals' aesthetic and material dimensions to address questions of sovereignty and modernity. Despite the central role of periodicals as public institutions that fulfil social functions, innovations in print and public communication specific to indigenous periodicals have yet to be empirically and theoretically integrated into the fields of periodicals studies and Native American studies. The project aims at differentiating Native American periodicals as aesthetic products to address questions of collaborations,



interaction, and ethnic differentiation in a period of social and technological transition. As such, the project understands Native American periodicals as a highly influential middle ground to mediate different types of indigenous modernity. The project seeks to demonstrate how Native American periodicals—heavily saturated in language and images—use aesthetic styles to create an indigenous print media that is part of the global modernities.

The author received university funding from April 2019-2020 (Inneruniversitäre Forschungsförderung 1) and conducted archival research during May/June 2019 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania and Little Rock, Arkansas.

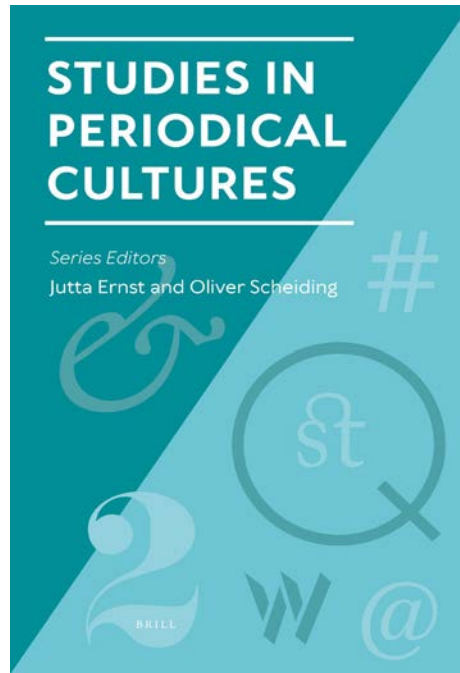
**DFG** Deutsche  
Forschungsgemeinschaft

## Transnational Periodical Cultures (Interdisciplinary Research Unit)

Oliver Scheiding and Jutta Ernst

The research group on *Transnational Periodical Cultures* (TPC) contributes to the burgeoning field of periodical studies, exploring magazines, newspapers, and other forms of serialized mass media in transnational contexts. TPC is intent on clarifying what role periodicals play not only as sites of affection, identification, and social differentiation, but also as aesthetic sources for the arts and literature, given the changing expectations of global media markets and their audiences since the eighteenth century. TPC serves as an interdisciplinary forum for organizing workshops, conferences as well as graduate and postgraduate research, bringing together students and international scholars from literary studies, media studies, book studies, journalism studies, sociology, translation studies, text design, archival studies, and digital humanities. The research group consists of senior and junior faculty members, PhD candidates, and graduate students working in the field of periodical studies.

For TPC's forthcoming book series *Studies in Periodical Cultures* (Brill) see:  
<https://brill.com/page/spc/forthcoming-series-studies-in-periodical-cultures>



For further TPC activities see:  
[www.transnationalperiodicalcultures.net](http://www.transnationalperiodicalcultures.net)

TPC has organized the following workshops in 2020 and 2021:

- Paper and Periodicals – Perspectives on Print Media** (December 2020)
- Beefcake: Male Bodies, Masculinity, and Community-Building in Pre-Stonewall Gay Magazines** (January 2021; with Prof. Dr. Florian Freitag, Universität Duisburg-Essen)
- Off the Radar: Periodical Print Media Outside Mainstream Culture, 1800 – Today** (Postgraduate Conference in Comparative Literature and Culture, January 2021)
- Magazines and Fashion** (April 2021)
- Postdigital Print** (November 2021)

## Selected Habilitations

Philipp Reisner  
**Faith in Verse:  
Biblical Presence in Contemporary  
Anglo-American Poetry**

Over the past decades, numerous American poets have found inspiration in the Bible, incorporating biblical motifs and language, and sometimes entire passages, into their poetry. *Faith in Verse* takes up this generally neglected topic. It examines, for the first time in a book-length study, the topic of biblical presence in contemporary Anglo-American poetry. It argues that an understanding of biblical presence is essential not only for interpreting this poetry, but also for appreciating the place of non-Abrahamic religious and spiritual traditions in literature more generally. The importance of the Bible for poetry has generally been overlooked because of the prevailing misconception that we are living in a secular age that could be understood entirely from the perspective of "culture."

At the heart of *Faith in Verse* is a careful analysis of recently published cycles and single poems by Brooks Haxton, Suji Kwock Kim, Kevin Hart, and Li-Young Lee. Chosen for their diversity in age, gender, faith, cultural and ethnic background, these poets each attribute in their own way a significant role to biblical text and



employ a wide range of textual strategies to seamlessly and subtly incorporate theological positions into their poems.

Their poetry is not characterized primarily by Christian devotionalism or general religious themes, or the expression of a vague spirituality or universal mysticism. Rather, their poems are profoundly theological. Investigating these works from the perspective of theology unearths surprising insights into their inspiration and structure, including different interpretations of central Judeo-Christian notions and biblical passages. Together, these poems

illustrate the vivid and diverse confessional landscape of contemporary American poetry.

*Faith in Verse* further asks how poetry as a literary medium may shed light on central theological claims, whether poetry itself may be seen as a form of theology, and which theological presuppositions underlie our understanding of modernity. *Faith in Verse* seeks to shed new light on the history of American modernity from the vantage point of the present and on how biblical presence has characterized the past four decades of contemporary American poetry and the history of Anglo-American poetry since Romanticism.

Beyond demonstrating the cultural relevance of contemporary poetry, the analyses and interpretations in *Faith in Verse* show that the contemporary moment cannot be understood as secular, but as a point in time within a continued process of sacralization undergirding culturalist and secularist conceptions of modernity.

Pia Wiegink

### **Reconfiguring the Nation? Transnationalism and Gender in American Abolitionist Literature**

In *Reconfiguring the Nation*, Pia Wiegink makes three interrelated claims: First, she argues that abolitionist literature, in its various forms, offered a cultural and political imaginary. Abolitionist literature was an important cultural medium, a testing ground to imagine and envision America as a multiracial, just, and democratic society. The monograph thus places the abolition of slavery center stage on the cultural and political map of antebellum America: *Reconfiguring the Nation* shows that abolitionist literature negotiated questions pertaining to American self-fashioning not in addition to, but *by means* of criticizing slavery. Abolitionist literature "mattered" not because it led to dissolution of the Union and to the Civil War, but because it provided a cultural test-ground for imagining America as a cosmopolitan, multiethnic, and equal society.

Second, abolitionist literature was strategically cosmopolitan and transnational. Although produced to criticize and abolish a national evil, when looked at more closely, abolitionist literature was often deeply embedded in specific transnational contexts and discourses. American abolitionist writers, she contends, made strategic use of public figures and international events, employing various transnational tropes to convince



their readers of the social, moral, political, and national necessity to abolish slavery as a universal moral wrong. While historians have begun to chart the transnational alliances between U.S. abolitionism and reform movements in other parts of the world, with regard to American antislavery literature, these entanglements have not yet been thoroughly explored.

