

Current Issues

in North American Studies and Cultural Studies
Lecture Series | Winter Term 2015-2016

**NORTH
AMERICAN
STUDIES
PROGRAM**

PD Dr. Carsten Junker
Universität Bremen | Universität Leipzig

universität**bonn**

“The Ambivalences of Early Abolitionism: A Reevaluation”

—Martin Luther King Day Lecture 2016—

Monday, January 18, 2016 | 6:00–8:00 pm
Lecture Hall V, Regina-Pacis-Weg 1



Against the backdrop of recent instances of racialized violence in the United States, this lecture examines and reassesses early forms of protest against anti-black violence – the discourses of early abolitionism around and before 1800. Abolitionism as a movement to end the slave trade and slavery is generally construed as selfless because abolitionists sought to sensitize the public to the plight of the enslaved in order to ameliorate the conditions under which they lived. Dr. Junker seeks to complicate this perspective by identifying a contradiction between abolitionist purposes and effects; he argues that strategies of campaigning geared toward overcoming structural inequality potentially reified such inequality and allowed for the personal self-aggrandizement of abolitionists. By reevaluating a neglected archive of material from an early period of abolitionism, the talk also seeks to extend current theories of anti-black violence.

Carsten Junker is currently Visiting Professor at Leipzig University, filling in for the Chair of American Literature. He obtained his Ph.D. from Humboldt University, Berlin, and completed his Habilitation at the University of Bremen in 2015. His publications include *Frames of Friction: Black Genealogies, White Hegemony, and the Essay as Critical Intervention* (2010) and, as co-editor, *Postcoloniality—Decoloniality—Black Critique: Joints and Fissures* (2014) and *Slavery Revisited*, an issue of *Black Studies Papers* (2014).

The talk and discussion will be followed by a small reception.