



Nordamerikastudienprogramm
Institut für Anglistik, Amerikanistik und Keltologie



Lecture Series

**"Current Issues in North American Studies and Cultural Studies"
Summer Term 2011**

Prof. Dr. Susan Strasser
University of Delaware | FU Berlin

**"Woolworth to Wal-Mart: Mass Merchandising
and the Changing American Culture of Consumption"**

Wednesday • 4 May 2011 • 6-8 pm c.t. • Hörsaal 17, IAAK

American mass merchandising developed in tandem with mass production, and for much of the twentieth century branded goods helped manufacturers dominate the power structure of distribution. Wal-Mart was not the first amazingly dominant retailing firm, nor the first retailer to depend on cheap labor, nor the first to threaten local businesses, nor the first to tout its low prices, nor the first to give rise to substantial opposition. Yet it has challenged that power structure in new ways that reflect on both the commerce and the culture of American consumption.

Susan Strasser is Professor of American History at the University of Delaware and currently a Fulbright Guest Professor at the John F. Kennedy Institute, Free University of Berlin. A historian of American consumer culture, she has been praised by the *New Yorker* for "retrieving what history discards: the taken-for-granted minutiae of everyday life." Strasser is the author of *Waste and Want: A Social History of Trash* (Henry Holt, 1999) and *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market* (Pantheon, 1989) and the editor of *Commodifying Everything: Relationships of the Market* (Routledge, 2003). She is currently working on "A Historical Herbal," a book-length account of the commerce and culture of medicinal herbs.