Third, in light of the multifaceted transnational entanglements of American abolitionist literature, it is necessary to reassess the role of women—as producers, subjects, and recipients—of antislavery literature. Women writers were not just part of but main facilitators



of transnational American abolitionist literature. Accordingly, women's roles in the production, dissemination, and content of antislavery literature, as well as their roles as editors, authors, protagonists, correspondents, and translators need to be examined more closely. While scholars have emphasized the central position of women for the cause of abolition in the U.S. and as authors of antislavery literature, little attention has thus far been paid to the transnational political alliances and literary tropes that inform, in particular, women's contributions to the culture of abolition.

*Reconfiguring the Nation* thus complements existing research on antislavery literature in significant ways. It combines approaches derived from the fields of slavery studies, transnational American studies, periodical studies, feminist literary criticism, women's history, and ethnic studies. It reassesses and expands the canon of American abolitionist literature by bringing to the fore the multifaceted transnational entanglements of this genre, as well as women's pivotal role in creating and maintaining these entanglements. This reassessment results in a readjustment of common perceptions of the genre of American abolitionist literature, its authors, and its particular modes and spaces of dissemination and publication. Abolition, Pia Wiegink argues, was not a minor reform movement but the animating spirit which pressured the United States to further approximate its founding creed that all men (and women) are created equal. In abolitionist literature this moral

imperative was turned into a cultural and political imaginary of Americans as citizens of the world.

## Selected Dissertations

Mousa Z. Abu Haserah  
**Post-Orientalism and the  
Contemporary Novels**

Advised by Oliver Scheiding

My dissertation provides a scientific and academic contribution to the scientific exploration of the complex relationship between the Orient and the Occident in American literature. The individual chapters contain a literary text (a selected novel) that discusses and treats the topic of the dissertation: Post-Orientalism: The New East and Contemporary Novels. The four novels discussed and analyzed in the dissertation are *Mornings in Jenin* by Susan Abulhawa, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid, *Falling Man* by Don DeLillo, and *The Wind of Paradise* by Turki al-Hamad.

The study places itself at the center of Arab-American literature to discuss the situations and conditions of the New East. It treats the Orient as a moving body and takes Edward Said's *Orientalism* into account, treating the term 'Orientalism' as a moving body. In addition, this study shows Post-Orientalism or the New East as a literary phenomenon in the 21st century, specializing in politics, militarism, and post-colonial ideology. Indeed, Post-



Orientalism (as a generic term) responds to the current profound changes in the world order that have accumulated since the end of World War II. The script is based on Said's *Orientalism* and focuses on the Middle East, but divides the Middle East into two parts: the Arab-Islamic Middle East part and the non-Arab-Islamic Middle East part. According to the novels, Arab Muslims have a lot in common, and the most

important commonalities are language, conceptualization, and culture. The study shows the differences between the Arab-Islamic Middle East and the non-Arab Islamic Middle East as represented in the novels covered in the work. Furthermore, this study presents the East as a land of desolation and destruction due to the political, regional, and religious changes that have shaken it.

Tatjana Neubauer

### **The Mediatization of the O.J. Simpson Trial: From Reality Television to Filmic Adaptation**

Advised by Jutta Ernst

F. Scott Fitzgerald once said: "Show me a hero, and I'll write you a tragedy." In the early 1990s, nobody fell deeper than O.J. Simpson. Once considered a national icon, the athlete was accused of brutally killing his ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman on June 12, 1994. In a matter of days, the media and public developed an unprecedented obsession with the story, turning a murder investigation and trial into a sensationalized reality show.

Simpson's controversial court case was framed and argued around television and reflected the changing media landscape in the US in the 1990s. Facilitated and expedited by the rapid expansion of new technologies, the competitive commodification of news, and stimuli for increased public participation, reality television became a staple of American popular culture and a suitable alternative to the increased costs of scripted programming. In addition, traditional and newly emerging media outlets began shifting their focus away from the didactic function of the press and towards the histrionic details of high-profile trials and investigations. Court procedures were mediatized by institutionalized mass media through the blending and blurring



of factual and fictional visual styles and the (re)interpretation of events and people.

In my dissertation project, I focus on three key moments in the Simpson trial to make my case: the infamous Bronco Chase that initiated Simpson's sensationalized reality show, followed by the "glove demonstration" mid-trial and the concluding acquittal on October 3, 1995. I first demonstrate how the continuous and unrelenting transmission of hypermediated television images transmutes new stories into national and international media spectacles and, in the process, transforms audiences into witnesses and co-producers of the unfolding events. Subsequently, I outline important historical and political developments in the US that allowed cameras to enter American courtrooms in the first place while presenting the most prevailing arguments for and against cameras to demonstrate the complexity

of the debate. By addressing celebrity culture in the United States, my study further explicates how fame and stardom not only control the extent to which reports receive media and public attention but also the possibly detrimental effects they can have on the judicial process.

In the main analysis, I concentrate on the original media coverage of the Simpson story in 1994 and the transmission of the trial in 1995 by analyzing the diverse reporting and broadcasting techniques used by mass media to shape the case to their needs. I amplify those findings with an evaluation of how the main players inside the courtroom (the judge, lawyers, witnesses as well as the defendant himself) reacted to and participated in the publicity surrounding the trial.

To complement my analysis of the original footage of the Simpson trial and its connection to reality television, I also consider the filmic adaptation of the case, which was released on FX Networks in 2016. The success of the ten-part anthology, titled *The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story*, demonstrates the cultural significance the trial still holds for the American people over twenty years after the conclusion of the original proceedings. The juxtaposition of the original media coverage with its filmic pendants reveals that although the series thrives on dramatizations, exaggerations, additions, and omissions, the line between reality television and fictional formats is fine and oftentimes difficult to rivet. Instead of representing two opposing ends of the spectrum, reality formats and TV

adaptations share production processes and narrative discourses as well as elements of fact and fiction, which unveil a relationship of reciprocal influence.

My research follows a highly interdisciplinary approach and includes analytical methods from Media, Literature, and Mediatization Studies as well as Celebrity, Law and Performance Studies. This particular combination of disciplines allows me to address the trial from a new and more expanded perspective in order to describe the medial staging of the Simpson case and the figurative meltdown of factual and fictional television genres in the US in the 1990s.

Johanna Seibert

### Archipelagic Media: Early African Caribbean Newspapers and the Whirls of Emancipation, 1827-1838

Advised by Oliver Scheiding

Located at the intersections of periodical research and early Caribbean studies, my dissertation project sets out to expand on the ways in which we still tend to historicize, anthologize, and theorize early African Caribbean print cultures. This study accordingly turns toward two of the first Caribbean newspapers in the emancipation period that were published, edited, and printed by men of African descent whose freedom was merely nominal and whose subject status remained highly fragile: Henry Loving and William Hill's *Antigua Weekly Register* (1827-1833) in St. John's and Edward Jordon and Robert Osborn's *Watchman, and Jamaica Free Press* (1829-1838) in Kingston. Struggling for the liberation of both Black peoples and Black media, the *Register* and the *Watchman* acted as what I conceptualize as "archipelagic media." It is the archipelagic paradigm that allows us to at least capture the medial, textual, and material complexities of the two Black publications, insofar as path-breaking theorems such as Paul Gilroy's 'Black Atlantic' or the familiar dichotomy between imperial center and alleged outpost of the empire do not necessarily speak to the whirlwind of communication newspapers such as the *Register* and the *Watchman*



in fact navigated under the conditions of the colonial-imperial complex and at the intersections of lands, seas, and oceans.

