



Wednesday Seminars

SOMMERSEMESTER 2017

Andrew Brandel

Knowledge of Labor: SW Mintz and the Legacy of Ethnographic Theory

Mittwoch 15.03.2017, 17.00, HS C, IKSA, NIG, Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Wien, 4. Stock



Andrew Brandel is visiting fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna, completing work on a monograph on literary culture in Berlin, co-authored with Clara Han (Johns Hopkins) on the inheritance of witness accounts of catastrophic

violence, and a co-edited volume with Anouk Cohen (Centre national de la recherche scientifique) on the anthropology of textual practices. From 2011-2013, he was the inaugural University Archives Fellow at the Hamburger Archives where he curated the papers of Sidney W. Mintz; his recent work on the history of anthropology includes the recent essay "The Art of Conviviality".

...kommende Termine

22.03.2017 **Herta Nöbauer**

**Von der Goldmine zum Gletscher-
skigebiet: All Weather Snow als
multiples Frontier-Phänomen**

29.03.2017 **Lina Masana**

**Living with an invisible chronic ill-
ness: body, conflicts and resistances**

03.05.2017 **Peter Rohrbacher**

**Wiener Völkerkunde in der NS-Zeit:
Pater Wilhelm Koppers, 1938–1945**

Sidney W. Mintz (1922-2015) is widely considered one of the most influential American anthropologists of the 20th and 21st centuries, and a key member of the tradition's third generation, building on the legacy of Boasian approaches to fieldwork that continue to shape global conversations on the historical transformations of culture. While his contributions to the study of Caribbean societies, peasant economies, and the anthropology of food, are well known, this lecture will explore the subtleties of his thinking about the methods of anthropological research. Drawing on his readings of his friends and teachers, importantly Alexander Lesser and Ruth Benedict, his occasional writings on ethnography, and his voluminous teaching notes, we will examine how at bottom, Mintz's conception of anthropological knowledge rested on a Marxian-inspired respect for the dignity of humanity and her labors. These ordinary forms of labor, from the women of Haitian market places to the sugar-cane workers of Puerto Rico, appear in Mintz's writings as definitive spaces of cultural knowledge and creativity. But in his careful attention to peoples' daily work, Mintz also shows how anthropology stands to learn and develop its own practices from the variety of human genius. This is perhaps most famously exemplified in his identification of Don Taso as a collaborator, in his descriptions of the latter's efforts at data collection, and in his reverence for his friend's analytical brilliance. Such people are not "average" or "exemplary" of some larger social collectivity, he writes, but are rather highly original thinkers in their own right, whose contributions to theorizing the ethnographer's task Mintz taught us to take seriously.