



Public online lecture

by

Prof. Dr. Adam Laats (SUNY)

« Safety Schools: Conservative Education Reform in Twentieth-century America »

Tuesday, December 8, 2020, at 4 pm CET
Registration for the zoom session
till December 7, 2020: michael.geiss@uzh.ch

Historically, studies of school reform in the United States have focused on progressive reformers. Yet during the twentieth century, at least, conservative activists and ideas played just as significant a role in shaping and revising American education and public schooling. What has it meant to be “conservative” about education? There has been no single answer to that question; the goals and policies of conservative school reform have taken many different forms over the years. In this talk, historian Adam Laats describes one theme that has linked successful conservative efforts. In every decade, conservative activists manipulated popular opinions about student safety in order to enact their reforms. With issues as varied as evolution education, communism, and classroom pedagogy, an array of loosely connected conservatives argued that only their policies could protect students from the dangers of the modern world, and protect America from the dangers of the twentieth century.

Adam Laats is an historian interested in culture and education in the United States. He taught middle- and high school for ten years in sunny Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He now teaches at Binghamton University (State University of New York). He was trained as a historian at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where he studied with educational historian William J. Reese and historian of science and medicine Ronald L. Numbers.



Timetable for the lecture

- 16.00-16.05 The purpose of the research network (Michael Geiss)
- 16.05-16.40 Mini lecture by Adam Laats
- 16.40-16.50 Short Comments by Anja Giudici (University of Oxford)
& Michelle Nickerson (Loyola University Chicago)
- 16.50-17.00 Break
- 17.00-17.30 Open Discussion