So, this study considers how the *Register* and the *Watchman* managed a set of intersecting geographical, social, aesthetic, and material relations at a moment when chattel slavery as a major pillar of the British Empire was about the collapse. To conceptualize the *Register* and the *Watchman* as archipelagic media is thus to propose a relational, spatially oriented, dynamic, and more so a media-specific model of early African Caribbean newspapers that first pays attention to their reach and movements and determines the



material circumstances under which they networked. As archipelagic media, they were enmeshed in asymmetrical, dynamic, and often messy relations. They operated where different geographies, markets, and spheres of political influence collided with each other. Yet furthermore and more importantly, such a model needs to elucidate the forms this relation making took and the concrete ways in which archipelagic media forged and then maintained relations across scales as part of their emancipation enterprise—through their workings as communication enterprises, design objects, literary compositions, mobile histories, and legal promulgators as I demonstrate in five different chapters.

Julia Velten

**Extraordinary Forms of Aging:  
The Construction of Age in Life  
Narratives of Centenarians and  
Children with Progeria**

Advised by Mita Banerjee

While aging and the life-course appear to be normalized processes, the complex construction of age at the intersection of biology, society, and culture remains mostly opaque. What role does the cultural imaginary we have of the aging process play in our perception of the life-course? How is society influenced by the way individuals regard aging? And how does the undeniable reality of the aging body connect to the aging experience? This study contributes to a deeper understanding of age(ing) at the intersection of culture, society, and the aging body by exploring its construction through the analysis of extraordinary cases. Based on the assumption that the aging process is naturalized and therefore mostly invisible, it regards these extraordinary forms of aging as deferral from an aging norm, which reveals heretofore neglected aspects of the process. Focusing on life narratives of centenarians and children with progeria, it seeks to analyse the way age(ing) is experienced in these specific cases and how negotiating them can



contribute to our understanding of age in general. Situated at the intersection of aging studies and medical humanities, it asks what extraordinary age(ing) can tell us about a 'normal' aging process. Using the genre of collaborative life writing it focuses on the way the aging process is negotiated by the aging individual, as well as by the people surrounding them.

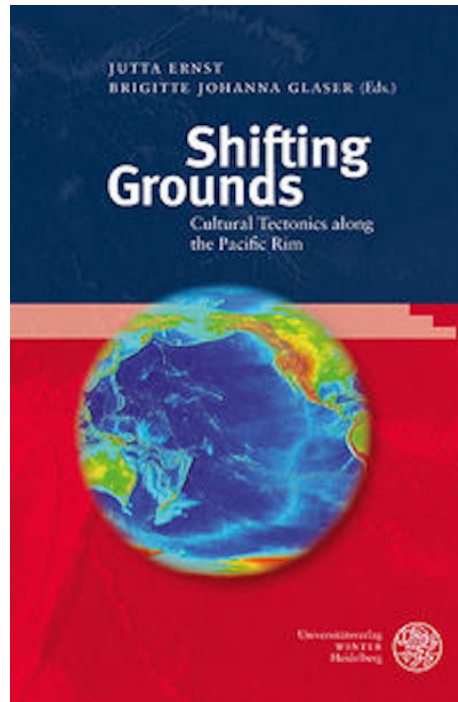
## Selected Book Publications

Jutta Ernst and Brigitte Johanna Glaser (eds.)

**Shifting Grounds: Cultural Tectonics along the Pacific Rim**

Heidelberg: Winter, 2020

Geological in origin, 'Pacific Rim' refers to a zone of high tectonic stresses along the margins of the Pacific Ocean, thus conceptually tying together the Americas, the islands of the South Pacific, Australia and New Zealand as well as Southeast and Northeast Asia. The phrase gained wider currency in the 1970s when the political and economic situation of the United States necessitated a strategic reorientation in terms of spatial imaginaries and, concomitantly, the coinage of a new transnational discourse. While the notion of the Pacific Rim has seeped from the realms of politics, business, and trade into cultural studies, scholars increasingly challenge its logic of linkage along borders and develop alternative conceptions favoring, for instance, an archipelagic approach.

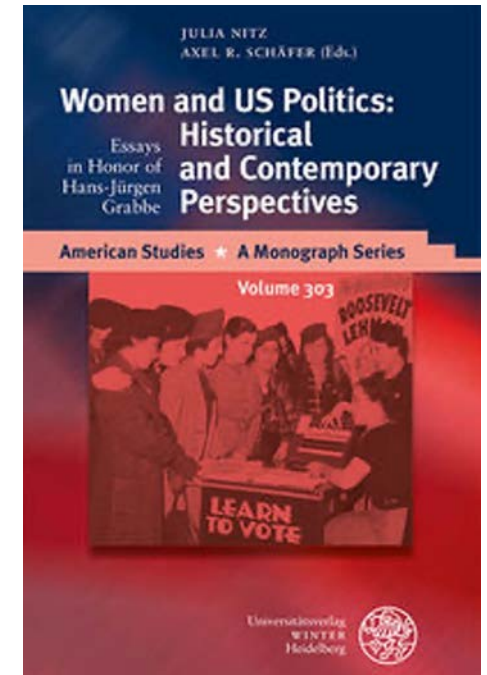


The volume contributes to the current debate by offering expert geohistorical and theoretical discussions plus in-depth analyses of cultural products including photography, film, TV, music, and literature.

Julia Nitz and Axel R. Schäfer (eds.)  
**Women and U.S. Politics: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives**

Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2020

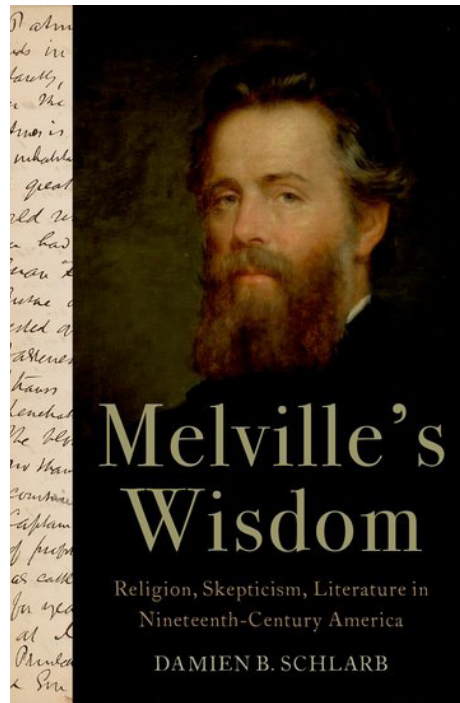
The last few decades have witnessed a steady rise in women's participation in electoral politics, culminating in Hillary Clinton campaign for the presidency of the United States. The essays in this volume seek to widen the scope of women and politics studies in order to help us understand current events. Instead of solely focusing on electoral issues they open up new insights into the way women were politically active in a myriad of ways and historical settings. The book features essays by leading scholars from the United States, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, the Netherlands and Poland who explore women and U.S. politics past and present. Topics range from female activism in early America via women's political writings to gender debates in the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election. The authors, coming from a variety of academic disciplines, apply methodological frameworks from cultural history, literary and media studies, and political science. Collectively, the essays call for an expanded understanding of women and politics. They join recent scholarly efforts to broaden notions of what is considered women's political activities and what constitutes politics.



