



Roosevelt
Institute for
American
Studies

Seminar Series on Modern North American History

September 2023 – April 2024

Program

Invitation to Seminar

by Sean H. Vanatta
29 January 2024

The political developments, societal transformations, cultural shifts, foreign policy initiatives, national security concerns, and international relations that originated from the US have left an indelible mark on the North American continent and the global landscape.

This hybrid seminar series, organized by the RIAS and the Sciences Po Center for History (CHSP) in Paris, forms a platform to explore these diverse and interconnected themes.

This series, one of very few of its kind in Europe, intersects with various significant historiographical trends, continuing the move towards a more integrated view of US and North American history. It pays special attention to the inclusion of global, imperial, transnational, and interconnected histories to reframe our understanding of the United States' place in the world and the emerging focus on international environmental history and issues.

The platform, which meets once a month in a hybrid format (online and in person), encourages active participation from doctoral students and aims to serve as an open and inclusive forum for discussing some of the most innovative recent scholarship. It aspires to bring together historians of different backgrounds and in different stages of their career, foster a historiographical and interdisciplinary conversation, and critically consider the contemporary societal and political ramifications of the historical events under discussion.



Coordinators:

- **Dario Fazzi (Leiden University / RIAS)**
- **Gaetano Di Tommaso (RIAS)**
- **Mario Del Pero (Sciences Po-Paris, Centre d'histoire)**
- **Olivier Burtin (Université de Picardie Jules Verne)**

Invitation

A TREACHEROUS OCEAN OF MONEY: FINANCE AND FAILURE ACROSS THE INTERWAR ATLANTIC, 1920-1935

LECTURER Sean H. Vanatta

DATE Monday, 29 January 2024 at 17:00 to 18:30 CET

LOCATION Online

Click on this [link](#) to register



Sean H. Vanatta is lecturer in United States economic and social history at the University of Glasgow and senior fellow at the Wharton Initiative on Financial Policy and Regulation (2023–2024). His research examines the political economy of US finance. He is the author of *Plastic Capitalism: Banks, Credit Cards, and the End of Financial Control* (Yale University Press, forthcoming) and *The Banker's Thumb: A History of Bank Supervision in the United States* (with Peter Conti-Brown, Princeton University Press, forthcoming), as well as articles appearing in *Business History Review*, *Capitalism: A Journal of History and Economics*, *Enterprise & Society*, and *Review of Social Economy*.

In his lecture, Vanatta will explore how small US rural banks became entangled in Latin American sovereign debt, tracing the complex financial networks before and during the Great Depression.

In the early 1930s, thousands of mostly small, rural banks failed in the United States. When government officials took possession of the failed institutions, seeking to liquidate their assets and repay the banks' creditors, they found something surprising: large quantities of sovereign debt, particularly from Latin American states and municipalities which borrowed heavily in the interwar years. The paper starts with this puzzle: how did rural American bankers come to own the debt issued to pave streets, build railroads, and supply clean water across Brazil and Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru? In seeking to answer it, the presentation offers a very preliminary sketch of a new project, which will trace the transnational networks linking Latin American governments (bond issuers), British and American investment banks (bond underwriters), US commercial banks and bond houses (bond distributors), and small, rural US banks (the ultimate bondholders), showing how the networks grew and developed before the Great Depression, how they frayed and split during it, and how they eventually reformed—like much of the global economy—under firm US government influence.

To attend the lecture, please register [here](#).

Program

Monday, 25 September 2023, 17.00 – 18.30 CEST

- Kristin Hoganson (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign), *Structures of Power: US Infrastructure Building in the Circum-Caribbean During the Bad Neighbor Era*

Monday, 23 October 2023, 18.00 – 19.30 CEST

- Matthew Connelly (Columbia University), *America's Secrecy Industrial Complex: History and the Future*

Monday, 20 November 2023, 17.00 – 18.30 CET

- Andrew Preston (University of Cambridge), *From Planning to Strategy: New Deal Liberalism and the Invention of National Security*

Monday, 11 December 2023, 17.30 – 19.00 CET

- Rebecca Herman (UC Berkeley), *Cooperating with the Colossus: US Military Basing in World War II Latin America*

Monday, 29 January 2024, 17.00 – 18.30 CET

- Sean Vanatta (University of Glasgow), *A Treacherous Ocean of Money: Finance and Failure across the Interwar Atlantic, 1920-1935*

Monday, 26 February 2024, 17.00 – 18.30 CET

- Sarah Nelson (Leiden University), *Networking Empire: Communications, Decolonization, and American Power in the 20th Century*

Monday, 25 March 25, 2024, 17.00 – 18.30 CET

- Augusta Dell'Omo (Southern Methodist University), *Far Right Capitalism in the US and South Africa at the End of the Cold War*

Monday, 29 April 2024, 17.00 – 18.30 CEST

- Elsa Devienne (Northumbria University), *Rubbish Tactics? Oil Spills, Beach Clean-Ups, and the Making of Modern Environmentalism (1969-2023)*



Roosevelt Institute for American Studies

Hofplein 16
4331 CK Middelburg
The Netherlands
T +31(0)118 678 836
E info@roosevelt.nl
W www.roosevelt.nl

SciencesPo
CENTRE FOR HISTORY



This program is sponsored by

