

Current Issues

in North American Studies and Cultural Studies

Lecture Series | Winter Term 2016-2017

**NORTH
AMERICAN
STUDIES
PROGRAM**

Dr. Jonas Bens

Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology
Freie Universität Berlin



“When the Cherokee Became Indigenous”

Tuesday, November 22, 2016 | 6:00–8:00 pm
Room A, IAAK, Regina-Pacis-Weg 5



When the Cherokee Nation went to the United States Supreme Court in 1831 to sue the State of Georgia they started a paradoxical endeavor. They argued that they were a “foreign state” – but at the same time subjected themselves to the jurisdiction of another state. In the course of this campaign they transformed from a political to a legal subject and took the position of what today would be called an “indigenous” community. By analyzing the bill the Cherokee Nation presented to the Supreme Court, Dr. Bens examines how indigeneity is produced in the interaction between the native communities of North America and the (post-)colonial state’s legal system.

Jonas Bens is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology and the Collaborative Research Centre “Affective Societies” at Freie Universität Berlin. His research focuses on legal and political anthropology, especially indigenous rights and transitional justice. He currently works on a book called *The Indigenous Paradox: Rights, Sovereignty, and Culture in the Americas*.