

2023

**November
16-18**
Leucorea
Lutherstadt
Wittenberg

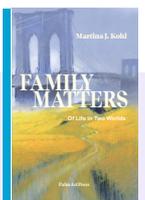
WITTENBERG TEACHER ACADEMY 2023

Oceanizing American Perspectives

Organized by Julia Nitz and Laura-Isabella Heitz

SPEAKERS

- **Sarah Eaton**
Humboldt University Berlin
- **Helen A. Gibson**
Erfurt University
- **Meredith Oyen**
University of Maryland,
Baltimore County
- **Martina Schulze**
U.S. Embassy Berlin
- **Timothy E. Stroud**
MLU Halle-Wittenberg
- **Jiann-Chyng Tu**
Humboldt University Berlin
- **Eric Weisbard**
The University of Alabama
- **Esther Wetzel**
MLU Halle-Wittenberg



READING

Martina Kohl
*FAMILY MATTERS:
Of Life in Two
Worlds*

Website
[https://
muhlenbergcenter.
uni-halle.de](https://muhlenbergcenter.uni-halle.de)



Public Diplomacy
Funding by U.S.
Embassy Berlin



Further
Program
Support:



Landesinstitut für Schulqualität
und Lehrerbildung (LSA)



Program



About Us



**Speaker Bios &
Abstracts**



Program

THURSDAY, NOV. 16

- 15:00** **Arrival and Check-in (Leucorea)**
- 16:30** **Welcome and Introduction**
- U.S. Consulate General Leipzig represented by Dave Panetti
(Public Affairs Officer)**
**Executive Director of the English Department at MLU
represented by Carsten Albers**
Organizers: Julia Nitz and Laura-Isabella Heitz
- 17:00** **Opening Lecture: “Across the Pacific: The United States and
China in Historical Perspective,”**
Meredith Oyen (University of Maryland, Baltimore County)
- 18:30** **Dinner Buffet (Best Western Stadtpalais)**
- 20:00** **Reading: *FAMILY MATTERS: Of Life in Two Worlds*
(PalmArtPress 2023)**
by Martina Kohl at Leucorea

FRIDAY, NOV. 17

- 9:00** **Lecture: “U.S.-China Technology Conflict,”**
Sarah Eaton (Humboldt University Berlin)
- 10:00** **Lecture: “‘I was one of an army of enthusiasts:’ Empire and
American Women in the Philippines (1899-1914)”**
Esther Wetzel (MLU Halle-Wittenberg)
- 11:00** **Coffee Break**
- 11:30** **Conversation Groups with Lecturers**

- 13:00** **Off time**
- 15:00** **Workshop I: “Afro-Futurism in the EFL-Classroom,”**
Timothy E. Stroud (MLU Halle-Wittenberg)
- Workshop II: “A Food-Centric Approach to Teaching**
American Literature and Culture,”
Jiann-Chyng Tu (Humboldt University Berlin)
- 16:30** **Coffee Break**
- 17:00** **Workshops Continued**
- 19:00** **Round Tables with Speakers and Thanksgiving Dinner**
at Best Western Stadtpalais Wittenberg

SATURDAY, NOV. 18

- 9:00** **News from the U.S. Embassy’s Public Diplomacy Section**
and Resources for Teaching U.S.-Pacific Relations,
Martina Schulze (U.S. Embassy Berlin)
- 9:30** **Lecture: “Teaching Reproductive Justice from Granny Midwives**
to the SisterSong Collective,”
Helen A. Gibson (Erfurt University)
- 10:30** **Workshop III: “‘If You Catch Me at the Border I Got Visas**
in My Name:’ Hip-Hop and Global Youth Culture,”
Eric Weisbard (The University of Alabama/Fulbright Professor
at Uppsala University)
- 11:15** **Coffee Break**
- 11:45** **Workshop III Continued**
- 13:00** **Feedback and Farewell**
- 14:00** **City Tour**



It is our great pleasure to welcome you to the Wittenberg Teacher Academy 2023 at Stiftung Leucorea in Lutherstadt Wittenberg.

The Wittenberg Teacher Academy is an annual nationwide teacher training seminar on U.S.-related issues organized by PD Dr. Julia Nitz and Laura-Isabella Heitz and primarily financed by Public Diplomacy Funding of the U.S. Embassy Berlin. The seminar includes a varied group of educators, i.e. curriculum developers (and Fachbereichsleiter), teacher trainers, senior, junior, and future teachers as well as “Quer- and Seiteneinsteiger*innen” teachers.

We offer 2.5 days of talks, interactive workshops, readings and informed conversation sessions by U.S. and German scholars, practitioners, and emerging artists that train participants in political, social, and cultural America related issues at Stiftung Leucorea in Lutherstadt Wittenberg.