Damien B. Schlarb  
**Melville's Wisdom: Religion, Skepticism, and Literature in Nineteenth-Century America**

New York: Oxford University Press, 2021

In *Melville's Wisdom: Religion, Skepticism, Literature in Nineteenth-Century America*, I explore the way Herman Melville responds to the spiritual crisis of modernity by using the language of the biblical Old Testament wisdom books to moderate contemporary discourses on religion, skepticism, and literature. I argue that attending to Melville's engagement with the wisdom books (Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes) can help us understand a paradox at the heart of American modernity: the simultaneous displacement and affirmation of biblical language and religious culture. In wisdom, which addresses questions of theology, radical skepticism, and the nature of evil, Melville finds an ethos of critical inquiry that allows him to embrace modern analytical techniques, such as higher biblical criticism. In the medium of literature, he articulates a new way of accessing the Bible by marrying the moral and spiritual didacticism of its language with the intellectual distance afforded by modern critical reflection.



Alfred Hornung  
**Al Capone: Der amerikanische Traum und das organisierte Verbrechen [The American Dream and Organized Crime]**

Darmstadt: wbg Theiss, 2021

This biography of Al Capone focuses on the promises of the American Dream for Southern Italian immigrants and the propensity for drifting into the arms of criminal organizations. The discrimination against visibly different foreigners and their separation from mainstream American society culminated in calling Al Capone "Black". Prohibition constituted the perfect platform for illegal activities in the 1920s for ethnic groups who used the revenue to set up sites for gambling and prostitution. The consumers of Al Capone's services ignored his alleged criminal record and valued his self-styled role as a benefactor of the poor, the "John D. Rockefeller of the Underworld."

Alfred Hornung's analysis of the Capone Organization in Chicago in relation to the simultaneously established Trump Organization in the construction business in New York is based on the frequent references of President Donald Trump to Al Capone and the comparison of their business deals as well as their establishment of a system of 'alternate truths' and their interference with elections. The reasons for the unabated public interest in Al Capone as a subject of study and media representation can be linked to these current concerns.



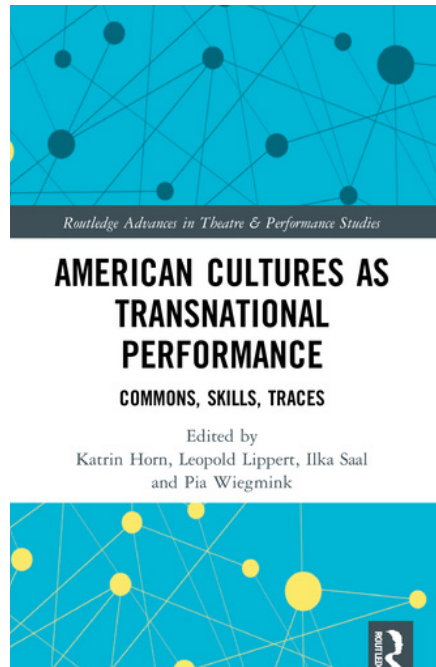
The ethnic profiling in earlier productions has receded in favor of entertaining consumption. However, the analysis of Al Capone's migration background also reflects the treatment of (im)migrants in past and present, their discrimination and separation hindering their legal participation in public life and instead contributing to their potential involvement in criminal activities.



Pia Wiegink, Katrin Horn, Leopold Lippert, and Ilka Saal (eds.)  
**American Cultures as Transnational Performance: Commons, Skills, Traces**

London: Routledge, 2021. Print, e-book

This book investigates transnational processes through the analytic lens of cultural performance. Structured around key concepts of performance studies—commons, skills, and traces—this edited collection addresses the political, normative, and historical implications of cultural performances beyond the limits of the (US) nation-state. These three central aspects of performance function as entryways to inquiries into transnational processes and allow the authors to shift the discussion away from text-centered approaches to intercultural encounters and to bring into focus the dynamic field that opens up between producer, art work, context, setting, and audience in the moment of performance as well as in its afterlife. The chapters provide fresh, performance-based approaches to notions of transcultural mobility and circulation, transnational cultural experience and knowledge formation, transnational public spheres, and identities' rootedness in both specific local places and diasporic worlds beyond the written word.



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**Lörch, Michael.** "Die Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik (ZAA) als Beispiel für das Zusammenwirken von universitärer Amerikanistik und Verlagswesen in der DDR." *Übersetzer und Übersetzen in der DDR – Translationshistorische Studien.* Ed. Aleksey Tashinskiy, Julija Boguna, and Andreas F. Kelletat. Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2020. 129-50.

**Sawallisch, Nele.** "North American Counter-Territoriality: Nineteenth-Century Black Activism and Alternative Legal Spatiality." *Special Forum American Territorialities*, guest editors Nicole Waller and Jens Temmen, *JTAS* 11.1, July 2020, pp. 231-252. (online publication)

---. "Ricky Gervais's Sentimental Men." *Anglistik: International Journal of English Studies* 31.2, Summer 2020, pp. 111-125. (online publication)

**Schäfer, Axel R.,** and Julia Nitz, editors. *Women and U.S. Politics: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives.* Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2020.

---. "High on Jesus": US Evangelicals and the Counterculture" ("Viajando em Jesus": os evangélicos norte-americanos e a contracultura), *Horizonte - Revista de Estudos de Teologia e Ciências da Religião (Journal of Studies in Theology and Religious Sciences)*, 19, 58 (December 2020): 924-954.

**Scheiding, Oliver** (Co-author). "Introduction: Independent Magazines Today." *Journal of European Periodical Studies* 5.2 (2020). 1-11.

---. "Indie Magazines as Brands: Aesthetic Communication and Designing the Kinfolk Experience." *Journal of European Periodical Studies* 5.2 (2020): 46-59.

---. "Nineteenth-Century American Indian Newspapers and the Construction of Sovereignty." *The Cambridge History of Native American Literature*. Ed. Melanie Benson Taylor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. 89-112.

---. "Re-Visioning the Past: Charles Brockden Brown's Historical Tales and the Pleasures of Dissecting." *Studies in the American Short Story* 1.1 (2020): 1-19.

---. "Fraktur: Material Religion and Print Culture in the Early German Language Atlantic World." *Elusive Archives: Material Culture Studies in Formation*. Ed. Martin Brueckner and Sandy Isenstadt. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2021. 199-218.

