



Nordamerikastudienprogramm
Institut für Anglistik, Amerikanistik und Keltologie



Lecture Series

**"Current Issues in North American Studies and Cultural Studies"
Summer Term 2013**

Prof. Grace Elizabeth Hale

**American Studies Program | Corcoran Department of History
University of Virginia**

"Out of Place, Out of Time: Filming the 'Folk' in the US South in the 1960s and 1970s"

**Wednesday • 5 June 2013 • 6:00-8:00 p.m.
Lecture Hall 104 • University Main Building • Am Hof 3-5**

A new type of documentary film emerged in the US in the 1960s and 1970s: the "folklore" or "folkloric" film. Usually made with newly available sync sound film equipment and using at least some direct cinema techniques, filmmakers including Les Blank, John Cohen, Bill Ferris, Elizabeth Barrett, and Peter Adair worked to document Southern working-class people and rural cultural practices they believed were more "authentic" and "real" than the people and practices of urban and suburban middle-class Americans. The films constituted a rich and now mostly forgotten part of a larger US and transnational interest in Southern "folklore." I explore why US filmmakers so often went "South," what they believed they found there, and why these films (and other documentary work like sound recordings and photography) resonated with a large audience of young Americans seeking an alternative to white, middle-class suburbia. By the 1970s, I argue, a deep identification with Southern "folk" (both black and white), folk music and handcrafts, and rural life formed the basis of an alternative culture built by young middle-class whites, a kind of "folksy" Southern bohemia that was the flip side of the Sunbelt South.

Grace Elizabeth Hale is Professor of History and American Studies and Director of the American Studies Program at the University of Virginia. Currently she is a visiting Fulbright Professor at the University of Erfurt. Her publications include *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890–1940* (1998) and *A Nation of Outsiders: How the White Middle Class Fell in Love with Rebellion in Postwar America* (2011). Her new book *Cool Town: Athens, Georgia and the Promise of Alternative Culture in Reagan's America* is forthcoming in 2013.