

RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM NORTH AMERICAN HISTORY

**17 June 2024
6PM, Room 201**

“Partus Sequitur Ventrem: Law, Race, and Reproduction in Colonial Slavery” by Jennifer L. Morgan

**A text-based discussion with
Sebastian Jobs (FU Berlin)**

From the moment of its introduction into the Atlantic world, hereditary racial slavery depended on an understanding that enslaved women’s reproductive lives would be tethered to the institution of slavery. At the same time, few colonial slave codes explicitly defined the status of these children. This essay explores English slave codes regarding reproduction under slavery alongside the experience of reproduction to suggest that legislative silences are not the final word on race and reproduction. The presumption that their children would also be enslaved produced a visceral understanding of early modern racial formations for enslaved women. Using a seventeenth-century Virginia slave code as its anchor, this essay explores the explicit and implicit consequences of slaveowners’ efforts to control enslaved women’s reproductive lives.



Sebastian Jobs is a Junior Professor of History at the JFKI, specializing in cultural history, theory of history, and African-American history.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT JFKI.FU-BERLIN.DE.