

The Center for Hellenic Studies at Stony Brook University

presents

AA: (Greek) Adoptees Anonymous. Adoption, Memory, and Cold War Greece

Gonda Van Steen

Cassas Professor in Greek Studies, University of Florida

The talk offers a first introduction to a Greek American adoption ethnography, set against the backdrop of the global Cold War. It is the first project to study the biopolitics of the adoption movement from Greece to the United States in the 1950s and 1960s. The vehicle of the mass international adoptions of Greek-born children symbolically (and no less physically) marked the transition to a new political and ideological status quo that sought to balance the democratic West against the communist East--but at what cost? This overseas adoption movement places a fitting lens on American as well as Greek foreign policies, security concerns, refugee provisions, and other external affairs, which were integral parts of the Cold War project. The mass adopting-out of Greek children to America proves to be the most concrete example of the politics of dependence on the United States. The Greek adoptees' (shaken) identities have infused the lived experiences of their descendants, and they co-exist, in multiple ways, with American and European transnational identities; they also prove that the personal and the political stories of postwar global history intersect.

Thursday, October 20, 2016

4 - 6 pm

**Poetry Center, Humanities Building
(2nd floor)**

Stony Brook University



Gonda Van Steen earned a BA and MA degree in Classics in her native Belgium and a PhD degree in Classics and Hellenic Studies from Princeton Univ. As the Cassas Chair in Greek Studies at the University of Florida, she teaches courses in ancient and modern Greek language and literature. Her research interests include classical drama, Western travelers to Greece and the Ottoman Empire, 19th- and 20th-century receptions of the classics, and modern Greek intellectual history.