



Roosevelt
Institute for
American
Studies

European Forum on US History

September 2026 – June 2027

Program

The RIAS, in collaboration with eleven other European institutions, is launching the European Forum on US History, a new monthly hybrid seminar series on US history. Our partnership consists of the following research centres:

- American Studies Center, University of Warsaw
- CEI-Iscte / Centre for International Studies of Iscte – University Institute of Lisbon
- Centre d'Histoire de Sciences Po
- Centro di Studi sugli Stati Uniti – Università di Bologna
- Heidelberg University
- Instituto Franklin-UAH – Alcalá University
- Roosevelt Institute for American Studies
- Rothermere American Institute – University of Oxford
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Glasgow
- University of Southern Denmark



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Together, our eleven institutes will curate a rotating, hybrid seminar series that deepens historiographical and interdisciplinary exchange, broadens our geographic reach, diversifies scholarly voices, and creates new opportunities for joint workshops, doctoral mentoring, and collaborative publications. By fostering an inclusive platform for scholars and reaffirming our shared commitment to cutting-edge research on US history, we sustain vital cross-border collaboration at a moment when restrictions on academic freedom make such partnerships more essential than ever.

This series, one of the 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, encourages active participation from doctoral students and serves 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 careers, foster a historiographical and interdisciplinary conversation, and critically consider the contemporary societal and political ramifications of the historical events under discussion.

Five of the eleven partner institutes are members of the American Studies Network (ASN), a consortium of European American studies centres affiliated with the European Association for American Studies (EAAS).

Members

- William Glass (American Studies Center – University of Warsaw)
- Ana Mónica Fonseca, Luís Nuno Rodrigues (CEI-Iscte / Centre for International Studies of Iscte – University Institute of Lisbon)
- Olivier Burtin, Mario Del Pero, Jonathan Levy (Centre d'Histoire de Sciences Po)
- Matteo Battistini, Angela Santese (Centro di Studi sugli Stati Uniti – Università di Bologna)
- Nicole Colaiani (Heidelberg University)
- Carlos Herrero, Ana Lariño (Instituto Franklin-UAH – Alcalá University)
- Gaetano Di Tommaso, Dario Fazzi (Roosevelt Institute for American Studies)
- Daniel Rowe (Rothermere American Institute – University of Oxford)
- Fabian Hilfrich (University of Edinburgh)
- Jay Sarkar, Sarah C. Dunstan, Oli Charbonneau (University of Glasgow)
- Jørn Brøndal (University of Southern Denmark)

Program Coordinator

Gaetano Di Tommaso

Invitation

'WHY DO THEY FEAR TO RETURN?': HAITIAN REFUGEES, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, AND RIGHTS-BASED LITIGATION IN THE UNITED STATES, 1973-1980

SPEAKER Bastiaan Bouwman

DATE Monday, 26 October 2026 at 17:00 to 18:30 CET

LOCATION Online



Bastiaan Bouwman is Assistant Professor of History of International Relations at Utrecht University, where he studies the **history of human rights, humanitarianism, and refugees during the Cold War**. He is the author of *Liberalism and Liberation: The World Council of Churches and the Global Politics of Human Rights* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2026). Bastiaan is also the editor of the forthcoming special issue "Refugees and the Cold War," with *Cold War History*. He has held postdoctoral fellowships at Princeton University, the Freie Universität Berlin, and the German Historical Institute in Washington, DC. Bastiaan's current project is entitled "The Rise of Refugee Rights: The Movement to Make Asylum a Human Right, c. 1945-1995." His work has been published in the *Journal of Global History*, *Low Countries Historical Review*, and *Contemporary European History*, which in 2021 awarded him 'Honorable Mention' for the Contemporary European History Prize.

In the 1970s, thousands of **Haitians** arrived in the United States by boat, escaping the repression and immiseration of Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier's Haiti. Their claims to asylum were met with hostility by US authorities, however, who considered them **undesirable migrants**. The ensuing political and legal struggle, which pitted a wide-ranging coalition against the US government, took on added significance against the background of Jimmy Carter's presidency: Carter promised a moral revival of foreign policy, including the treatment of refugees. Ultimately, the Haitian case contributed to a shift from a **refugee policy** of Cold War selectivity to one based – at least in principle – on **universal human rights**. This paper focuses especially on Amnesty International's role as the standard-bearer of the 1970s "human rights movement." It argues that Amnesty made vital contributions to litigation on Haitians' behalf and thus helped reframe refugee affairs as a human rights issue.

TO ATTEND THE LECTURE, PLEASE REGISTER [HERE](#).

Program 2026-2027

Monday, 28 September 2026, 17:00-18:30 CEST

- [Brooke L. Blower](#) (Boston University), *Flying for Refuge: Europe's Unwed Mothers and Birthright Citizenship at the US Border, 1880s–1920s*
- Host: American Studies Center, University of Warsaw (Poland)

Monday, 26 October 2026, 17:00 – 18:30 CET

- [Bastiaan Bouwman](#) (Utrecht University), *'Why Do They Fear to Return?': Haitian Refugees, Amnesty International, and Rights-Based Litigation in the United States, 1973-1980*
- Host: Centre d'Histoire de Sciences Po (France)

Monday, 23 November 2026, 17:00 – 18:30 CET

- [Frédéric Heurtebize](#) (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle), *Constrained Engagement: US Labor and Portugal's Democratic Transition (1974–1975)*
- Host: CEI-Iscte/Centre for International Studies of Iscte – University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal)

Monday, 14 December 2026, 17:00 – 18:30 CET

- [Aimée Plukker](#) (Center for Presidential History, SMU), *Destination Europe: Cold War Transatlantic Tourism and the Making of 'the West*
- Host: University of Southern Denmark (Denmark)

Monday, 25 January 2027, 17:00 – 18:30 CET

- [Hélène Quanquin](#) (University of Lille / IUF), *Feminisms Without Children: Childlessness, Feminist Activism and Kinships in the United States, 1830s–1920s*
- Host: Roosevelt Institute for American Studies (Netherlands)

Monday, 22 February 2027, 17:00 – 18:30 CET

- [Matteo Rossi](#) (Fondazione 1563 / University of Turin), *The Artifice of Accumulation: Henry Carey's Political Economy in the Making of American Capitalism*
- Host: Centro di Studi sugli Stati Uniti - Università di Bologna (Italy)

Monday, 22 March 2027, 17:00 – 18:30 CEST

- [Sarah E. Naramore](#) (University of Edinburgh), *Transatlantic Negotiations: American and European Interpretations of Disease*
- Host: University of Edinburgh (Scotland)

Monday, 19 April 2027, 17:00 – 18:30 CEST

- [Katharina Wiedlack](#) (University of Vienna), *'When Uncle Sam Sent Me to Alaska': Entangled Imperialisms and Native Resistance at the Turn of the 20th*

Century

Host: Heidelberg University (Germany)

Monday, 24 May 2027, 17:00-18:30 CEST

- Emilie Cunning (Emory University), *Borders of Freedom: How Europe Became Contested Territory for Amnesty Politics during the US War in Vietnam*
Host: Rothermere American Institute - University of Oxford (England)

Monday, 24 May 2027, 17:00-18:30 CEST

- Suzanne Enzerink (University of St. Gallen), *From Race Suicide to the Great Replacement: Europe and the United States in a Century of Dialogue and Exclusion*
Host: Instituto Franklin-UAH – Alcalá University (Spain)

This program is sponsored by



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