

Proseminar in Social, Political, and Humanistic Inquiry, Spring 2014

# Threshold <sup>Live</sup>Lives

CALENDAR OF PUBLIC TALKS

ALWAYS AT 4:30 pm, BLODGETT OAK ROOM

*Thursday, February 6*

'I write in order to Live.' Translating Paul Celan.

**Susan Gillespie, Bard College**

*Monday, March 10*

The Imagination of the State, and the  
Imagination of the Stowaway

**Amitava Kumar, Vassar College**

*Thursday, March 13*

"Color Line Justice": Ida B. Wells  
and the Feminist Case for Reparations.

**Lawrie Balfour, University of Virginia**

*Thursday, April 10*

TBA

**Gabriela Sandoval, Insight Center for  
Community Economic Development**

*Thursday, April 17*

The Trauma of Translation: Freud and Sultan  
Mehmet II (1430-81) among the Trojan Ruins.

**Kathleen Biddick, Temple University**

*Thursday, May 1*

Between Messianism and Despair: Politics and  
Resilience in Jonathan Lear's *Radical Hope* and Lars  
Von trier's *Melancholia*

**Bonnie Honig, Brown University**

*Thursday, May 8*

Carceral Thresholds

**Lisa Guenther, Vanderbilt University**

Thresholds

ALL TALKS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



GUEST BIOGRAPHIES & CALENDAR OF WORKSHOPS  
INFORMAL LOUNGE, LIVINGSTON HALL STUDENT UNION

Faculty, staff, and students (sophomores or above) who would like to participate in a Workshop focusing on the work of the guest scholar in connection with the Proseminar theme, may register to do so. There will be 5 slots per workshop available. Participants would have to register to reserve a slot for themselves, and will need to do the readings in order to participate. Registered participants will be invited to lunch with the scholar following the Workshop. Please email [aabbas@simons-rock.edu](mailto:aabbas@simons-rock.edu) to register and receive a confirmation and link to readings.

**FEBRUARY**

Thursday, February 6, 9:30-11am

**Proseminar Workshop with Susan Gillespie, Bard College**

About our Guest

Susan H. Gillespie has translated works by Theodor W. Adorno and other writers of musicological and philosophical works, as well as fiction and poetry. Her involvement with German and commitment to the idea and practice of translatability go back to five and a half years spent as a student in Freiburg im Breisgau, with the support of the German Academic Exchange Office (DAAD), and a subsequent year in Berlin. She has worked in factories, offices, non-profit institutions, and since 1985 as vice president of Bard College. At Bard, she founded the Institute for International Liberal Education, helping to develop and administer dual degree and academic exchange programs with university partners in Russia, South Africa, Palestine, and Germany. She has translated books and essays by Theodor W. Adorno, Helga Königsdorf, Hanna Zischler, and numerous other German poets and philosophers. Her translation of *The Correspondence of Paul Celan & Ilana Šimueli* (Sheep Meadow Press), including 27 poems by Celan, was a finalist for the National Translation Award.

Readings

Octavio Paz, "Reading and Contemplation," from *Convergences: Essays on Art and Literature*, trans. by Helen Lane (London: Bloomsbury, 1987).

Susan Petrilli, selection from *Sign Crossroads in Global*

*Perspective. Semioethics and Responsibility* (New Brunswick & London: Transaction Publishers, 2010).

Tejaswini Niranjana, "Representing Texts and Cultures: Translation Studies and Ethnography," from *Siting Translation. History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1992).

Paul Celan, *Covers*, trans. Susan Gillespie. (2013)

We will also consider some different translations of a few poems, and compare them, giving the guest a chance to talk concretely about how the process unfolds for her and to explain some specific choices & decisions.

**APRIL**

Thursday, April 10, 9:00-11:30 am

**Proseminar Workshop with Gabriela Sandoval, Insight Centre for Community Economic Development, Oakland, CA**

About our Guest

Gabriela Sandoval is Director, Policy and Research at the Insight Center where she designs and manages research projects focused on building wealth for economically vulnerable people and communities through the Closing the Racial Wealth Gap Initiative. She also manages outreach and recruitment for an Experts of Color Network consisting of over 180 professionals in the asset-building field. Previously, Sandoval was a member of the faculty in the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and she most recently worked as the Academic Coordinator for the Centro para los Adolescentes de San Miguel de Allende's (CASA, AC) Professional Midwifery School in Mexico. She holds BAs in Psychology and Ethnic Studies from the University of California, San Diego, a Masters in Regional Planning, and a PhD in Sociology from Cornell University.

