

American Studies Research Colloquium

Guest Lectures Winter 2023/24

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14 November 2023, 6pm c.t., Cas 1.812

»Biohistory and American Indigenous Languages
in Henry David Thoreau's 'Indian Notebooks'«



“Given the urgency of anthropogenic climate change and threats to biodiversity and ecosystem sustainability, Henry David Thoreau’s philosophy of ecology and politics of civil disobedience have found renewed potency. Yet, crucial to understanding Thoreau’s ecological politics is his deep engagement with, and preservation of, North American Indigenous word-concepts for natural phenomena. In this presentation, I will explore how Thoreau integrated Indigenous languages and ethnobotanical knowledges into his own biohistoriographical practices and ecological thought. I will do so based on research on Thoreau’s ‘Indian Notebooks,’ a largely under-explored and unpublished archive of his writings on Indigenous cultures, held at the Morgan Library in New York.”

Michael Jonik teaches American literature at the University of Sussex and is Reviews and Special Issues editor of the journal *Textual Practice*.



General Creighton W. Abrams Building, Frankfurt am Main, Germany