



International Wednesdays



Prof. Adam Nelson, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Capital of Mind: The Idea of a Modern American University

International Lecture Series

Wednesday, January 22nd, 5 pm, Hörsaal 1
Sensengasse 3A, 1. OG

This presentation looks at the early decades of the nineteenth century, explaining how the idea of the modern American university arose from a set of institutional and ideological reforms designed to foster the mass production and mass consumption of knowledge. This “industrialization of ideas” mirrored the industrialization of the American economy and catered to the demands of a new industrial middle class for practical and professional education. From Harvard in the north to the University of Virginia in the south, new experiments with the idea of a university, often conceived in critical dialogue with developments in the German university system, elicited intense debate about the role of scholarship in national development and international competition, and whether higher education should be supported by public funds, especially in periods of fiscal austerity. In this presentation, Adam Nelson will show how the history of capitalism and the history of the university are intimately intertwined—which raises a host of important questions that remain salient today. How do we understand knowledge and education as commercial goods? Should they be public or private? Who should pay for them? And, fundamentally, what is the optimal system of higher education for a capitalist democracy?

Adam R. Nelson is Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professor of Educational Policy Studies and History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He received his Ph.D. in History from Brown University. He recently published two volumes on the history of higher education in the United States of America with University of Chicago Press. He co-edited *The Global University: Past, Present, and Future Perspectives* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). He served as President of the History of Education Society and co-directs the annual University of Wisconsin-Peking University Workshop on Higher Education.

This event is organized by the Department of Education and the Doctoral School in Education of University of Vienna. It will be followed by an open reception.