---. "Magazines, Print Culture, and the American Short Story." *Studies in the American Short Story* 2.1 (2021): 20-47.

---. (Co-author). "Spiel mit Unterscheidungen in Bildstrecken von Zeitschriften." *Humandifferenzierung: Disziplinäre Perspektiven und empirische Sondierungen*. Ed. Dilek Dizdar, Stefan Hirschauer, Johannes Paulmann, and Gabriele Schabacher. Weilerswist: Velbrück, 2021. 260-286.

**Schlarb, Damien B.**, Florian Freitag, et al. "Immersivity: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Spaces of Immersion." *Ambiances. Environnement Sensible, Architecture et Espace Urbain, UMR 1563 - Ambiances Architectures Urbanités*, Dec. 2020. journals.openedition.org, doi:10.4000/ambiances.3233.

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---. "Review of Philipp Schweighauser, *Beautiful Deceptions: European Aesthetics, the Early American Novel, and Illusionist Art* (2016)." *Amerikastudien / American Studies*, vol. 65, no. 3, 2020.

---. "Glitches"; "Metagames / Metagaming"; "Metalepsis." *The Encyclopedia of Video Games*. 3 Vols. 2nd Ed. Mark J.P. Wolf, ed. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC Clío, 2021.

---. *Melville's Wisdom: Religion, Skepticism, and Literature in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021.

**Schmidt, Klaus H.** "Neonaturalism in Contemporary U.S. Film." *Studies in American Naturalism* 15.1 (2020): 18-48.

---. "In Search of Neonaturalism; or, Lost in Translation: Tracing an Elusive Meme in American Literary Criticism and Contemporary U.S. Film – Companion Website." 2020. [https://amerikanistik.fb06.uni-mainz.de/files/2020/12/Schmidt\\_In-Search-of-Neonaturalism-or-Lost-in-Translation\\_Companion-Website\\_11\\_25\\_2020.pdf](https://amerikanistik.fb06.uni-mainz.de/files/2020/12/Schmidt_In-Search-of-Neonaturalism-or-Lost-in-Translation_Companion-Website_11_25_2020.pdf). [139 pp.]

**Veauthier, Ines.** "Picture Perfect Prose: Cultural Reverberations of Power." *Metáforas, Alegorías y otras Imágenes*. Ed. Carmen-Cayetana Castro Moreno. Granada: Editorial Comares, 2020. 225-36.

---. "The Time of my Life! Science Fiction and Life Writing." *Mapping the Imaginative II – Teaching Fantasy and Science Fiction in the EFL Classroom*. Ed. Christian Ludwig and Elizabeth Shipley. Heidelberg: Winter, 2020. 91-111.

---. "A War of Words." *La virtualidad en los procesos narrativos, didácticos e interpretativos*. Ed. María Pilar Úcar Ventura. Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, 2021, pp. 543-56.

**Wiegink, Pia** and Andrea Zittlau. "Radical Time Travel: An Interview with Denise Uyehara." *American Cultures as Transnational Performance: Traces, Bodies, Commons, Skills*, Eds. Katrin Horn, Leopold Lippert, Ilka Saal, und Pia Wiegink, Routledge, 2021, 129-144. Print, ebook.

---, Marina Barys Janer, Caro Ley, and Andrea Zittlau, "Border Movement: Transnational Performance in Practice." *American Cultures as Transnational Performance: Traces, Bodies, Commons, Skills*, Eds. Katrin Horn, Leopold Lippert, Ilka Saal, and Pia Wiegink, Routledge, 2021, 85-98. Print, ebook.



## List of Presentations Given by Members

- Banerjee, Mita.** "Umgekehrte Mimikry und postkoloniale Rache: Die monumentale Bildkunst von Kent Monkman", Conference *Decolonize the University*, University of Mainz, Nov 28, 2020 (online).
- . Roundtable at the First Townhall Meeting of the German Association of American Studies, University of Mainz, Nov 27, 2020 (online).
- . "Der Wasserhahn als Detail? Wasser als Menschenrecht in Michael Moores *Fahrenheit 11/9* und der Amazon-Serie *Goliath* und *The Cherokee Word for Water*," Rotary Club Mainz, Aug 19, 2020.
- . "Asian German Experience," Workshop "Asiatisch-Diasporische Zukünfte," Deutsches Zentrum für Integrations- und Migrationsforschung (DeZIM), Berlin, Nov 30, 2020 (online).
- with Matthias Krings. "Verwischung kategorialer Grenzen: Alter und 'Rasse' im Vergleich," Conference *Humandifferenzierung. Disziplinäre Perspektiven und empirische Sondierungen*, Jun 25, 2020 (online).
- . "Narrative Medicine and the Black Maternal Mortality Crisis" (Invited Lecture), Workshop of the Graduate School of the Arts and Humanities (GSAH) *Life*, Walter Benjamin Kolleg, University of Bern, Mar 13, 2020.
- . "Backlash im Dokumentarischen Film" (RV „Dokumentarisches Erzählen“, JGU Mainz). Jan 05, 2021.
- . Workshop „Tragischer Konflikt und politische Vermittlung“ (Uni Regensburg). Jan 15, 2021.
- . Gastvortrag (RV „Contingent Belonging“ Uni Münster). Jan 29, 2021.
- . Vortrag USA (Rotary Mainz). Mar 31, 2021.
- . „Blackness, Whiteness, Race Treason: Rethinking Race in Raoul Peck's *I Am Not Your Negro*“ (RV „Unlearning Racism“ Uni Bern). Apr 21, 2021.
- . „Life Writing, Writing Life: From Benjamin Franklin to Mitchell Levitz' and Jason Kingsley's *Count Us In*“. Keynote (Workshop „Life Writing“ Uni Regensburg). May 14, 2021
- . „Zählt uns dazu': Autobiographie und genetische Abweichung im Zeitalter der Biomedizin“. Meenzer ScienceSchoppe. Jun 09, 2021.
- . Keynote (Workshop „Embodied Knowledges and the Failures of Neoliberal Work Culture“ Uni Bern/Mannheim). Jun 11, 2021.
- and Eva Boesenberg. Chairs of Workshop 12 „Whiteness and American Studies“. 67th Annual Meeting of the German Association for American Studies (DGfA) „Participation in American Culture and Society“. Heidelberg, Jun 19, 2021.
- . „Ein Rahmen, aus dem Du fällst': Framing Diversity in German Studies“ (Special Panel „Diversity and Inclusivity in German Studies“). *Women in German Studies* conference. U of Aberdeen. Jun 25, 2021.
- . „Literarische Lebenslaufpolitiken“ (Vortrag und Gespräch, 26.09.2021). *INSERT FEMALE ARTIST-Festival* Köln. Sep 23-26, 2021.
- . *VI InterAmerican Studies Association Meeting*. Invited Participant Keynote Roundtable. Texas A&M, College Station, TX, USA. Nov 12, 2021.
- . *Transatlantic Perspectives on Hidden Late 19th Century Music* online conference. Expert Discussion Guest. JGU Mainz, Nov 29-30, 2021.
- . *Intersecting Medicine and the Humanities* (Webinar Series by GSU Center for Studies on Africa and Its Diaspora & JGU Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies). Panelist. Online, Dec 08, 2021.
- Bassimir, Anja-Maria.** "Evangelical Magazines and Popular Culture," American Society of Church History, Winter Meeting, New York, USA, January 3-6, 2020.
- . "Seeking the Good Life for the Good Worker: The American Federation of Labor and Immigration," 42nd Annual Conference of the Historians in the German Association of American Studies: *Reform Movements in US History*, Bad Bevensen, February 14-16, 2020.
- . "Das ‚Mencken Paradigma‘: Anti-Intellektualismus und die Darstellung von Religion in den USA." Workshop: Anti/Intellektualismus in der U.S.-amerikanischen Geschichte. February 26 and 27, 2021, Europa-University, Flensburg. Organized by Andreas Hübner and Niels Steffensen.
- . "Protestant America?" Presentation and talk as part of an American Studies Seminar, on February 25, 2021, Martin Luther University, Halle-Wittenberg. Organized by Julia Nitz.
- Bull, Anne.** "Epistemology of the Veil: White Miscegenation Panic in *Light in August*." *The Fourth Faulkner Studies in the UK Colloquium: Faulkner, Transgressive Fiction, Postmodernism*. International Conference (Online). Royal Holloway, University of London, London, UK, January 29-30, 2021.
- . "The Erotics of Terror: Revisiting the Southern Rape Complex in Faulkner's *Light in August* and Wright's 'Long Black Song.'" *The University of Mississippi 47th Annual Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference: Faulkner Welty, and Wright: A Mississippi Confluence*. International Conference (Online). The University of Mississippi, MS, USA, July 18-21, 2021.

