PUBLIC PROGRAMS

The GHI aims not only to support innovative scholarly research but also to foster dialogue between the scholarly community and the broader public. To that end, the institute sponsors a broad range of programs for the general public. The Annual Lecture, inaugurated the year of the GHI’s founding, is envisioned as an opportunity for two noted scholars – one German and one American; one as principal speaker, the other as commentator – to address a topic of interest to professional historians and the educated public alike. Since 1988, the GHI has organized a public lecture series each spring and fall. The spring and fall lecture series initially spotlighted new research in German and German-American history. Since the fall of 1993, the lecture series have each been devoted to a particular topic. In some instances, the lecture series have dealt with new approaches to historical research or with subjects at the center of current scholarly debate. The spring 2010 lecture series, for example, focused on “History of Globalization – Globalization in History.” Other lecture series have sought to offer a historical perspective on contemporary issues and problems. The rationales behind the spring 2009 series “Financial Crises: How They Changed History” and the spring 2012 series “Get Out the Vote! Mobilization, Media, and Money” are self-evident.

The GHI has partnered with other institutions and foundations in organizing events aimed at a general audience. From 1991 to 1998, the institute and the Stifterverband für die deutsche Wissenschaft sponsored an annual Alois Mertes Memorial Lecture. Mertes (1921–1985), who divided his career between the Bundestag and the Foreign Ministry, was broadly interested in transatlantic relations and particularly concerned with ties between Germany and the United States. The Alois Mertes Memorial Lectures recognized outstanding scholars whose work centered on the issues to which Mertes devoted his career. From 2001 to 2011, the ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin and Gerd Bucerius and the GHI sponsored an annual Gerd Bucerius Lecture in memory of the influential publisher-politician. The Bucerius Lecture featured prominent commentators on transatlantic relations – Ralf Dahrendorf in 2001, for instance, and Timothy Garton Ash in 2005 – as well as major German public figures, including Chancellors Helmut Schmidt and Gerhard Schröder, Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, Bundestag President Rita Süssmuth, and Federal Constitutional Court President Jutta Limbach. Starting in 2003, the Hertie Foundation has sponsored the GHI’s annual German Unification Symposium on October 3. The
Hertie Lecture, the central event of the symposium, is an occasion for a participant in East Germany’s peaceful revolution and the unification process to reflect upon developments in united Germany since 1990. Finally, the GHI has repeatedly teamed up institutions in Washington – notably the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, and the German Marshall Fund of the United States – in organizing lectures, panel discussions, and book presentations. Those events are generally open to the public free of charge.

The GHI’s scholarly work and public outreach efforts frequently overlap. Conferences at the GHI commonly open with a keynote lecture open to the public. The March 2012 conference “Adolescent Ambassadors: Twentieth-Century Youth Organizations and International Relations,” for example, featured a public keynote address by Akira Iriye of Harvard University. Organized in collaboration with the Humanities Council of Washington, DC, the Black German Cultural Society, and the Goethe-Institut Washington, DC, the GHI’s spring 2011 lecture series “Crossing the Color Line: A Global History of the African American Freedom Struggle” was an integral part of the institute’s special research program on African Americans and Germany.
GHI Lecture Series 2012

Get Out the Vote! Mobilization, Media, and Money

Mobilizing the Nineteenth-Century American Electorate: The Elections of 1828 and 1840
Michael Holt, University of Virginia
March 22

Voters Without Democracy: Elections in Imperial Germany
James Retallack, University of Toronto
April 12

Americanizing the Electoral Process? Elections in the Federal Republic of Germany
Frank Bösch, Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung Potsdam
May 3

American Campaign Mobilization in the Age of New Media
Kate Kenski, University of Arizona
May 31

Social Justice in Times of Crisis: A Transatlantic Comparison

The Idea of Social Justice: Genuine or Spurious?
Wilfried Hinsch, University of Cologne
September 6

Markets, States, and Social Justice in the Era of High Industrial Capitalism: Contrasts and Connections across the Atlantic
Daniel Rodgers, Princeton University
October 11

Parallels, Networks, and Convergences: Women and Social Justice in Transnational Perspective
Sonya Michel, University of Maryland, College Park
October 25

The End of the Social Democratic Era? Crisis in the Conceptualization of Social Justice in the 1970s and 1980s
Martin H. Geyer, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich
December 6