



Colloquium

Tuesday, 26 October 2021, 17:00 CET

Online

Heike Paul, FAU Erlangen–Nürnberg

American Civil Sentimentalism, Past and Present

This lecture introduces "American civil sentimentalism" (*amerikanischer Staatsbürgersentimentalismus*) as a key concept for the analysis of imaginaries of order and belonging in United States political culture. The sentimental is defined here as a culture specific code of political communication, and its recent forms and functions of community-building will be examined in case studies ranging from powerful displays of statecraft to the affective mobilization in protest movements and aesthetic practices. The fundamental ambiguity of civil sentimentalism as a practice of symbolization and identification (often in times of crisis) resides, on the one hand, in its prioritizing of affective affiliation in political discourse and, on the other hand, its disciplinary channelling of diffuse affects into socially accepted repertoires of public feeling.



Heike Paul is chair of American Studies at Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuernberg and director of the Bavarian American Academy in Munich. She received her degrees from Goethe University Frankfurt and Leipzig University. In 2018, she was recipient of the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize of the German Research Foundation, and she has been a member of the Bavarian American Academy of Sciences and Humanities since 2019. She held fellowships at Harvard University, the Institute for Advanced Study (*Wissenschaftskolleg*) in Berlin, the IFUSS at the University of Illinois Urbana-

Champaign, Graz University, and the Thomas Mann House in Los Angeles. Twice, she was Visiting Harris Professor at Dartmouth College. Among her publications are *The Myths That Made America* (2014), *Understanding Stewart O'Nan* (2020), and *Amerikanischer Staatsbürgersentimentalismus* (2021). She has published on cultural mobility, reeducation, critical regionalism, gender studies, populism, and sentimentality. She currently leads the "Global Sentimentality Project" at FAU.