- . "'Waiting for a chance to drown in homemade Jordan:' Faulkner's *The Unvanquished* and Modernity's Darkness." *The Fifth Faulkner Studies in the UK Colloquium: The Dark Cosmos of William Faulkner and Cormac McCarthy*. International Conference (Online). Royal Holloway, University of London, London, UK, September 25-26, 2021.
- Ernst, Jutta.** "European Periodical Research 2020/2030 – Some Voices and Visions," Round Table. "Periodical Formats in the Market: Economies of Space and Time, Competition and Transfer," 9th Conference of the European Society for Periodical Research, June 2021 [digital conference due to Covid pandemic].
- . "Against the Grain: The Refusal to Translate, Foreign-Language Use, and Aesthetic Distance in Modernist Little Magazines." "Periodical Formats in the Market: Economies of Space and Time, Competition and Transfer," 9th Conference of the European Society for Periodical Research, June 2021 [digital conference due to Covid pandemic].
- . Respondent: "Close- & Distant Reading (-Viewing) Journals", Workshop Ruhr-Universität Bochum, April 2021 [digital conference due to Covid pandemic].
- Hornung, Alfred.** "Jack London und Hawai." Freundschaftskreis Mainz-Louisville e.V. Mainz, January 2020.
- . „Disruption und Demokratie in Amerika: Herausforderung und Potential transkultureller und transnationaler Gesellschaften." Lions-Club, Wiesbaden, Mai 2020.
- . "Ecology and Life Writing in Transnational and Transcultural Perspective." British and American Literature and Cross-cultural Studies. Summer School of International Postgraduates, Hunan Normal University, August 2020.
- . "The Modernist Movement." Shandong University, Jinan, China, April 2020.
- . Lecture Series on Area Studies: "Area Studies: American Studies, Transnational American Studies," "The Global South," "Chinese Ideas in the Foundation of the United States of America," "The Silk Road and Cultural Exchange," "From Black Face to Yellow Face: Chinese and Popular Culture," "Chinese American Life Writing," "Transcultural and Transnational Perspectives of Ecology and Life Writing," "Poetic Knowledge and Narrative Medicine: Creating the Transnational Self," "Jack London's Transnational Adventures," "Disruption and Democracy in America." Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, China, November 2020

- . Shandong Summer School, 26.7.-2.8.21. Lecture Course "Transnational American Studies" im Rahmen der Honorary Chair Professur Area Studies: American Studies; The Global South; Chinese Ideas in the Foundation of the United States of America; The Silk Road and Cultural Exchange; Chinese American Life Writing; Poetic Knowledge and Narrative Medicine: Creating the Transnational Self; Jack London's Transnational Adventures; Disruption and Democracy in America.
- . Online Conference Wuhan, 4.11.21, *The International Symposium on Age and Gender in Chinese and Foreign Literature*, Zhongnan University of Economics and Law, Wuhan, Keynote: "Life Writing and Age"
- Kathke, Torsten.** "Newt Gingrich's Sci-Fi Futures." Jahrestagung der Gesellschaft für Fantastikforschung (GFF). Online. Sept. 25, 2020.
- , Juliane Tomann and Mirko Uhlig, conveners: International Society for Ethnology and Folklore, SIEF, Annual Conference 2021, Helsinki. June 19-24, 2021. "Restoring Pasts, Rewriting Rules? Negotiating Norms Within Practices of Counter-Curation." June 21, 2021. (Via Zoom)
- and Mirko Uhlig, "Counter-Curation and Reenacting the American Civil War in Cold War West Germany" presentation held at: International Society for Ethnology and Folklore, SIEF, Annual Conference 2021, Helsinki. June 19-24, 2021. "Restoring Pasts, Rewriting Rules? Negotiating Norms Within Practices of Counter-Curation." June 21, 2021. (Via Zoom)
- . "Selling Future Shock: Alvin Toffler und seine Rezeption" Universität Tübingen, 29 June 2021
- . "Die Welterklärer – Gegenwartsdiagnosen der 1970er und 1980er Jahre: Alvin Toffler und Future Shock" Universität Kassel, 6 December 2021
- Lörch, Michael.** "Readership and Ideology in Scholarly Journals: The Case of the *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*." Global Publishing and the Making of Literary Worlds: Translation, Media, and Mobility, Princeton University, June 2021 [digital conference due to Covid pandemic].
- . "The Founding of the ZAA (*Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*) and Its Transnational History." 67th Annual Meeting of the German Association for American Studies (DGfA) Heidelberg, June 2021 [digital conference due to Covid pandemic].
- . "The Transnational History of the *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*." Research and Doctoral Colloquium: British and North American Literary and Cultural Studies, University of Duisburg-Essen, July 2021.

---. "Readership and Ideology in Scholarly Journals: The Case of the *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*." Colloquium "Politics, Poetics and World Literature": Institute for World Literature (IWL), Harvard University. July 2021 [digital conference due to Covid pandemic].

**Neubauer, Tatjana.** "The O.J. Simpson Case: Media Coverage and Filmic Adaptation." Research and Doctoral Colloquium: British and North American Literary and Cultural Studies, University of Duisburg-Essen, May 2020.

**Sawallisch, Nele.** "The Literature of Black North American Mobility." Summer School "Migration, Inklusion und Marginalisierung. Transnationale Geschichte(n) der Mobilität," Organized by Jun.-Prof. Dr. Rebecca Brückmann and Jun.-Prof. Dr. Juliane Czierpka, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, September 2020.

