



US-Generalkonsulat  
Düsseldorf



North American Studies Program  
Department of English, American, and Celtic Studies



Vortragsreihe

# The Road to the White House: Die USA vor den Präsidentschaftswahlen

Montag, 29. Oktober 2012 • 18-20 Uhr • *(Columbus Day Lecture 2012)*  
Festsaal (Hauptgebäude der Universität Bonn, 1. OG, Regina-Pacis-Weg 3, 53113 Bonn)

**Prof. Crister S. Garrett (Universität Leipzig)**

## “America Debates Itself: Exceptionalism, Declinism, and the Electoral Season of 2012”

American anxiety about the country's future has provided the unmistakable backdrop for the electoral season of 2012. Although the economy continues to mend, polls show that one week before election day Americans across the country are deeply concerned about the nation's direction. The domestic variant of this debate focuses on the ability of Americans to still attain the so-called American dream, or in short hand, the opportunity for citizens to achieve the socio-economic mobility they seek. Extending from and interrelated with the national debate about prospects for economic power and societal dynamism are the diverse arguments centering on the country's place in global affairs. Anxieties stem here from perceptions of decline, that America's exceptional role in the twentieth century slowly is giving way to withering influence and abilities to exert power. The electoral season of 2012 has witnessed an intense and fundamental debate among Americans about the essential qualities of the American experiment in republican democracy and the extent to which it will thrive in the coming decades. Results from election day 2012 will thus determine basic elements of the country's course and its contributions to global affairs.

*Crister S. Garrett, Professor for American Culture and History at the University of Leipzig. He earned his PhD at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and has taught at the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California (five years) and at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (five years). He conducts research on contemporary American politics and society, especially in an international context and does a lot of research on contemporary trends in political, economic, and social reform in a transatlantic context, involving mostly the United States, Germany, France, and Sweden. He is also regularly researching American foreign policy, and the relationship between the country's history, political culture, and international politics.*