

Co-Conveners: UNC–Chapel Hill, Dept. of History and German and Slavic Languages and Literatures, and Duke University, Dept. of History and German Languages and Literatures

**Sunday, 20 January 2019**

5:00 – 7:00 pm | UNC–Chapel Hill | Hamilton Hall 569

**GEORGE S. WILLIAMSON**

Professor, Florida State University, Department of History



**“Russian Spy,” “German Voltaire,” “Fickle Genius”:  
August von Kotzebue as a Problem for German History  
and Literature**

The author of over 200 plays, August von Kotzebue (1761-1819) was one of the most prolific and successful writers of his day. Yet Kotzebue’s career was shadowed by controversy and bitter disputes, which culminated in his assassination by the student radical Carl Sand. After his death, Kotzebue was largely forgotten by literary history and, despite some recent interest, he remains understudied. This talk argues that a reconsideration of Kotzebue’s turbulent life and complex legacy has the potential to reshape our understanding of the so-called *Goethezeit*, pointing to new interpretations of the intellectual and political history of this era.

**George Williamson** is Associate Professor of History at Florida State University. He is the author of *The Longing for Myth in Germany: Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche* (University of Chicago Press, 2004), as well as articles and book chapters on German religious history, Schelling’s theory of race, debates on the historicity of Jesus, and the death of Kotzebue and its aftermath. His current book project is entitled *August von Kotzebue (1761-1819): A Political History*.

**Moderator: Karen Hagemann | UNC Chapel Hill, Department of History**

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