

# Research Colloquium North American History

---

Text based discussion led by Dr. Helen Gibson:  
“Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom,  
Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of  
Plants” by Robin Wall Kimmerer

Monday November 25th , 6pm-8pm, Room 201

---



Dr. Helen A. Gibson is a historian interested in the healing power of narrative. Gibson’s previous research has helped restore the voting rights of several hundred thousand Virginians and elucidated the profound significance of joyriding otherwise in the early twentieth century United States. Dr. Gibson’s current research illuminates ways in which grand midwives have historically obviated propertization of birthing people and acted as pillars of community in the face of total violence and reproductive injustice.

Abstract: Plants speak to us in symbols and in metaphor. Robin Wall Kimmerer teaches us in Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants that “In some Native languages, the term for plants translates to ‘those who take care of us’” (Kimmerer 2013, p. 228). At a time when many people are seeking grounding, plants remind us that we can choose to be held in spaces of sacred reciprocity—spaces with a “bundle of responsibilities” in lieu of a “bundle of rights” (Kimmerer 2013, p. 28). We will be discussing excerpts of Braiding Sweetgrass with a focus on the significance of Indigenous knowledges for Indigenous peoples (Whyte 2018). Come learn about the origins of Turtle Island and the sacred beings whose wisdom holds the potential to transform collective consciousness and modes of relating.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [JFKI.FU-BERLIN.DE](http://JFKI.FU-BERLIN.DE)**