Readings

TBA

Thursday, April 17, 9:00-11:30 am

**Proseminar Workshop with Kathleen Biddick, Temple University**

About our Guest

Kathleen Biddick is Professor of History at Temple University. Her current book, *Years of Reign* (Punctum Books, June 2014), returns to Walter Benjamin's famous essay, "Critique of Violence" and locates a critical study of the archive between mythic and divine violence. She has authored books in the field of medieval studies, critical historiography and theory: *The Other Economy; Shock of Medievalism; Typological Imaginary: Circumcision, Technology, History*.

Readings

William Shakespeare, *King Richard II*.

\*Kathleen Biddick, "Tears of Reign: Big Sovereigns do Cry."

**MARCH**

Monday, March 10, 1:00-3:30 pm

**Proseminar Workshop with Amitava Kumar, Vassar College**

About our Guest

Amitava Kumar's latest title, *A Matter of Rats: A Short Biography of Paina*, was released this month. He is also the author of *A Foreigner Carrying in the Crook of His Arm a Tiny Bomb: A Writer's Report on the Global War on Terror* (2010) which was judged Best Non-Fiction Book of the Year in the Asian American Literary Awards. *Husband of a Fanatic* was an 'Editors' Choice' book at the New York Times in 2009 and *Bombay-London-New York* was on the list of 'Books of the Year' in *The New Statesman* in 2011. His novel, *Home Products*, was short listed for India's premier literary prize, the Vodafone Crossword Book Award. Kumar is Helen D. Lockwood Professor of English at Vassar College.

Readings

Amitava Kumar, *A Foreigner Carrying in the Crook of His Arm a Tiny Bomb* (Durham: Duke, 2010).

Amitava Kumar, selection from *Bombay, London, New York* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

Thursday, March 13, 9:00-11:30 am

**Proseminar Workshop with Lawrie Balfour, University of Virginia**

About our Guest

Lawrie Balfour is Professor of Politics at the University of Virginia. She is the author of *Democracy's Reconstruction: Thinking Politically with W. E. B. Du Bois* and *The Evidence of Things Not Said: James Baldwin and the Promise of American Democracy*. Her teaching and research focus on African American political thought, democratic theory, feminist theory, and politics and literature. Currently, she is working on a book on reparations for slavery and Jim Crow.

Readings

Toni Morrison, *Home*

Lawrie Balfour, chapter from in-progress book on reparations and feminism, TBA

**MAY**

Thursday, May 1, 9:30 am-noon

**Proseminar Workshop with Bonnie Honig, Brown University**

About our Guest

Bonnie Honig is Nancy Duke Lewis Professor (elect) of Modern Culture and Media (MCM) and Political Science at Brown University. Author of several prize-winning books and articles, including *Emergency Politics* (co-winner of the David Easton prize), her most recent book is *Antigone, Interrupted* (Cambridge, 2013).

Readings

Bonnie Honig, *Antigone, Interrupted* (Cambridge, 2013).

Janelle Watson, "Feminism as Agonistic Sorority: An Interview with Bonnie Honig," *Minnesota Review*, Number 81, 2013.

**Proseminar Workshop with Lisa Guenther, Vanderbilt University**

Thursday, May 8, 9:00-11:30 am

About our Guest

Lisa Guenther is Associate Professor of History at Vanderbilt University. Her recent book *Solitary Confinement: Social Death and its Afterlives* is a phenomenological critique of solitary confinement, drawing on the work of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Levinas, as well as legal and historical documents in the history of the US penitentiary system, supermax prisons and detention camps such as Guantanamo Bay. Deprived of regular contact with concrete others in a shared space, many prisoners come unhinged from reality; they experience perceptual distortions and hallucinations, they lose track of time, and they even become unable to identify the boundaries of their own bodies. What must subjectivity be like in order for these effects to be possible? Who are we, such that we can be undone in this way, unhinged from ourselves by being separated from others? What ends are served by isolating prisoners to the point of psychological and even ontological derangement?

Readings

Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, pp.1-65.

Colin Dayan, "Legal Slaves and Civil Bodies," *Materializing Democracy*, eds.

Dana Nelson and Russ Castronovo (Duke University Press, 2002).

Lisa Guenther, *Solitary Confinement: Social Death and its Afterlives* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013).