

Panel on American Violence

Dear Colleagues:

The Department of History at the JFKI is hosting an inter-departmental panel discussion for students and faculty in response to recent political unrest in the United States. The online event will focus on the role of **racial/gendered/symbolic violence** in both contemporary and historical political discourse and will be held on **Wednesday, April 28, time 16:15 - 20:00**.

The event will be immediately followed by a **lecture on the toppling of slaveholder statutes**, delivered by Elahe Haschemi Yekani of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and hosted by the Literature and Culture Departments at the John F. Kennedy Institute.

Please do send your R.S.V.P. along with questions for the panelists to Robert Benson at robert.benson@wzb.eu before Monday, April 26.

Event Link:

<https://fu-berlin.webex.com/fu-berlin-en/onstage/g.php?MTID=e475f59fb1746e8d1233303bc42f5428d>

The conversation will be split between two thematic panels:

The first panel will address violence during periods of rupture. Among other questions, panelists will address: How has racialized violence shaped the political and constitutional order of the United States. Has social, political, economic, and cultural disruption encouraged violence in the past? And how does the promise of (re)conciliation do damage to the concept of liberty and justice for all.

The second panel will address violence amid continuity. How do we understand recent events within the historical context of racial and gendered violence in the US? What tropes, myths, and imaginaries have been deployed to represent violence and the threat of violence? And how has violence—racial, gendered, or otherwise—informed perceptions of belonging in the United States.

Lastly, what do the legacies of violence mean for us— students, instructors, administrators — as we grapple with political unease across the Atlantic.

Please join me in warmly welcoming:

Panel One: Violence amid Rupture, 16:15 - 17:00

Cameron Seglias: Doctoral Candidate at the Graduate School of North American Studies, Berlin.

Cameron Seglias is a doctoral candidate at the Graduate School of North American Studies, Freie Universität Berlin, where he works on a dissertation entitled “Paradoxes of Liberty: Antislavery and Colonial Power in Crisis, 1675-1793.” His research examines the relationship between early modern capitalism, slavery, and antislavery resistance.

Michael L. Thomas: Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Research Fellow at the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies, Berlin.

Michael Thomas specializes in Social and Political Philosophy, Social Aesthetics, and Africana Philosophy. His work explores the aesthetic dimensions of social relations expressed in popular culture and in the phenomenology of everyday encounters. His publications include work on aesthetic sociality, racial sensibility, and the politics of Hip-Hop.

Helen Gibson: Doctoral Candidate at the Graduate School of North American Studies, Berlin.

Helen Gibson has just completed her dissertation on the racialized economy of emotions of driving in the early-twentieth-century United States. In her new role as research fellow at Universität Erfurt, she will research the relationship of midwives to matrilineal enslavement and the womb as a site of self-liberation.

Panel Two: Violence amid Continuity, 17:15 - 18:00

Treva Lindsey: Associate Professor at the Department of Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Ohio State University.

Treva Lindsey specializes in African American women’s history, black popular and expressive culture, black feminism(s), hip hop studies, critical race and gender theory, and sexual politics. Her first book is *Colored No More: Reinventing Black Womanhood in Washington D.C. (2017)*.

Curd Knüpfer: Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science at the John F. Kennedy Institute, Berlin.

Curd Knüpfer is an assistant professor of political science with a focus on political communication at the John F. Kennedy Institute and the Freie Universität Berlin. His teaching and research

investigate the intersection of mediated information and politics in US and European democratic systems, with a particular emphasis on right-wing media.

Tobias Jochum: Researcher at the Department of Literature at the John F. Kennedy institute, Berlin.

Tobias Jochum is a research fellow with the Literature Department at the JFKI whose teaching and research cover epistemologies of resistance in literatures of the American hemisphere. In his dissertation he examined representations of violence at the U.S.-Mexico border. His current project concerns transatlantic exile narratives and their circulation through space, time and languages.

Lecture: *Enslavement in British Memorial Culture: Between Nostalgia and Toppled Monuments, 18:15 –*

Elahe Haschemi Yekani: Professor at the Department of English and American Studies at the Humboldt University Berlin

Elahe Haschemi Yekani is Professor of English and American Literature and Culture with a focus on Postcolonial Studies at the Department of English and American Studies at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. In her second book *Familial Feeling: Entangled Tonalities in Early Black Atlantic Writing and the Rise of the British Novel* (2021) she traces an entangled literary history of canonical bourgeois novels of the late 18th and 19th century and the earliest written testimonies of Black British writers.

We do look forward to seeing you there.

Warmly,

The John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies,
Berlin Germany
