

MUTANT BIOLOGIES: SURVIVAL AND HEALTH STRATEGIES AT KAZAKHSTAN'S SEMIPALATINSK NUCLEAR TEST SITE



The Soviet-era Semipalatinsk nuclear test site situated in contemporary Kazakhstan was an experimental landscape where science, technology, Cold War militarism, and human biology intersected to create lasting effects/legacies. From 1949 to 1989, more than 450 nuclear devices were detonated on the seemingly vast and desolate grasslands, where thousands of people continue to live in rural settlements today. This talk focuses on one such village, Koyan, located on the test site's western border, where damaged genetics and mutant biologies have acquired both sensational and scientific currency. How do individuals living in ecosystems contaminated with radioactivity perceive its effects on their past, present, and future? Lacking robust economic options, Koyaners claim to be “mutants” adapted to radiation, while outsiders see them as genetically tainted. In this setting, I ask how post-Soviet social, political, and economic transformations operate with radioactivity to co-constitute a “mutant” subjectivity.

30.07.2020
18:15-19:45 Uhr

Das Kolloquium findet dieses Semester online über Zoom statt. Für weitere Informationen melden Sie sich bitte bei Frau Kindermann (sekretariat.wsu@geschichte.uni-freiburg.de).

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