

2019-20 Humanities Center Faculty Seminars

Gloria Naylor Archive – In collaboration with the Gloria Naylor Archive Accelerator Grant

Facilitators: Suzanne Edwards (English, WGSS, Humanities Center), Mary Foltz (English, SSI, WGSS)

Meeting Dates: TBD

Trans* Studies – In collaboration with Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies

Facilitators: Olivia Landry (German, Film and Documentary Studies, WGSS), Mary Foltz (English, SSI, WGSS)

Meeting Dates: TBD

Democracy and Truth – In collaboration with The Center for Ethics*

*The Center for Ethics is funded in part by the ENDOWMENT FUND for the TEACHING of ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING

Facilitators: Nitzan Lebovic (History, Berman Center for Jewish Studies, Center for Ethics) and Bill Bullman (History, Global Studies)

Meeting Dates: 12:00-2:30pm on September 6, September 27, November 1, December 6, February 7, March 6, April 3, May 1 in the Humanities Center

Interdisciplinary Approaches to Antibiotic Resistance – In collaboration with the Office of the Vice President for Research

Facilitator: Lorenzo Servitje (English, HMS, Film and Documentary Studies)

Meeting Dates: TBD

To Apply: Please submit a brief statement (250 words) describing how your research interests connect with the seminar topic to Sue Shell (sus3@lehigh.edu) by May 7, 2019.

Fine Print: Seminar participants will receive a \$1000 research/travel grant. Faculty will receive these funds as a contribution to their discretionary research fund. Post-docs, visiting faculty, staff, and graduate students without a discretionary research fund, will receive the funds as travel reimbursement, administered through the Humanities Center. This money will be paid out in December (\$500) and June (\$500), and is contingent on attendance at least three of the four scheduled seminar meetings each semester.

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Facilitators: Suzanne Edwards (English, WGSS, Humanities Center), Mary Foltz (English, SSI, WGSS)

This seminar will explore Gloria Naylor's collected papers as a resource for understanding her published writings, including her 1982 *Women of Brewster Place*. The journal entries, private correspondence, research materials, novel drafts, plays, and screenplays in the Gloria Naylor Archive have escaped notice because they have not yet been digitized or publicized. By reading Naylor's novels, materials from the archive, and historical and literary scholarship, we will ask how the archive opens up new lines of inquiry about Naylor's work as well as the transnational networks through which she traveled in the late twentieth century. In addition, we will explore how Naylor's political, aesthetic, and intellectual commitments--as evidenced in her published and unpublished writings--suggest strategies for digitizing and publicizing her collected papers to audiences inside and outside the academy. Prospective participants in this seminar should have a particular project involving the Gloria Naylor Archive in mind, as the seminar will include workshops of work-in-progress.

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Trans* Studies – In collaboration with Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies

Facilitators: Olivia Landry (German, Film and Documentary Studies, WGSS), Mary Foltz (English, SSI, WGSS)

Still an emerging field, Trans* Studies will be the focus of this seminar. Beginning with the key texts of Susan Stryker, Jack Halberstam, and C. Riley Snorton, we will discuss powerful historical accounts of transgender people's activism, contributions to a variety of social justice movements, and community building. We will further investigate how a field founded on and dedicated to activism and politics has also been so epistemologically transformative. The insights of Trans* Studies open up new ways of thinking about and understanding our past and present. In the balance of the year, we will engage with new directions in the field, such as its important intersections with disability studies, transnational studies, fat studies, spatial studies, and prison studies.

This seminar is co-sponsored by the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program at Lehigh. Over the past five years, WGSS has expanded its curricular offerings of queer theory and LGBTQ+ studies. We feel that we have room to grow in our knowledge of new work in Trans* Studies. Thus, the WGSS program would like to spend a year reading major works in this field, bringing in prominent speakers for seminars and lectures, and facilitating conversations about Trans* Studies for invested faculty even if they are not associated with our program.

While much of the reading schedule will be set at our first meeting, texts might include: Jack Halberstam's *Trans*: A Quick and Quirky Account of Gender Variability*; the new edition of Susan Stryker's *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution*; C. Riley Snorton's *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*; Aren Z. Aizura's *Mobile Subjects: Transnational Imaginaries of Gender Reassignment*; Toby Beauchamp's *Going Stealth: Transgender Politics and U.S. Surveillance Practices*; Eli Clare's *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation*; Lucas Crawford's *Transgender Architectonics: The Shape of Change in Modernist Space*; Gayle Salamon, *The Life and Death of Latisha King: A Critical Phenomenology of Transphobia*; Dean Spade's *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law*; Eric A. Stanley and Nat Smith's (eds.) *Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex*.

