

**A05** John / USA / German Studies

Interaction partner(s): German students  
Moment of enquiry: WS 07/08  
Experience of difference: Role expectations towards students

John is spending a student year at a German university. As he attends different seminars, he wonders why there are lively discussions in some courses and not in others. When the lecturer in one of his seminars asks a question and none of the students answer, John can no longer take the silence and raises his hand to speak even though he cannot answer the question either. Accordingly his fellow students sneer at his contribution and while the lecturer shows a polite interest, he then moves on to answer his own question. John is annoyed at his German fellow students: Nobody contributed to the seminar discussion, yet nobody appreciated his attempt at saving the situation.

1. What could be the reason for John's behaviour?
2. Is there an explanation for the German students' reserve during the seminar discussion?