

THE DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES  
AND THE HUMANITIES INSTITUTE INVITE YOU TO A LECTURE BY

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## The American Civil War as an International Revolution: A radical trip down the Mississippi River



Apr 23, 2015

4:00 p.m.

George Wells Knight  
House,

Humanities Institute  
104 E. 15th Avenue  
main campus

Many consider the Civil War to be the most important event in the history of the United States. Yet, the American Civil War was both an international and a national event, with European, Caribbean, Latin American, and African histories influencing, and in turn being influenced by, the war over slavery in the United States.

This lecture highlights the international currents at work in the states around the Mississippi River during the Civil War. When war came to this region in 1861, the struggle between secession and union was joined by revolutionary socialist émigrés from Europe, African American rebels against slavery, and evangelical anti-slavery fighters from 'Bleeding Kansas' and elsewhere. These groups helped create a winning 'war-by-emancipation' strategy for the Union Army by building on international experiences of armed struggle against slavery, against aristocracy, against capitalism, and for a wide range of secular and religious ideas of a just society. At the same time, some slaveholders sought to be as international in their defense of slavery as these opponents, and looked to top-down, conservative socialisms of Napoleon III in France and Robert Owen in Britain, as well as to their own Caribbean and Latin American slaveholding counterparts, to modernize the ideologies and institutions of slavery.

This lecture will suggest just how international our national history is by focusing on the Civil War as the most American of international revolutions.

**Andrew Zimmerman** is professor of history at the George Washington University. He is the author of *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago, 2001) and *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (Princeton, 2010). He is currently working on a global history of the American Civil War.

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