Soldiering for Empire: Race, Labor, and Conquest Armies in Africa and the United States, 1850-1918

Michelle Moyd
Department of History
Indiana University

This talk will introduce initial observations on how racial thought and labor paradigms intersected to create nineteenth-century armies of empire in three historical contexts—the United States, German East Africa, and Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. It considers convergences and divergences in practices of empire-building during this period of intense imperial competition and expansion around the world. It will focus particularly on the question of who does the violent work of empire in different historical and contemporary circumstances. Along the way, it seeks to integrate the expansionist history of the United States into a wider trans-imperial history of soldiering.

Michelle Moyd is the Interim Associate Director of the Center for Research on Race and Ethnicity in Society (CRRES) and Associate Professor of History at Indiana University. She is a historian of eastern Africa, with special interests in the history of African soldiers and warfare. Other research interests include German colonial history, the history of racial thought in Europe, Africa, and the United States, and the history of race as a factor in labor and military recruitment processes in Africa and elsewhere.