

Theories of Life

in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Interdisciplinary Humanities Conference



Theories of Life in the 20th and 21st Centuries brings together scholars from across the humanities to investigate the centrality of theories of "life" to twentieth and twenty-first century theory and cultural production. In fields as diverse as vitalism, feminism, animal studies, political theory, aesthetics and psychoanalysis, presenters will highlight how the humanities investigates the ontological properties and ethical imperatives of life.

Saturday, February 26, 2011
Rutgers University
Murray Hall, Plangere Center
9am - 7pm



Plenary Lecture

The Career of Living Things is Continuous

Donna V. Jones, University of California at Berkeley, English

Professor Jones is the author of *The Racial Discourses of Life Philosophy: Négritude, Vitalism and Modernity* (Columbia University Press, 2010). She is currently working on a project entitled *The Ambiguous Promise of European Decline: Race and Historical Pessimism in the Era of the Great War*.

Schedule

9:00 Coffee and Tea

9:15 Introduction

9:30-11:00 Panel 1: Philosophies and Life: Values, Objects, Methods

moderated by Octavio Gonzalez, Rutgers University, English

"Hunger and Happiness"

Richard Dienst, Rutgers University, English

"The Strange Fact of Critical Theory: Medusa, Feminist Poetics, and the Wonder of Ekphrasis"

Anne Keefe, Rutgers University, English,

Tyson Lewis, Montclair State University, Department of Educational Foundations

"Life After Death: Freud's Biogonic Myth"

Benjamin Fong, Columbia University, Religion

"What is a Lichen?: Species, Symbiosis, Reduction"

Derek Woods, University of British Columbia, English

11:15-12:45 Panel 2: Vitalist Traditions in Cultural Expression

moderated by Fred Solinger, Rutgers University, English

"The Vitalist Debate in American Literature, 1950-2000"

John McClure, Rutgers University English

"Nietzschean Vitalism in German Musical Modernism"

Jonathan Gentry, Brown University History

"The Limits of Life in the 20th and 21st Century: The Fetus and the Refugee"

Heather Latimer, University of Manchester, English and American Studies

"History in the Service of Life: Nietzsche and Deleuze"

Allison M. Merrick, University of Southampton, Philosophy

12:45-1:45 Lunch

2:00-3:15 Panel 3: Posthuman Ontologies and Subjectivities

moderated by Becca Klaver, Rutgers University, English

"Life or Lives: The Question of 'Actually Existing Animals' "

Marianne DeKoven, Rutgers University, English

"Life After Humanism"

Rachel Greenwald Smith, Saint Louis University, English

"Artificial Life: Figuring the Robot and the End of the Human(ist) World"

Bryan Conn, Case Western Reserve University, English

3:30-4:45 Panel 4: The (Bio)Politics of Life: Regulating and Organizing Life

moderated by Candice Amich, Rutgers University, English

"Life at War: Biopower and Feminist Dissensus"

Harriet Davidson, Rutgers University, English and Women and Gender Studies

"Liberated Futures/Multi-Dimensional Ruptures: Late Marcuse and Black Critical Theory"

Carter Mathes, Rutgers University, English

"When Thought and Life Coincide: Plasticity and Agamben's Form-of-Life"

Kelly Kawar, University of California-Santa Barbara, English

5:00 Plenary Lecture: Donna V. Jones, University of California-Berkeley English, "The Career of Living Things is Continuous"

introduced by Carter Mathes, Rutgers University, English

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A reception will follow.

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free and open to the public

register at <http://theoriesoflifeconference.wordpress.com>

Organized by 2120: The Twenty-first and Twentieth Century Research Group in the Rutgers English Department. Sponsored by the Women and Gender Studies Department, Center for Cultural Analysis, Institute for Research on Women, Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis, Graduate Student Association, School of Arts and Sciences, and the Graduate School-New Brunswick. For more information please contact Philip Longo, phlongo@eden.rutgers.edu