

**GUEST LECTURE**

**15.5.2012**

**18-20 Uhr, ES 131 (alt H 19)**

**– everybody welcome!!!!**

**Prof. Dr. Laurenz Volkmann (Jena)**

**Reconsidering the issue of transcultural vs. ethnocentric uses of literature:**

**The case of Arundhati Roy's award-winning bestseller *The God of Small Things***

Receiving ravishing reviews for her 1997 debut novel *The God of Small Things*, New Delhi based writer Arundhati Roy has become what may well be considered an international icon of anti-globalization forces, a celebrity author with a feminist, anti-capitalist and anti-materialist agenda. Her brilliant, intricately structured, sinuously lyrical and bitter-sweet fictional masterpiece about a doomed love affair in the context of changing family and social dynamics in Kerala, India, provides enticing insights into some of the recently discussed topics of transcultural learning: it engages issues such as localization, globalization as Westernization, glocalization, inter- and transculturality, and, more generally, issues of *Fremdverstehen* or inter-/transcultural competence. The presentation will focus on the novel as an invitation to rethink the still pertinent issue of which teaching objective should be aimed at in the university or school classroom: does literature carry universal or transnational meaning(s) or should one rather focus on culture-specific issues challenging Eurocentric modes of perception and meaning creation?