

- Montag, 13.10.2025 Timothy Moss (Berlin):
Book Launch - Meet the Authors: Grounding Berlin. Ecologies of a Technopolis, 1871 to the Present
In Kooperation mit dem Forschungsschwerpunkt „Umwelt, Klima, Energie“ im Centre Marc Bloch, Friedrichstraße 191, 3. OG, Simmelsaal und online Abweichend: 16-18 Uhr
- Montag, 15.12.2025 Žiga Zwitter (Ljubljana):
Hay Meadows in the Alps, 16th–Mid-20th Centuries: A Material and Cultural Environmental History, and “Usable Pasts”
- Montag, 19.01.2026 Rebecca Janzen (Columbia, S.C., USA):
Mining Religion: Religious Sites and Extractive Industries across the Americas
- Montag, 09.02.2026 Tetiana Perga (Berlin):
Waste, Power, and Ideology: Recycling in the Early Soviet Ukraine
In Kooperation mit dem Forschungsschwerpunkt „Umwelt, Klima, Energie“ im Centre Marc Bloch, Friedrichstraße 191, 7. OG, Tillionsaal und online
- Ort: **ONLINE on ZOOM:** <https://hu-berlin.zoom-x.de/j/65558796751?pwd=U3hkYVMzTDkrc3lGdk5nekdGL2l6Zz09>
Meeting-ID: 655 5879 6751; Passwort: 264162
- Zeit: **18:00 – 20:00 Uhr**
- Kontakt: **Astrid M. Kirchhof** astrid.m.kirchhof@hu-berlin.de
Jan-Henrik Meyer meyer@zzf-potsdam.de

Montag, 13.10.2025

Timothy Moss (Berlin):

Book Launch - Meet the Authors: Grounding Berlin.

Ecologies of a Technopolis, 1871 to the Present

In Kooperation mit dem Forschungsschwerpunkt

„Umwelt, Klima, Energie“ im Centre Marc Bloch,

Friedrichstraße 191, 3. OG, Simmelsaal und online

Abweichend: 16-18 Uhr

Abstract:

Das jüngst erschienene Buch [*Grounding Berlin. Ecologies of a Technopolis, 1871 to the Present*](#) (Hg. Timothy Moss) ist ein innovativer Beitrag zwischen Umwelt-, Stadt- und Technikgeschichte. Es untersucht die Rolle Berlins als Pionierstadt für urbane Technologien und Stadtökologie von 1871 bis heute und zeigt, wie tiefgreifende Eingriffe in Energieversorgung, Wasser, Abfallentsorgung und Flächennutzung Berlin zu einem internationalen Vorreiter der technologischen Moderne machten – von der Industrialisierung über die Weimarer Republik und die Zeit der Teilung bis hin zu Nachhaltigkeits- und Dekarbonisierungs-Strategien der Gegenwart. Berlin wird dabei als Fallbeispiel genutzt, um die komplexen Wechselbeziehungen zwischen Gesellschaft, Natur und Technologie in Städten sichtbar zu machen.

Dieser Book Launch bietet neben der Einführung in das Konzept des Buches, auch die Gelegenheit zur vertieften Diskussion einzelner Beiträge mit verschiedenen Autorinnen und Autoren. Die Veranstaltung findet auf Deutsch statt und ist auch online zugänglich.

Kurzbiographie:

Timothy Moss ist Senior Researcher am Integrative Research Institute on Transformations of Human-Environment Systems (IRI THESys) an der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin und Honorarprofessor an der Leibniz Universität Hannover. Seit über 30 Jahren erforscht er städtische Energie- und Wassersysteme aus geschichts- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Perspektiven. Kennzeichnend für seine Forschungen ist die Verzahnung von historischen Infrastrukturstudien mit aktuellen Debatten über soziotechnische und urbane Transformationen. Sein Buch [*Remaking Berlin. A History of the City through Infrastructure, 1920-2020*](#) erschien 2020 bei MIT Press. Aktuell leitet er ein interaktives DFG-Projekt über „usable pasts“ der Berliner Infrastrukturgeschichte (mit den Schwerpunkten Energie und Wasser) als Impulsgeber für heutige Transformationsprozesse.

Montag, 15.12.2025

Žiga Zwitter (Ljubljana):

**Hay Meadows in the Alps, 16th–Mid-20th Centuries:
A Material and Cultural Environmental History, and
“Usable Pasts”**

Abstract

The forthcoming 980-page volume *Historical Biodiversity in the Alps: Grassland Agroecosystems in the Last Millennium* (Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, autumn 2025), written in cooperation with botanist Leonid Rasran, will be presented by the first author. The book combines novel research insights—based on archival and published primary sources, oral-history interviews, historical artefacts and paintings, fieldwork, and interdisciplinary botanical and agronomic interpretations—and literature to synthesize a material and cultural environmental history of hay meadows in the Alps. The volume contains the following chapters: (1) Introduction, (2) Brief phytosociological overview, (3) Fluctuations in grassland area in the Alps over the last millennium, (4) Natural and nature-induced environmental changes in grasslands, (5) Historical changes in livestock size and feed demand, (6) Selected historical practices of species-rich grassland management and their ecological impacts, (7) Introduction of plant species to grasslands in the Alps through human activities in the context of economic history, political history, and the history of botany and ornamental plants, (8) Gathering of grassland plants and lichens, (9) Abandonment of grasslands in the Alps: a case study with an emphasis on the role of plant species composition, (10) Applicability of grassland history in the twenty-first century, with an emphasis on meadows, and (11) Conclusions. A selection of historical contents will be presented, enabling the presentation of a few examples of “usable pasts” in the 21st century, when species-rich grasslands are being rapidly lost.

