



Nordamerikastudienprogramm  
Institut für Anglistik, Amerikanistik und Keltologie

## Events • Veranstaltungen Wintersemester 2010-11



**Martin Luther King Day Lecture 2011**

# Jun.-Prof. Dr. Simon Wendt

## Universität Frankfurt

**“This nonviolent stuff ain’t no good. It’ll get ya killed.’  
Armed Self-Defense and the Civil Rights Movement”**

Thursday • 20 January 2010 • 6:00-8:00 pm  
HS XVII, Institut für Anglistik, Amerikanistik und Keltologie

This talk explores the role of armed self-defense in the African American freedom struggle of the 1950s and 1960s. Confronted with violent attacks by the Ku Klux Klan and other racist terrorists, southern blacks adopted Martin Luther King's philosophy of nonviolent resistance as a tactic, but at the same time, they armed themselves out of necessity and pride. Sophisticated self-defense units patrolled black neighborhoods, guarded the homes of movement leaders, rescued activists from harm, and occasionally traded shots with their white attackers. These patrols enhanced and sustained local freedom movements in the face of white aggression.

Trying to provide a balanced history of the role of black self-defense efforts in the African American struggle for freedom, the talk will take a closer look at black militants such as Malcolm X and the Black Panther Party, but it will also appraise largely unknown black protective agencies in North Carolina, Louisiana, and Alabama.

Simon Wendt is Assistant Professor of American Studies at the University of Frankfurt am Main. He holds a Ph.D. in Modern History from the Free University of Berlin and has taught in Berlin, Madison-Wisconsin, Heidelberg, and the North American Studies Program in Bonn. Prof. Wendt's research interests include modern US history, African American and gender history, memory, and nationalism. His monograph *The Spirit and the Shotgun: Armed Resistance and the Struggle for Civil Rights* was published by the University Press of Florida in 2007. One of his current research projects investigates the history of the Daughters of the American Revolution.