



WINTERPROGRAMM 2018/19

Abendvortrag

Donnerstag, 24. Januar 2019, 17.15 Uhr

Vortragssaal des Forschungszentrums Gotha („Landschaftshaus“ am Schloßberg 2)

David Armitage (Harvard University): In Defence of Presentism

Historians know one thing about presentism: they are against it. Yet what exactly presentism is, they cannot agree. Is it a focus on modern history or a novel way of thinking confined to the present at the expense of both past and future? Does it mean speaking only to the concerns of the present or recognising that “all history is contemporary history”? These confusions are symptoms of a deeper quandary: the very purpose of history writing itself. With the help of scholarship on presentism in other disciplines—philosophy, psychology, history of science—this paper disentangles the various meanings of presentism, presents their ethical implications, and offers a tempered defence of presentism in history as a key to human flourishing.

Prof. Dr. David Armitage studied history at the University of Cambridge and Princeton University. Since joining the faculty of Harvard in 2004, he teaches intellectual history and international history at the Department of History. He has held research fellowships and visiting positions in Australia, Britain, China, France, Germany, South Korea and the United States.