The input and materials that will be shared via our website are meant to deepen

participants’ understanding of U.S. society and to enable them to translate the seminar workshops on U.S. related content into meaningful lectures in their schools.

The program is further supported by the U.S. Consulate General Leipzig, the Muhlenberg Center for American Studies at MLU, Stiftung Leucorea Lutherstadt Wittenberg, and Landesinstitut für Schulqualität und Lehrerbildung Sachsen-Anhalt (LISA).

In 2023, we concentrate on transpacific matters and partnerships of the past and present under the heading, “Oceanizing American Perspectives: Pacific Currents.” Our focus will be on “the Greater United States,” and on transpacific relations. Our speakers will talk about Afro-Futurism, Sino-American relations, American women who traveled to the Philippines and much more.

We are looking forward to a great conference & talks!

Julia Nitz and Laura-Isabella Heitz

oceanizing

American

perspectives

Abstracts & Bios

Opening Lecture by MEREDITH OYEN

“Across the Pacific: The United States and China in Historical Perspective”

As tensions rise between the United States and China in the 2020s, a historical perspective on American trans-Pacific relations is invaluable. This talk will touch upon early American involvement in the China trade, then address the rise of imperialism in Asia, the political transformations of China, the watershed of World War II, the twin challenges of decolonization and the Cold War, and increasing economic integration. It will explore how the United States and China have navigated disagreements and conflicts in the past, offering valuable context for understanding the present challenges.

MEREDITH OYEN is an Associate Professor of History and director of the Asian Studies Program at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She completed her Ph.D. in History from Georgetown University in 2007. Her first book, *The Diplomacy of Migration: Transnational Lives and the Making of U.S.-Chinese Relations in the Cold War*, was published in 2015 by Cornell University Press. It explored how immigration, deportation, refugee policy, and transnational networks interacted with foreign policy and bilateral relations between 1943 and 1972. Oyen has published articles in *Diplomatic History*, the *Journal of Cold War Studies*, *Modern Asian Studies*, and the *Journal of American Ethnic History*. Oyen has received external fellowships to support her research from NSEP Boren, Fulbright, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations.

Reading by MARTINA KOHL

FAMILY MATTERS: Of Life in Two Worlds

FAMILY MATTERS follows the traces of a German family that, over generations, continues to cross the Atlantic in both directions. There are Elizabeth and Little Henry who, at the beginning of the 20th century, are forced to leave their beloved New York to return to the old country; the violinist Clara who can only live her passion for music in the America of the suffragettes; the war bride Toni, who courageously follows a G.I. to Nebraska after World War II; and, finally, the student Iris, who is trying to find her place in both worlds in the 1980s.

Looking back, they all ask the same question: „What if . . .?” What if they had not gone to America, or back to the old country? If they had not fallen in love? What if they had taken that other road and pursued their dreams a bit more forcefully? *FAMILY MATTERS* takes ordinary, yet memorable characters out of the yellowed pictures in the photo albums, gives them a voice and places them in their own time. Martina J. Kohl revives the past. She shows that today cannot be understood without the yesterday. And that migration, uprooting, and the search for belonging are universal themes.

Publisher: PalmArtPress Berlin for the English and German version of *FAMILY MATTERS* (2023)

MARTINA J. KOHL worked in the Cultural Section of the U.S. Embassy in Berlin for many years. She developed and organized numerous programs, but especially loved the literature series. Writing has been a passion ever since she taught at the University of Michigan. It is part of her seminars that she teaches regularly at Humboldt University Berlin and defined her work as editor of the American Studies Journal. As an advisory board member of the Salzburg Global American Studies Program, she continues to engage in transatlantic dialogue. Among her academic publications, *FAMILY MATTERS* is her first book-length fictional work and is published in English and German. She lives with her family in Berlin.

Website: martinajkohl.com

Lecture by SARAH EATON “U.S.-China Technology Conflict”

This talk explores heightening tech conflict between the U.S. and China. It first explores the drivers of China’s high tech ambitions and assesses the current state of Chinese firms’ positions in critical and emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, telecommunications infrastructure and electric vehicles. Focus then shifts to analysis of the measures employed by the U.S. government to curb Chinese high tech sectors since 2018. The talk concludes with closer analysis of conflict in one key theater of tech conflict: digital standard-setting.

SARAH EATON is Professor of Transregional China Studies at Humboldt University Berlin and co-founder of the Berlin Contemporary China Network (BCCN). She is interested in the study of contemporary Chinese politics and political economy from comparative and transregional perspectives.