Short Bio:

Žiga Zwitter, PhD, University of Ljubljana, graduated in history and geography, and obtained his PhD in history in 2015. He is an assistant professor of early modern history. Since his postdoctoral project at the Vienna’s Institute of Social Ecology (2016–2017), his research has focused on long-term environmental history and historical ecology of grasslands in the Alps. Together with botanist Leonid Rasran, they wrote the interdisciplinary volume *Historical Biodiversity in the Alps: Grassland Agroecosystems in the Last Millennium* (Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, autumn 2025). Zwitter has been representative of the European Society for Environmental History’s Dinaric Region and he is recently elected president of the Historical Association of Slovenia. He was visiting professor at the University of Innsbruck (2024) and at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society (2025).

Montag, 19.01.2026 Rebecca Janzen (Columbia, S.C., USA):
**Mining Religion: Religious Sites and Extractive
Industries across the Americas**

Abstract:

This presentation is part of a larger project called *Mining Religion*, a single-authored monograph that examines the complex relationship between Catholic religious devotion in churches and shrines near mines – looking at mining saints, and church buildings, and altars inside of mines in Oruro, Bolivia; Diamantina, Brazil; Santiago de Cuba, Cuba; Real de Catorce, Mexico. It situates this religious veneration in its historical context in relationship to booms and busts in mining and relates the popularity of certain saints (and not others) to support from government tourism programs, and the UNESCO world heritage program. The presentation speak to the relationship between the natural world, the mining industry, and religious practice and offer a case study from Mexico.

The presentation engages with questions such as: what does the environment afford religious practice? How does the mountainous and desert-like space in San Luis Potosí, Mexico, as well as copper mining, relate to Huichol Indigenous pilgrimages, spiritual engagement with peyote, and Catholic pilgrimages? Moreover, how have the booms and busts associated with mining, and, more recently, tourism, affected the local environment and the people who live there?

Short Bio:

Rebecca Janzen is Professor of Spanish and Comparative Literature at the University of South Carolina – Columbia and a Humboldt Foundation Experienced Research Fellow at the Deutsches Bergbau Museum (2025-2027). She is a scholar of gender, disability and religious studies whose research focuses on excluded populations in Latin America. She has written four books about literature, film, religion and law in Mexico: *The National Body in Mexican Literature: Collective Challenges to Biopolitical Control* (2015), *Liminal Sovereignty: Mennonites and Mormons in Mexican Culture* (2018), *Unholy Trinity: State, Church and Film in Mexico* (2021), and *Unlawful Violence: Law and Cultural Production in 21st Century Mexico* (2022).

Montag, 09.02.2026

Tetiana Perga (Berlin):

Waste, Power, and Ideology: Recycling in the Early Soviet Ukraine

***In Kooperation mit dem Forschungsschwerpunkt
„Umwelt, Klima, Energie“ im Centre Marc Bloch,
Friedrichstraße 191, 7. OG, Tillionsaal und online***

Abstract:

This paper explores the features of the early Soviet waste regime in the Ukrainian SSR during the 1920s and early 1930s, examining waste recycling as a survival strategy for enterprises, institutions, private entrepreneurs, charitable organizations, and ordinary citizens amid chronic raw material shortages, forced industrialization and collectivization, social transformations, the project of forming the “new Soviet person,” and the Holodomor of 1932–1933. How did they compete for this limited yet valuable resource during the “waste fever” that swept across Ukraine at the time? What practices did they employ in this intense competition? Which factors determined success and failure for businesses and individuals? The sheds light on how everyday survival strategies, competition, ingenuity, ambition, and practical knowledge shaped the functioning of the waste collection and recycling system in early Soviet Ukraine and it is built on a wide range of primary sources.

Short Bio:

Tetiana Perga received her Ph.D. from Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine, and has worked at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine for over 30 years. She has participated in international research programs funded by DAAD, DFG, the Volkswagen Foundation, the Max Weber Foundation, the Leibniz Institute for Jewish History and Culture (Germany), and the Aleksanteri Institute at the University of Helsinki (Finland). Currently, she is affiliated with the Technical University of Berlin. She is a member of the European Society for Environmental History and the Leo Baeck Institute Research Group in Jewish Environmental History, serves as an expert for the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and a member of editorial boards of two Ukrainian academic journals. She is also a participant in UGHI, where she is working on the excremental history of Ukraine. Tetiana Perga has presented at numerous international conferences and is the author of 140 articles, co-author of eight books, and author of two monographs, focusing on diverse aspects of environmental history.