THE CIVICS INNOVATION HUB

NECE LABS

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# NECE Lab on AI and the Future of Historical Learning

**16-18 September**
**Salzburg**
Austria

# Speakers portfolio

## Heinrich Ammerer



Speaker
*University of Salzburg*

Heinrich Ammerer is an associate professor in the Department of History at the University of Salzburg and also teaches at a secondary school. After completing his teacher training in history and psychology/philosophy, he worked as a lecturer in history and civic education at several higher education institutions and spent a research semester at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.

His academic interests lie at the intersection of history, politics and psychology. He obtained his PhD in the history of psychiatry in 2010 and completed his habilitation in 2020 with a study on historical meaning and the psychogenesis of historical consciousness. His current research interests lie in the field of teaching pragmatics, particularly the use of AI in classroom, historical and political thinking concepts, working with film and comics, and training utopian thinking.

## Judith Blum



Speaker & Moderator
*Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (Stiftung EVZ)*

Judith is a specialist advisor at Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility, and Future, where she is currently designing digital educational formats for the EVZ Academy's online platform on topics that are related to historical-political education about Nazi injustice, human rights and the commitment to democracy.

She studied history, communication science, and Eastern European Studies. In the activities and formats she plans in her work, she primarily invites educators and young people to create participatory and creative learning spaces.

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## Robert Breber



Speaker
*Cuts und Mouse*

Robert Breber is an Austrian documentary filmmaker and editor. In 2020 he produced the widely acclaimed historical documentary "An einem Tag im April - Attnang-Puchheim im Bombenhagel" for ORF, which draws on eyewitness accounts to revisit one of the heaviest air raids on Austrian soil.

In 2025 he edited "Hachschara – Israel's Pioneers from Austria" (ORF, directed by Alexander Millecker/OSTFILM) - a production that, according to ORF, marks the first large-scale use of generative AI in an Austrian documentary to present historical archive photographs as a "digital reenactment". In 2026 he was responsible for sound and visual effects on "Der Mann mit der kleinen Kamera" (ORF/3sat, directed by Andreas Kurz). He is currently working on a feature-length documentary - a long-term observational study of familial violence within one family.

## Christoph Kühberger



Speaker
*University of Salzburg*

Christoph Kühberger is a trained teacher in history and Italian studies, and worked as a cultural historian and scholar of history education at the University of Salzburg (Austria), the University of Greifswald (Germany), as well as the Salzburg University College of Teacher Education Stefan Zweig (Austria). Between 2008 and 2009, he held the position of Professor of Comparative Modern and Contemporary European Cultural History at the Institute of History, University of Hildesheim (Germany). Since 2017, he has been serving as Full Professor for History Education and Civic Education at the Department of History at the University of Salzburg. He has conducted research stays in Italy, Germany, Hawaii, and Aotearoa. His current research areas include historical thinking, decolonization, historical culture, and digital humanities

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## Mykola Makhortykh



Speaker
*University of Bern*

Mykola Makhortykh is an Alfred Landecker lecturer at the Institute of Communication and Media Science, where he studies the impact of algorithmic systems and AI on Holocaust memory transmission. In his research, Mykola focuses on politics and history-centred information behaviour in online environments and how it is affected by the information retrieval systems, such as search engines and recommender systems. To achieve this goal, he combines traditional social science methods (e.g., content analysis and focus groups) with novel computational approaches (e.g., deep learning and agent-based testing).

His other research interests include trauma and memory studies, armed conflict reporting, disinformation and computational propaganda research, cybersecurity and critical security studies, and bias in information retrieval systems

## Claudia Müller-Birn



Speaker
*Free University of Berlin*

Claudia Müller-Birn is the head of the Human-Centered Computing research group at Freie Universität Berlin and an Associated Researcher at the Einstein Center Digital Future. Her research advances human-centered AI for healthcare, combining computing, interaction design, and participatory methods to embed human centeredness into AI design.

She focuses on relational AI interactions in clinical and care settings through participatory methods, value-centered health data sharing to support informed decision-making, and calibrated human–AI collaboration for healthcare professionals and patients.

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## Robert Obermair

Speaker & Moderator
University of Salzburg



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Robert Obermair received his doctorate in 2021 with a thesis in the field of contemporary history and works as a university assistant for Public History at the University of Salzburg. He is involved in various research projects concerning the eras of Austrofascism and National Socialism as well as the post-war period, and serves as a program coordinator for ERINNERN:AT.

His recent monographs include Oswald Menghin (1888 – 1973): Science and Politics in the Age of Extremes (Berlin/Boston, 2024), and 'Erinnern – Stadt – Vergessen: Gedenkorte zur NS-Zeit in Salzburg erkunden' (Salzburg, 2025; co-authored with Bernadette Edtmaier, Kay-Michael Dankl, and Christoph Würflinger.

## Anja Ostermann

Managing Partner
*THE CIVICS Innovation Hub*



Anja is a comparatist, historian and Germanist (University of Bonn/ University of St Andrews). She has been managing the education and event agency labconcepts in Germany since 2005. Her focus is on consulting on educational strategies and networking in the field of European civic education. In addition, she develops concepts for dialogue and participation formats on topics from politics, education, media and science. Since 2019, she has headed the funding and qualification program for rural areas "MITEINANDER REDEN – Gespräche gestalten – Gemeinsam handeln". In 2021, she co-founded THE CIVICS Innovation Hub and now heads the Hub in Bonn as one of the three managing partners.

