

COLLOQUIUM

Gods of the Upper Air: How a Circle of Renegade Anthropologists Reinvented Race, Sex, and Gender in the Twentieth Century

Professor & Chair, Charles Eldon King – International Affairs & Government, Georgetown University

At the end of the 19th century, everyone knew that people were defined by their race and sex and were fated by birth and biology to be more or less intelligent, able, nurturing, or warlike. But one researcher-- Columbia University's Franz Boas--looked at the data and decided everyone was wrong. Charles King will speak about his new book, a group portrait of Boas, the founder of cultural anthropology, and his circle of scientists--a sweeping chronicle of how our society began to question the basic ways we understand other cultures and ourselves. Boas' students would go on to become some of the century's intellectual stars: Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, Zora Neale Hurston, and others. Together, they upended American notions of race, gender, and sexuality in the 1920s and 1930s and foreshadowed some of today's most pressing political and cultural debates. "Elegant and kaleidoscopic...this looks to be the perfect moment for King's resolutely humane book." *New York Times*

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2:00-3:30pm

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