

Current Issues in North American and Cultural Studies

Lecture Series of the North American Studies Program
in cooperation with the Amerika Haus NRW e. V.

Debating Columbus | Indigenous Peoples' Day: Controversies and Conflicts in Memory Cultures

Monday | 14 October 2024 | 6:00 c.t.-8:00 pm
53111 Bonn | Rabinstraße 8 | Room 7

Impulse Papers: Dr. Sabrina Schmitz-Zerres | Universität Münster | **“Adventurer, Explorer, Colonist? Columbus Narratives in History Textbooks”** & Stefan Benz | North American Studies Program | **“Celebrating Indigenous Peoples' Day – Past, Present, and Future Perspectives”**
Panelists: Dr. Aaron Nyerges | United States Studies Centre, University of Sydney | Matt Sheedy, PhD | North American Studies Program. Moderator: Prof. Dr. Sabine Sielke



From 2025 onward, the Columbus Day Lecture – a tradition of the North American Studies Program since its beginning in the early 1990s – will come to an end and the Indigenous Peoples' Day Lecture will take its place. For along with the statues of famous figures in world history, holidays such as Columbus Day are under severe attack – an „iconoclasm“ that is by no means a new phenomenon. Yet while some activists promote the quick disposal of monuments and festivities honoring characters whose heroism appears questionable in hindsight, others fear that along with these stones of contention, our sense of history gets disposed, and we become all too forgetful. Presenting different perspectives on these issues, the speakers and panelists mark some of the frontlines of these so-called “culture wars” whose concepts and strategies get adapted from US-American debates for incomparable historical contexts on foreign turf, including German memoryscapes.

The guest speaker, **Dr. Sabrina Schmitz-Zerres**, is a research associate at the University of Münster's Institute of History Didactics. Following her PhD work on future narratives in history books in 2019, she now conducts research on time practices in diaries and the relationship between digitality and historical learning.