



Nordamerikastudienprogramm
Institut für Anglistik, Amerikanistik und Keltologie

Events | Veranstaltungen Wintersemester 2009-2010



Prof. Jane Feuer

University of Pittsburgh / Universität Tübingen

"Town Meetings of the Imagination: *Northern Exposure* and *Gilmore Girls*"

Tuesday • 1 December 2009 • 6:00-8:00 pm
Room A, Institut für Anglistik, Amerikanistik und Keltologie

A mythology of the idyllic American small town has long permeated American literature, film and television, most recently in the "whimsical" U.S. television series *Northern Exposure* and *The Gilmore Girls*. Through historical and ideological references to the New England town meeting, long a symbol of American participatory democracy at its best, the Connecticut town takes on a link to Benedict Anderson's (imagined) primordial villages. *The Gilmore Girls* is treated as an extended text that encompasses and works through a number of significant ideological oppositions in relation to town meetings in many senses of the term, referring to the New England Town Meeting in particular, to places where citizens and ideas truly meet each other, and to the intermingling of certain binaries that structure the show thematically. Just as the town meeting represents an alternative to the corporate state, so too do *Northern Exposure* and *Gilmore Girls* offer alternatives to the brutal contemporary society portrayed on other television series.

Jane Feuer is professor of English at the University of Pittsburgh and a Fulbright Distinguished Professor at the English department of the University of Tübingen during the academic year 2009-10. Her main areas of interest are film, popular culture, television and Cultural Studies. Her publications include *The Hollywood Musical* (second edition, 1993) and *Seeing through the Eighties: Television and Reaganism* (Duke University Press, 1995) as well as numerous essays on television and popular culture. An article entitled "Town Meetings in *Northern Exposure* and *The Gilmore Girls*" is forthcoming in the essay collection *Screwball Television: Gilmore Girls* (ed. David Scott Diffrient and David Lavery, Syracuse University Press).