



Roosevelt
Institute for
American
Studies

International PhD Seminar

26-28 November 2025

Roosevelt Institute for American Studies
Hofplein 16
4331 CK Middelburg

Program

International PhD Seminar

26-28 November 2025

All sessions follow the following format: a 15-min presentation, followed by a 45-min discussion. There will be a 15-minute coffee break following each presentation & discussion.

Wednesday, 26 November

- 15:00 onwards** **Arrival in Middelburg and hotel check-in**
Hotel De Nieuwe Doelen, Loskade 5, Middelburg
- 20:00** **Welcome drinks at the hotel**

Thursday, 27 November

- 09:00-12:30** **Session 1: Gender, Sexuality & the Boundaries of Normality in Modern America**
Chair: Jeanine Quené (RIAS)
- **Eszter D Kovacs (University of Oxford)**
Cold War 'Normality', Sexuality, and the Project Mercury Recruitment Process
 - **Eloise Mattimoe (University of Bristol)**
Sexual Development under the Diagnostic Lens: Feeble-mindedness and Homosexuality, Napanoch 1919-1930
 - **Eimeel Castillo (University of Michigan)**
An Intoxicating Paradise: Prohibition and The American Legation Guard in Nicaragua, 1910-1925
- 12:30-13:00** **RIAS Tour**
- 13:00-14:00** **Lunch**
- 14:00-14:45** **Middelburg City Tour**

- 15:00-18:30** **Session 2: (Re)constructing Political Cultures in the Twenty-First Century**
Chair: Jack Thompson (University of Amsterdam)
- **Beer Prakken (University of Groningen)**
Humor and Play in Political Discourse: How The Far Right Mobilizes and Radicalizes through Playful Transgression
 - **Karina Cretu (University of Bucharest)**
Redefining American Conservatism After 2016: New Intellectual Currents on the Right
 - **Alma Topalli (University of Münster)**
Gender Representation in Newberry Award-Winning Books, 2015-2025
- 18:45** **Dinner at Restaurant Cluys**
Markt 7, 4331 LJ Middelburg

Friday, 28 November

- 09:00-12:30** **Session 3: Everyday Civil Rights Activism in the Jim Crow South**
Chair: Damian Pargas (RIAS/Leiden University)
- **Chelsea D. McNutt (Cornell University)**
Care, Joy, and Everyday Political Labor: Birdie Williams and the NAACP in Jim Crow South
 - **Katrina Stack (University of Tennessee, Knoxville)**
Toward a Spatial Public History of the Civil Rights Movement: Preserving Freedom Houses in the Mississippi Delta
 - **Samantha Gowdy (Queen's University Belfast)**
"Let them join the Union and do something for themselves": The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and Sharecropper Activism in Arkansas
- 12:45-13:30** **Roundtable on grants, fellowships and applications with Damian Pargas and visiting scholar Renata Nowaczewska**
- 13:30-14:30** **Lunch & Farewell**

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