**Schäfer, Axel R.** "Immigration and Welfare: Transnational Social Politics between the World Wars" (DGfA-Historikerkonferenz, Bad Bevensen, 16.-18. Februar 2020)

---. "Das kurze amerikanische Jahrhundert: Die USA als Weltmacht, 1917-1989" (Zentrum für Weiterbildung, Universität Zürich, 28./29. Februar 2020)

---. "Evangelicals, Conservatism and Corporations" (Online Seminar, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Seminar (28. Juli 2020)

---. "White Evangelicals, the Faith-Based Initiative, and the Neoliberal Welfare State in the U.S.," Symposium "Participation, Marginalization, and Exclusion in the U.S. Welfare State" (Universität Passau, 29 October 2021)

**Scheiding, Oliver.** "Indie Magazines as Brands: Aesthetic Communication and Designing the *Kinfolk* Experience." Mapping the Magazine 6: Exploring the Current State of Magazine Research and Industry, July 1-3, 2020 (Virtual Conference, Universidad Lusófona, Lisbon, Portugal). For the *Proceedings Book* see: [http://www.transnationalperiodicalcultures.net/wp-content/uploads/proceedings-\\_MtM6.pdf](http://www.transnationalperiodicalcultures.net/wp-content/uploads/proceedings-_MtM6.pdf)

---. "Transnational Periodical Cultures: Methods and Approaches." Jahrestreffen des Arbeitskreises Kulturwissenschaftlicher Zeitschriftenforschung, Leibniz Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung Berlin, March 18 2021

---. "Indie Mags in the Digital Era: The Politics and Geographies of Environmental and Technological Change in Avant-Garde Magazines." Periodical Formats in the Market. Economies of Space and Time, Competition and Transfer. 9th ESPRit conference, DFG research unit "Journal Literature", June 14 - 17 2021, Ruhr-Universität Bochum (online).

**Veauthier, Ines.** "Bringing the Battlefield Home?" VIII Congress of Literature, Language and Translation *LILETRAD*, Sede de la Universidad Católica de Cuyo, San Luis, Argentina, December 2020 [digital conference due to Covid pandemic].

---. "Mind over Matter: Embodiment and Power." VII Congress of Literature, Language and Translation *LILETRAD*, University of Sevilla, Spain, July 2020 [digital conference due to Covid pandemic].

---. "Rhetorical Codes and the Shaping of Realities" IX Congreso Internacional y Virtual *LILETRAD, Semiótica, Análisis Interdiscursivo y Traducción*, July 2021 [digital conference due to Covid pandemic].

**Wiegink, Pia.** "African American Literature in Transition" (Roundtable mit Carla Peterson, Nicole Aljoe, Nihad Fattooq, Cassander Smith, Tara Bynum, *Twelfth Biennial SEA Conference, The Many Pasts, Presents, & Futures of Early America*), March 2021. Atlanta.

---. "The Pages that Bind Us Together: Local, National, and Transatlantic Communities in the Abolitionist Gift Book *The Liberty Bell* (1839-1859)," (*Participation in American Culture and Society*, Annual Conference, GAAS, June 2021. Heidelberg).

---. "Mapping the Field: From Chattel Slavery to the Narrative Protocols of Dependency in American Literature," *Narratives of Dependency*, Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies, July 2021. Bonn, Germany.

---. "Gender, Abolition, and Transatlantic Reform in Antebellum African American Life Writing." *James C. Pennington and the World of Transatlantic Reform* (Heidelberg Center for American Studies/Department of African American Studies Princeton, HCA, Heidelberg), August 2021. Heidelberg.



## List of Presentations at the Obama Institute

2020

January

**Clemens Spahr** (JGU Mainz)

"American Transcendentalism, Education, and Reform"

**Jean Lee Cole** (Loyola U, Baltimore)

"What's so American about American Periodicals?"

**Stephen Donovan** (Uppsala U)

"Greenwood's Bath: Investigative Journalism and a Short History of Immersion"

**Sabina Fazli** (Georg-August-U Göttingen)

"Disruptive Content': *Momma Tried*'s Experiments with the Magazine Form"

**Gustav Frank** (LMU München)

"Macht oder machen: Zur Modellierung der Agentialität periodischer Artefakte"

**Florian Freitag** (U Duisburg-Essen)

"The Archival Afterlife of Beefcake Magazines"

**Mariana Hermanowski** (JGU Mainz)

"Materiality and Typography in Cuban Magazines"

**Timothy Holmes** (Cardiff U)

"Social Media Networks and Periodical Events"

**Nicola Kaminski** (U Bochum)

"Konzept Leseszene: (wie) macht sie Journallektüre sichtbar?"

**Kai Kauffmann** (U Bielefeld)

"Zeitschriften als Akteur? Alte und neue Methodenfragen der Zeitschriftenforschung nach dem praxeologischen 'turn'"

**Jana Keck** (U Stuttgart)

"The Nineteenth-Century Digitized German and German-American Press: Negotiating Slavery in a Transatlantic Context"

**Antje Krause-Wahl** (Goethe-U Frankfurt)

"Becoming a Body: Magazine Cultures in the 1960s and 1970s"

**Daniela La Penna** (U of Reading)

"Making the Case for the Paradox of Embeddedness in Periodical Studies: Journal's Performance, Habitus, and Networks in Fascist Florence"

**Jeremy Leslie** (MagCulture, London)

"We Love Magazines"

**Michael Lörch** (JGU Mainz)

"Transnational Readerships of an East German Academic Journal"

**Ariane Martin** (JGU Mainz)

"Literatur, Kultur, Politik: Die Umfrage als Presseformat in den 1920er Jahren (am Beispiel Heinrich Manns)"

**Lianne Moyes** (U de Montréal)

"*Tessera* and the Cohabitation of Languages"

**Corinna Norrick-Rühl** (JGU Mainz)

"Custom Media in the Twentieth Century: Observations on Corporate Publishing and Customer Magazines"

**Franziska Oehmer** (U de Fribourg)

"Leistungen von Zeitschriften in pluralen und individualisierten Gesellschaften – differenzierungstheoretische Überlegungen und empirische Evidenz aus der Perspektive der Kommunikationswissenschaft"

**Whit Frazier Peterson** (U Stuttgart)

"Transnational Aesthetics in 'Harlem Mecca'"

**Madleen Podewski** (FU Berlin)

"Text, materielles Objekt, Medium, Datenbank, 'Archiv'? Wie wir Zeitschriften modellieren"

**Andrew Thacker** (Nottingham Trent U)

"Modernist Magazines at Large"

**Ulysses Voelker** (Hochschule Mainz)

"Die Wirkung visueller Kommunikation auf die Bewertung von Information"

**Lena Wetenkamp** (JGU Mainz) and **Christian Luckscheiter** (HU Berlin)

"Essay und 'Rundschau'-Rubrik als Generatoren transnationalen Denkens in der *Neuen Rundschau* (1918-1933)"