A major focus of her current research is China's emergence as a central player in the field of digital standardization, for which she has received three years of funding (2023–2026) from the German Research Foundation. With support of Germany's Federal Ministry of Education and Research, she and colleagues in the BCCN are developing innovative means of nurturing China competence within Berlin's academic landscape. Before joining HU Berlin in October 2019, she held professorships at the University of Göttingen, the University of Oxford and the University of Waterloo. She holds a doctorate in political science from the University of Toronto (2011).

Lecture by ESTHER WETZEL

“‘I was one of an army of enthusiasts:’ Empire and American Women in the Philippines (1899–1914)”

U.S. women who came to the Philippines at the turn of the twentieth century did so for very different reasons: as tourists or teachers, missionaries, doctors and nurses, as wives of politicians, anthropologists, or military personnel. They travelled at a time marked by social upheaval and intense debates about American identity in an imperial context. They have been said to shape the colonial fringes through homemaking and the ostensibly civilizing force of white middle-class femininity, yet their presence at the male-dominated imperial peripheries was often already a flouting of rapidly shifting gender norms. Women's imperial mobility was thus characterized by a tension between rebellion, reproduction, and the expansion of gender roles. Those who took up travel to the Philippines held their own convictions about the United States, its imperial ambitions, and their place within society. This talk will explore these women's ambitions and justifications, their spheres of activity, and roles within the American overseas empire, as well as their reflections on the home they left behind—and eventually returned to.

ESTHER WETZEL is a research associate and lecturer at the Department of English and American Studies at Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg. She holds a degree in English and American Studies, French Studies, and Education Studies and is currently pursuing a PhD in American Cultural Studies. Her research is funded by a government postgraduate grant and is situated at the intersection of imperial history, gender studies, and cultural studies. It interrogates how white women from the United States related to their embodied experience of imperial spaces in the Pacific.

Workshop I by TIMOTHY E. STROUD

“Afro-Futurism in the EFL-Classroom”

Until recently, Afrofuturism had occupied a peripheral position within Science Fiction and fantastical literature, characterized by its thematic exploration of futures concerning individuals of African descent. Notably, distinguished Nigerian American author, Nnedi Okorafor, introduced the concept of AfricanFuturism to address the nuanced facets frequently omitted by the American aesthetic in its representation of the myriad cultures within the borders of Africa. Afrofuturism, synonymous with authors such as Octavia Butler and Samuel R. Delaney, extends its purview beyond these luminaries. Works by artists like Sun Ra and George Clinton, akin to Butler and Delaney, have significantly contributed to shaping the trajectory of subsequent Afrofuturist creators.

Within the domain of English as a Foreign Language, students will be exposed to narratives that not only challenge conventional storytelling paradigms but also engage in a critical inquiry into societal norms. They will embark on an exploratory journey into the rich tapestry of African and African diasporic cultures while contemplating alternative futures. This workshop seeks to introduce a selection of works authored by both established and contemporary Afrofuturist writers and artists. Furthermore, it endeavors to illuminate how these literary and artistic creations can be judiciously employed within the EFL classroom context to facilitate lexical enrichment, enhance comprehension, foster proficiency in speaking and writing, and cultivate a deeper cultural awareness.

By employing Afrofuturist works as a medium of language exploration, this workshop aims to equip teachers and aspiring teachers with the tools to navigate linguistic intricacies while simultaneously providing them with an avenue to engage with nuanced cultural narratives in a new, albeit familiar, context.

TIMOTHY E. STROUD was born in Atlanta, Georgia. His research investigates portrayals of masculinity in Afrofuturism through an interdisciplinary selection of works. He has taught English at the University of Halle-Wittenberg since 2018. He enjoys astronomy, sailing, writing SF and reading his embarrassing story outlines to his daughter.

Workshop II by JIANN-CHYNG TU

“A Food-Centric Approach to Teaching American Literature and Culture”

This workshop aims to provide English as a Foreign Language (EFL) educators with an innovative pedagogical strategy for integrating a food-centric approach to teaching Asian American literature into the curriculum. By way of reading food narratives and culinary experiences as metaphorical, significant, and symbolic gateways into the complexities of Asian American identities, the central focus is to explore how the motif of food can create a nuanced understanding of literary representation of contemporary Asian American experiences. Drawing from a selection of contemporary Asian American culinary memoirs—such as Eddie Huang’s *Fresh Off the Boat: A Memoir* (2013), Padma Lakshmi’s *Love, Loss, and What We Ate: A Memoir* (2016), and Michelle Zauner’s *Crying in H Mart* (2021)—this workshop will illuminate the metaphorical and symbolic roles food can play in illustrating complex themes such as immigration, cultural assimilation, and hybrid identities. Furthermore, it will offer practical guidelines for adopting such a food-centric approach in the EFL classroom, contributing to more engaging, relevant, and culturally responsive and sensitive teaching practices. This multifaceted investigation into the intersectionality of food, literature, and diasporic cultural identities presents an engaging strategy for enriching EFL teaching and learning, thereby encouraging a deeper appreciation, comprehension, and understanding of the diverse American narrative within a transpacific context.