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## Nicolas Python

Speaker
*ePost*



Nicolas Python is Chief Design Officer at ePost and an AI systems architect based in Switzerland. His work focuses on the intersection of Artificial Intelligence, product design, and systems design, with particular attention to agent-based systems in which autonomous AI agents interact responsibly, transparently, and in a comprehensible manner. His professional background combines more than a decade of experience in product and UX design with applied psychology and the design of complex digital systems. Alongside this, he runs the art project Skulls In The Machine (SITM), which explores generative AI as both an artistic and critical medium.

## Victoria Grace Richardson-Walden

Speaker
*University of Sussex*



Victoria Grace Richardson-Walden is full professor of Digital Heritage, Memory and Culture at the University of Sussex, where she is also Director of the Landecker Digital Memory Lab. Her research interests are in digital media and its interfacing with genocide memory, particularly the Holocaust. She is the author of Cinematic Intermedialities and Contemporary Holocaust Memory (2019), and editor of Digital Holocaust Memory, Education and Research (2021) and The Memorial Museum in the Digital Age (2022).

She has provided consultancy and advice for numerous non-academic organisations on digital Holocaust memory, from AR producers to the IHRA and United Nations. She is current Co-Chair of the UK's Media Education Association and President Elect of the British and Irish Association of Holocaust Studies.

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## Robert Schäfer

Speaker
*University of Basel*



Robert Schäfer teaches qualitative methods of empirical social research in the Department of Sociology at the University of Basel. His research focuses on secular worldviews. In this context, he is particularly interested in visions of the future in modern society, including utopias, dystopias, nostalgia, and apocalyptic thinking.

He studied sociology and religious studies in Bern and completed his doctorate in sociology. He has worked as a research associate at the Universities of Magdeburg and Koblenz-Landau, as well as a senior assistant at the University of Fribourg. He is also a lecturer in sociology within the history degree programme at FernUni Switzerland.

## Sabrina Schmitz-Zerres

Speaker & Moderator
*RWTH Aachen University*



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Sabrina Schmitz-Zerres is Professor of Didactics of History and Political Science at RWTH Aachen University since 2025. She studied German Studies, History, Philosophy, and Political Science at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf and the University of Duisburg-Essen.

Her research spans several areas: The implications and transformations of artificial intelligence and digitality for historical learning and its transformations of historical culture; German colonialism and its entanglements to current practices of consumption and time practices in diaries of the 19th and 20th century.

Her work focusses on the intersection of subject-specific didactics, digital humanities, and historical culture, contributing to debates on how historical thinking can be fostered in an increasingly digital and AI-shaped world.

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## Patrick Siegele

Moderator
*OeAD - Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation*



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Patrick Siegele studied German philology, musicology and museum management in Austria, the United Kingdom and Germany. From 2014 to 2021, he was director of the Anne Frank Zentrum, the German partner organisation of the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. His work focuses on Holocaust education and educational initiatives combating antisemitism. Between 2015 and 2017, Patrick Siegele was coordinator of the independent expert group on antisemitism (commissioned by the German Bundestag). Since June 2021, Patrick Siegele has been head of the 'Holocaust Education' department at the OeAD – Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation. He is a member of the Austrian delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).

## Drew Thomas

Speaker & Moderator
University of Salzburg



Drew Thomas is Assistant Professor of Modern History at the University of Salzburg, specializing in the early modern printing industry and digital humanities. He earned a BA from Saint Louis University, an MTS from Harvard University, and a PhD from the University of St Andrews.

His research explores how Protestants and Catholics used visual media during the Reformation and how computer vision and artificial intelligence can be applied to the large-scale study of early modern illustrations. He is the author of The Industry of Evangelism: Printing for the Reformation in Martin Luther's Wittenberg (Brill, 2022). His current work combines historical inquiry with computational methods to investigate the production, circulation, and reception of visual culture in early modern Europe.

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## Florian Tuder

Speaker & Moderator
*House of European History*



As Formal Learning Officer at the House of European History in Brussels, Florian co-developed "HistoriCall", a free digital resource for civic and history education designed for secondary school teachers across Europe. Its four modules explore key milestones of European integration as well as topics such as media literacy, racism, and colonialism. Artificial intelligence was used in the tool's technical development and also features in the pedagogical approach of the media literacy module. "HistoriCall" is available in 24 languages.

In the past 15+ years, Florian worked in the field of education and training in Austria and Belgium for schools, non-profit organisations, and the private sector. Florian has an academic background in Education, Theology, and European Studies from the Universities of Graz (Austria), Sibiu (Romania), and Leuven (Belgium) complemented with certifications in e-learning and instructional design (Harvard Graduate School of Education & University of Washington).

## Denitsa Vidolova

Speaker
Sofia Platform Foundation



Denitza Vidolova is an education specialist, whose work experience includes teaching, research, policy and programme management. A project manager at the Sofia Platform Foundation. Denitza is part of the team that has been developing the Histories from Belene project and the innovative platform for virtual conversations with survivors of the Belene forced labour camp (1949-1987). Denitza also works on Sofia Platform's civic education projects including a capacity building programme for civil society organizations, a series of training courses for teachers of civic education and different teaching and learning resources.

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## Désirée Waibel



Speaker
*University of Lucerne*

Désirée Waibel is a Senior Research Associate at the University of Lucerne, specialising in organisation and knowledge studies. Her focus lies on the institutionalisation processes of expertise. Her doctoral research examines the outsourcing of expert work to amateur collectives within organisations and on digital platforms. She is currently researching the role of organisations in the establishment of digital expert systems and the jurisdictional dynamics associated with them. She is a member of the DFG network On the Way to an Evaluation Society? as well as the Working Group on Organisation and Evaluation within the Organisational Sociology Section of the German Sociological Association