**Sascha Wolfer** (Leibniz-Institut für Deutsche Sprache, Mannheim)

"Exploring Lexical Change in 70 Years of *Der Spiegel*"

**Stefanie Schäfer** (Friedrich-Schiller-U Jena)

"Cowboys All! Settler Colonialism and the Invention of Tradition at the Western Spectacle"

"History Reloaded? Eternal Girlhood and the Afterlives of Anne Oakley"

**February****Cristina Stanciu** (Virginia Commonwealth U, Richmond)

"Native Education, Print Culture, and Americanization at Carlisle Indian Industrial School, 1879-1918"

"The Legacy of Residential Schools in Native North American Literature and Culture: Pedagogical and Theoretical Considerations"

**October****Yehuda Sharim** (UC Merced)

"We & We: Cinema of Two." Online Talk/Film Screening

**November****Yehuda Sharim** (UC Merced)

Documentary Film Screening *Songs That Never End* (2019) and Online Talk and Q&A

**December****Alysse V. Kushinski** (Le laboratoire Artefact, Montréal)

"Paperology: Materiality as a Mode of Interdisciplinarity"

**Moritz Neuffer** (Arbeitskreis Kulturwissenschaftliche Zeitschriftenforschung, Berlin)

"Worlds of Cultural Journals: What Is *Kulturwissenschaftliche Zeitschriftenforschung*?"

**Nele Sawallisch** (KU Eichstätt-Ingolstadt)

"Claiming 'The Great Black North' in Contemporary Short Stories from Canada"

**2021****January****Ian Aflerbach** (University of North Georgia, USA)

"Science Fiction Pulp and Popular Culture"

**Moritz Bauerfeind** (Basel U)

"The Periphery in the Periphery – The Beginning of Jewish Reformed Press in Bavaria"

**Filippo Carlà-Uhink** (U Potsdam)

"The Body of a Greek God: Classical References in Masculine Physique Culture"

**Sabrina Czelustek** (Leibniz U Hanover)

"The Avantgarde Scrapbook"

**Florian Freitag** (U Duisburg-Essen)

"Neophysique: Contemporary Physique Photography and Magazines"

**David K. Johnson** (U of South Florida)

"Physique Entrepreneurs and the Creation of a Gay Movement"

**Sandra Meerwein** (JGU Mainz)

"MOMENT – The Reconfiguration of Identity through 'Translocality'"

**Alice Morin** (Philipps-U Marburg)

"From Underground to Mainstream? Influences and Convergences in/of Andy Warhol's Interview's editorial formula"

**Elena Ogliari** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

"Nationalist Periodicals for Juveniles in Ireland (1910-1920s): A Matter of Negotiation"

**Matina Paraskeva** (University of Patras)

"Wandering Words: The Case of the Greek Periodical *ΤΙ* (Plandion)"

**Nina Prader** (The Impossible Library, Hamburg)

"Impossible Library Practices"

**Hanna Sellheim** (Georg-August-U Göttingen)

"Elias Boudinot's writings in the Cherokee Phoenix as Counter-Discourse of Justice"

**Avani Tandon Vieira** (University of Cambridge)

"Like Cartographers Mapping the City': Geographic Negotiations and Indian Literary Subcultures"

**Barbara Winckler** (Wilhelms-U Münster)

"What defines 'Mainstream' vs. 'Niche' Journal? The Beirut-based journal *al-Mara al-Jadida* (The New Woman; 1921-27) as an Example: Editors, Authors and Readers – Political and Social Views – Archiving Practices"

**Liam Young** (Mount Saint Vincent U Halifax)

"The Lottery of Death: Cattle Plague, Trichinosis, and Vegetarian Periodicals in the 1860s"

**February****Julie Greene** (U of Maryland)

"Workers of the World: U.S. Empire, Class, and Capitalism"

**Eileen Boris** (U of California, Santa Barbara)

"Neither Free Nor Slave: Migrant Domestic Workers, The Employment Agency, and Reproductive Labor Under Capitalism"

**April****Jasmin Assadsolimani** (U Dortmund)

"American Daydream(s): The Role of Fashion Magazines in Constructing National Identities after Donald Trump's Election in 2016"

**Roberto Filippello** (University of Edinburgh)

"The Fashion Magazine as a Desirous Queer Archive: The Case of Dutch"

**Antje Krause-Wahl** (Goethe-U Frankfurt)

"Queer Aesthetics and Gay-Lifestyle in 1970s American Magazine Culture"

**Alice Morin** (Philipps-U Marburg)

"Hierarchizing Images and Images Practices: The Editorial Well as the 'Beating Heart' of Fashion Magazines"

**June****Javier Zamara** (USA)

"The Poetry Reading Series" (co-organized and sponsored by the University of Duisburg-Essen, the Obama Institute, and Studienprogramm Q+)

**July****Glenn T. Eskew** (Georgia State U, Atlanta)

"The Ongoing Ideological Struggle 'To Redeem the Soul of America' and the World."

**September****Stefan L. Brandt** (Karl-Franzens-U Graz)

"Von Dumbo zur Eiskönigin: Das Walt Disney-Imperium und die Entwicklung der Zeichentrickklassiker" (co-organized and sponsored by the Atlantische Akademie Rheinland-Pfalz)

**November****Florian Cramer** (Willem de Kooning Academy, Rotterdam)

"Postdigital and/versus Urgent Publishing"

**Alessandro Ludovico** (University of Southampton)

"The Interdependent Networks of Neural Magazine"

**Sophie Seita** (Boston University)

"Diving into the Wreck: On Magazines and Other Postdigital Stuff"

**Daniel Stein** (U Siegen)

"Graphic Narratives of the Middle Passage."

**Craig Santos Perez** (U of Hawai'i at Manoa)

"Identity, Regional Conceptualization, and the Pacific"

**December****Vanessa Evans** (York U, Toronto)

"Transindigenous Literature and Social Justice"

**Sabine Kim** (Glasgow)

"Waste and Wealth: Indigenous People"

**Selina Lai-Henderson** (Duke Kunshan University, Shanghai)

"W.E.B. Du Bois in China"

**Aiko Takeuchi-Demirci** (Koç University, Istanbul)

"The Birth Control Movement: Age and Gender"

**Moustafa Bayoumi** (City U of New York)

"That's the thing about the Americans. They'll believe anything but the truth.: What reading Guantánamo Bay Literature Can Tell Us About the Future of American Democracy"

**David Sirakov** (Atlantische Akademie Rheinland-Pfalz)

"The Populist Moment: Populism and Polarization in the US"

**Therriault, Sean M.** (U of Texas at Austin)

"American Politics and the Midterm Elections 2022"

**Seales, Chad E.** (U of Texas at Austin)

"The System Will Not Be Labeled: Industrial Food and American Democracy"

**Wilson, Daniel H.** (Portland, Oregon)

"Robocalypse." Author Talk and Discussion



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Schäfer, Prof. Dr. Axel  
Scheiding, Prof. Dr. Oliver

### Research Professors

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### Emeriti

Herget, Prof. Dr. Winfried

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