Kommentar:
The West promises bounty and freedom, the North is chilling, but clear and rational, the East is foreign and different, the South may be seductive and dangerous at the same time: These are certainly clichés, and probably stem from a „Western“ perspective: We can’t seem to escape notions of culture that are expressed as cardinal coordinates, or as dichotomies between opposing poles on the compass. This seminar takes a look at those directional clichés as historically situated cultural codes, with an emphasis on the 19th and 20th centuries. We will look at emergence, semantics, functions, and socio-political contexts of those codes, including the fundamental opposition between East and West, Orient and Occident. Topics may include country studies (e.g., North-South codings in Italy vs. Britain or Germany), topical studies (e.g., directional codes in tourism; in world politics), and specific issues such as the emergence of the „Global South“ that are relevant to the larger theme. The seminar is somewhat experimental, and obviously, the professor’s knowledge on such a vast issue is very limited – the seminar will therefore succeed or fail with the engagement of students and their curiosity to explore topics. – The seminar will be taught in English (or will be partially bilingual, depending on the composition of the class). Hausarbeiten may be written in English or German.

Semester Program:

13 April  Introduction

20 April  A Modern Classic: Edward Said’s „Orientalism“
Text discussion: Edward Said, Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient, Introduction (pp. 1-28)

27 April  Classical Views of the West: Max Weber and Frederick Jackson Turner
4 May  **Brainstorming and Topic Orientation** (Topics for Student Presentations fixed, dates set)

11 May  **Asymmetrical Concepts: Reinhart Koselleck’s Approach**  
*Text discussion: Reinhart Koselleck, „Asymmetrische Gegenbegriffe“*

18 May  **Cultural History and the „Spatial Turn“**  
*Text discussion: tbd*

25 May  **Public Holiday / no class**

*Topics are preliminary from here; depending on class discussion & student selection of topics for presentation / papers*

1 June  **Images of the West / Occident**  
*Student Presentations*

8 June  **Images of the East / Orient**  
*Student Presentations*

15 June  **The Global North-South Distinction**  
*Student Presentations*

22 June  **Historical Case & Country Studies, I**  
*Student Presentations*

29 June  **Historical Case & Country Studies, II**  
*Student Presentations*

6 July  **„Go West“: Directional Codes in Popular Culture**  
*Student Presentations*

13 July  **Summary Discussion**