JIANN-CHYNG TU is currently a doctoral candidate in American Studies at HU Berlin, where he is completing a dissertation on the African American novel. He has previously worked and taught at universities in Berlin (HU), Münster, Bamberg, Regensburg, and Augsburg. Jiann-Chyng Tu is currently one of the two postgraduate representatives to the advisory board of the German Association for American Studies (GAAS/DGfA).

News from the U.S. Embassy’s Public Diplomacy Section and Resources for Teaching U.S.-Pacific Relations by MARTINA SCHULZE

MARTINA SCHULZE is an Established Opinion Leaders Specialist/Program Specialist in the Public Engagement Section of U.S. Embassy Berlin with a portfolio of American foreign and security policy, economic programs and global affairs which include climate and energy policies. Previously, she was head of the international office of Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, worked for the Georg Eckert Institute - Leibniz Institute for Educational Media in Braunschweig and was program head of a large private foundation in Hamburg. She has a Master of Arts in International Relations from Boston University and a Master of Arts in American Studies from Hamburg University.

Lecture by HELEN GIBSON

“Teaching Reproductive Justice from Granny Midwives to the SisterSong Collective”

What is Reproductive Justice? Why is access to doula and midwifery care especially important for Black birthing people in the United States? How can we advocate collectively to “parent in safe and healthy environments” (Ross in Gumbs et al. 2016, p. xvi), a founding tenant of the Reproductive Justice movement, in response to the “total violence” (Ferreira da Silva 2022) of ongoing genocide? Abortion rights have been on many people’s minds since the U.S. Supreme Court’s overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022. Many are unfamiliar, however, with the history of cooptation of enslaved women’s wombs, and the means by which granny midwives, as spiritual leaders and healers, have countered this violence by connecting the living and the dead. This lecture will foreground one granny midwife, Clara Walker, and the ways in which she invoked a world of haunts and spirits to catch babies during slavery and beyond. We will also focus on the significance of midwifery and radical doula care for Black birthing people in today’s United States.

HELEN A. GIBSON (she/they) is a researcher in the field of Black Study working in the Department of History at the University of Erfurt. They are the *European Journal of American Studies* editor for history, social sciences and international relations as well as co-editor of the SFB “Strukturwandel des Eigentums” blog “Transformation of Property.”

Helen Gibson defended their dissertation on Black joy and the history of Driving While Black at Freie Universität Berlin in 2021. She was recently awarded the Rolf Kentner Dissertation Prize by the Heidelberg Center for American Studies, and is currently researching the history of granny midwifery as spiritual practice.

Workshop III by ERIC WEISBARD

“‘If You Catch Me at the Border I Got Visas in My Name:’ Hip-Hop and Global Youth Culture”

Notions once considered “American” are now sampled, remixed, and adapted as part of a system of globalized flows of ideas, technology, people, media, and of course money. This talk and subsequent workshop will use M.I.A.’s 2007 recording “Paper Planes” as an example of those flows. We will follow the recording’s origins back to two quite different sources, a hip-hop and R&B song, “Rump Shaker,” by the group Wreckx-N-Effect and a punk song, “Straight to Hell,” by the group The Clash. We’ll look at how “Paper Planes” became an unlikely hit, thanks in part to how it featured in the film *Slumdog Millionaire* and the promo for the film *Pineapple Express*. And we’ll see how, subsequently, in “Swagga Like Us,” a sample of “Paper Planes” itself became the basis of a hip-hop track featuring Jay Z, Kanye West, Lil Wayne, and T.I. During the workshops, participants can choose one of these examples to talk collectively about the challenges of teaching vernacular American pop culture, in all its global iterations.

ERIC WEISBARD is Professor of American Studies at the University of Alabama and 2023-2024 SINAS Fulbright Chair in American Studies at Uppsala University. His new book, *Hound Dog*, looks at that single in both the Big Mama Thornton and Elvis Presley versions. Previous books, as author and editor, include *Songbooks: The Literature of American Popular Music*; *Top 40 Democracy: The Rival Mainstreams of American Music*; and the *Spin Alternative Record Guide*. He co-founded and for many years organized the Pop Conference. He edited the *Village Voice* music section in the late 1990s and co-edited *The Journal of Popular Music Studies* more recently. He is currently editing *The Oxford Handbook of Pop Music* and researching U.S. American music in the world.

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