



Nordamerikastudienprogramm
Institut für Anglistik, Amerikanistik und Keltologie



Lecture Series

"Current Issues in North American Studies and Cultural Studies"

Winter Term 2013-14

Dr. Stefanie Müller

Department of American Studies, University of Frankfurt

"National and Economic Incorporation in HBO's *Deadwood*"

Tuesday • 12 November 2013 • 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Room A • Department of English, American, and Celtic Studies • Regina-Pacis-Weg 5

In the first part of her talk, Dr. Müller will take a brief look at *Deadwood*'s use of genre conventions, in particular with regard to the Western's celebration of powerful individuals. Her focus will be on the portrayal of George Hearst as representative of corporate interests within the series. *Deadwood*'s debunking of the trope of individualism in the Western, Dr. Müller argues, is closely tied to its treatment of corporations – especially pertaining to their paradoxical status as "legal persons" and the moral and political conflicts implied by the concept of "corporate personality."



An investigation of how the show presents national and economic *incorporation* will constitute the talk's second part. Playing on the double meaning of "incorporation," the series depicts the town as incorporated both politically and economically, in effect suggesting that one process hijacks the other. *Deadwood*, it will be demonstrated, pitches the myth of frontier democracy against the economic motives of westward expansion.

Stefanie Müller is assistant professor at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, where she has been teaching American literature and cultural studies since 2007. Her main research interests include African American literature, the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Norbert Elias, as well as the interdisciplinary projects of the law-and-literature movement and of the more recent trends in the sociology of literature. Her dissertation, "The Presence of the Past in the Novels of Toni Morrison," has been published by Universitätsverlag Winter in 2013. Her current book project explores legal fictions of state and corporate power in American literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.