

You can apply now for the winter semester 2023 / 2024

Next Online Info Session for prospective students
26 January 2023 • 5 pm



Dear members of the IPU Berlin,

With this last newsletter of the year, we would like to update you on the latest news from the IPU and upcoming **Events**. In addition, you will find the monthly **Column** alongside **the annual review by IPU President Prof. Jan-Hendrik Olbertz**.

Members of the DAAD-funded **StuFen** project at IPU Berlin support refugees by, for example, arranging suitable educational opportunities – also for Ukrainian refugees from Russia’s war of aggression on Ukraine. **On our website you will find a detailed report** on the work of the dedicated team behind the StuFen project, which is led by IPU professor Konrad Schnabel.

IPU alumni **Dr. Florian Dreyer** was recently awarded the Hermann Paul Award for his dissertation. His conversation analytic paper is considered the “best dissertation of this past year in the field of linguistics”. Learn more about the award ceremony **on our website**. Dreyer is also a board member of IPU’s associated institute – JUNKTIM e. V., whose annual conference will be held at IPU in March.

We wish you all a relaxing end of this year and all the best for 2023.

Events

13 January 2023 | 9:30 am | House 2, Lecture Hall 2 (1st floor)

Research Day at IPU Berlin

An opportunity for scientific exchange in a personal atmosphere and networking with IPU researchers.

Registration **by email**.

SAVE THE DATE: 19 January 2023 | 6 pm

‘Raw Sex?’: An Exploration of the Political Potential of Lacan’s Non-conclusive Binary.

Hybrid Lecture by Calum Neill (Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland)

More information on our website soon.

26 January 2023 | 5 pm

Online Information Event for prospective students

Register **on our website**.

SAVE THE DATE: 10 February 2023 | 7 pm

First Do No Harm: Psychoanalytic Reflections on Gender Dysphoria

Lecture by Dr. David Bell, organized by the friends and patrons association of the IPU Berlin.

More information on our website soon.

23 March to 24 May 2023

DAAD Online Webinar Series for International Students

Meet our International Office and find out more about our English language programs.

Further information **on our website**.

A Nice Mess

The December Column by IPU President Prof. Jan-Hendrik Olbertz

The tradition of giving gifts on Christmas Eve can be traced back centuries, though its roots are even older. They reach back to the early days of Christianity—it’s not without significance that in some places, Christmas gifts are opened on 6 January, which is the day to celebrate the Three Kings of the Levant who gifted the newborn Jesus of Nazareth with gold, frankincense, and myrrh. As a derivation of this, in some regions (and religions) today, the gift giver takes the form of the Christ child, in Scandinavia it is Julklapp, in other places it’s the Weihnachtsmann. In North America he is known as Santa Claus or Father Christmas, in France as Père Noël, in Italy as Babbo Natale, and in Russia as Ded Moroz (Grandfather Frost), even if the associations are acutely different than its western neighbors.

More than anyone else, children look forward to Christmas, as they are usually gifted with new toys. For them, play is a way to relate to the world, to gain knowledge and experience, and to learn how to use their imagination, complex thinking, and social behavior. Play as a meaningful action, in which one can lose themselves, is something deeply human. Schiller once wrote that the human is “only a whole being when at play”.

There is all the more need for careful selection of the necessary materials—“toys” for short. I have observed that one can recognize the quality of a toy through the way a child handles it. Sometimes, even the toy’s destruction is a more creative act than its intended use, especially when the child is forced into an inactive role, such as simply watching a robot that teeters, blinking and blaring, through the child’s room.

***Prof. Jan-Hendrik Olbertz** has been president of the IPU Berlin since July 2021. Once a month, he provides commentary here on contemporary, timeless, psychoanalytic and political issues.*



If the only challenge for the child is to push a button or place a “Tiptoi” (an electronic stylus with built-in speaker) onto a dot in a book, that then screeches out a lecture, the allure will quickly fade. In the end, just about every child knows what a goat looks like and sounds like but has never seen one in a field or on a mountain, much less heard or touched one. To play or be played, that is—in a Shakespearean-Hamlet sense—the question one must ask when choosing gifts for children or grandchildren.

A toy is then valuable if it awakens creative energies, if it is variable, if it involves other children and encourages the imagination to continually develop new projects with it. The opposite is true if all of this is taken from—or even denied to—children. And it should be made from natural materials, not deceptively processed plastic junk.

And then, the toy lands on the table of presents and doesn’t find itself in the corner only after a small amount of use. Rather, it has the chance to become a favorite toy, which maybe is even lovingly kept into adulthood as a reminder of Christmas 2022.

Dennis Kemena joined the Finance/Human Resources team this month. A warm welcome to our university.