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Democracy and Truth – In collaboration with The Center for Ethics*

*The Center for Ethics is funded in part by the ENDOWMENT FUND for the TEACHING of ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING

Facilitators: Nitzan Lebovic (History, Berman Center for Jewish Studies, Center for Ethics) and Bill Bullman (History, Global Studies)

The question of truth has played a fundamental role in the history, theory, and practice of democracy. From Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* (1776) to the political thinker Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) and the intellectual historian Sophia Rosenfeld's *Democracy and Truth* (2018), truth has often been identified as the anchor of democratic communities. In this seminar we hope historically to situate today's concerns about a "post-truth" moment in democratic culture; examine the ethical, discursive, and epistemological aspects of the relationship between democracy and truth claims; and describe the contemporary, practical nature of this relationship, with reference to themes including media, representation, and gender. The precise array of themes and topics covered will be determined by the facilitators but depend upon input from all participants.

This seminar is a collaborative effort between the Humanities Center and the Center for Ethics. It will be facilitated by William J. Bulman (History, Global Studies), Nitzan Lebovic (History, Berman Center, Center for Ethics), and likely a third faculty member to be recruited from applicants to the seminar. The seminar will meet eight times for 2.5 hours over the course of the 2019-20 academic calendar. Participants will meet in person to discuss common readings on the seminar theme chosen in advance. They will be expected to play a regular, active role in shaping the reading content of the seminar in addition to contributing to the discussions. We plan to involve one or two scholars from outside the university to help enrich the discussion. Options would include internationally-prominent scholars such as Seyla Benhabib or Sophia Rosenfeld herself.

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Interdisciplinary Approaches to Antibiotic Resistance – In collaboration with the Office of the Vice President for Research

Facilitator: Lorenzo Servitje (English, HMS, Film and Documentary Studies)

Antibiotic resistance characterizes microbes' ability to develop measures to resist antimicrobial treatment through evolution. As a result of the overuse of antibiotics since the mid-twentieth century, bacteria have developed evolutionary mechanisms that give them resistance to very drugs used to treat them, from first generation antibiotics like penicillin to last resort drugs like vancomycin. To compound this evolutionary response, the pipeline of antibiotic production has for the most part run dry: because of both economic, technological, and non-renewable limitations—there have been no new antibiotic classes for over three decades (Landecker 2015). Antibiotic resistance's consequences do not end with antibiotics' direct use (treating infections); antibiotic resistance unravels the infrastructure that has allowed for so much innovation in treatment and care on which so much contemporary health and longevity depends: chemotherapy, surgery, immunosuppression, just to name a few.

By some estimates, it is expected to kill more than 10 million people by 2050 (UN General Assembly 2016), supplanting cancer as the leading cause. In response to this growing threat, there has been an increasing appearance of science-fictional language and imagery describing the “post-antibiotic apocalypse” in news media. There are to a group of British projects, funded by organizations such as National Endowment for Science, Technology, and the Arts (NESTA) and the Wellcome Trust, that have fictionalized this phenomenon in the interest of informing the public, in a radio drama qua audiobook, a short story collection, a graphic novel, and video game. There are additionally a small number of documentary films, of varying commercial success. There remains, however, a fundamental misunderstanding and lack of attention by the public (Mendelson et al 2017; Ancillotti et al 2018), despite the attempts of educating through fiction and new media, and despite catastrophizing headlines that have been running for the past 10 years.

As the so-called “War on Cancer” and the “Golden Age of Antibiotics” have demonstrated, some biomedical problems are not inevitably solvable through science and engineering, given enough time and funding. Antibiotic resistance requires a new paradigm to understand the complex relationships, interconnections, effects between humans, the bacterial resistome, and the environment. How can we address the challenging questions, such as the bioethical inquires that emerge regarding prioritizing and withholding treatment (of real patients in the present for possible patients in the future); the responsibility of West to developing nations; the economic incentives and financialization of antibiotic pharmacology; and the continued use of antibiotics for hypertrophic volume increases in livestock.

If current history has taught us anything, it is that antibiotic stewardship and expectations of technofixes are not enough. We need to think beyond the lab, beyond the clinic; we need to think beyond sensational headlines; and, we need to think beyond our insularities—our disciplinary, national, ecological, and individualistic silos. If any problem demands interdisciplinary attention, it is antibiotic resistance.

This seminar seeks to provide a place for scientists, engineers, and humanists to consider how we might tackle the nuance, scale, and complexity of antibiotic resistance.

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This seminar seeks to recruit faculty members who are working on antibiotic resistance specifically along with those who have unique perspectives, and related skills and research interests including but not limited to: microbiology; bioinformatics; value-based care; global and public health; economics of healthcare; psychology of decision making; health communications; medical history; cultural studies of medicine; social and environmental determinants of health.

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