20/20

Twenty Years of Franke Forum Lectures and Big Problems Courses

2018-19 ANNUAL REVIEW
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Front cover: Dean Anne Robertson gave the eighty-sixth Franke Forum Lecture on November 13, 2019. Back cover: In the Big Problems course on “Urban Design with Nature,” teams of students presented their projects.
After almost three decades, the Franke Institute remains a flagship for our goals and aspirations in the Humanities Division. It continues to nurture our advanced research, foster innovation, and facilitate collaboration through exciting and often challenging programming. The Institute likewise provides the ideal venue for faculty and graduate students to carry out their pathbreaking work as well as a forum for stimulating interaction.

Events at the Franke are always thought-provoking: after three years as dean, I for one realize how much I have gained from the Every Wednesday Luncheon Series, featuring talks by new and seasoned faculty as well as visiting scholars. Indeed, a number of these lectures have kept me thinking long after they took place. Presenters whose talks I continue to ponder include—to name just a few—Gabriel Lear, who spoke on Plato and the invention of aesthetic pleasure; Lars-Christian Koch, who gave an oral and aural presentation on musical recordings in prisoner of war camps; Sianne Ngai, who is doing pioneering work on the effects of the gimmick on forms associated with capitalism; Françoise Meltzer, who presented a unique series of artistic photographs taken by her mother in Berlin just days and weeks after the end of the war in Europe; and Erik Zyman, a linguist who offered a lucid presentation on the fundamental operations of syntax. The variety of these lectures and quality of the discussions that follow are impressive, and I count the stimulation that I receive weekly on a wide array of subjects as one of the highlights of my time as dean.

In July, a new era at the Franke begins, as Richard Neer, the Barbara E. and Richard J. Franke Distinguished Service Professor in Art History and Cinema & Media Studies, assumes the directorship. We look forward to the vision, ideas, and emphases that Richard will bring to the Institute. Finally, I want to thank Françoise Meltzer, the Edward Carson Waller Distinguished Service Professor in Comparative Literature and the Divinity School, for her inspiring leadership as Interim Director this year. We all wish her the very best as she now dives into a well-deserved research leave.

Anne Walters Robertson
Dean, Division of the Humanities
This has been a fabulous year at the Franke, and I am grateful for having been Interim Director. I want to begin by saying that the Franke staff is wonderful—they do great and important work behind the scenes, and so I want to thank them and recognize them here.

This year, we celebrate the twentieth anniversaries of both the Franke Forum Lecture Series and the Big Problems Capstone Curriculum in the College. These two programs exemplify outreach and engagement—two vital components of the Franke's mission. We are proud of, and grateful to, the scholars, students, and members of the public who have enriched the literally hundreds of events that these programs have sponsored over the years, which are listed on the inside covers of this Review.

The Every Wednesday Luncheon series continued to be a great success this year. There were many excellent talks on a wide array of fascinating topics. Rebecca West gave a talk on screenplays. Rebecca showed how fluid movie scripts are as a genre: their authors are frequently conflated with the film director; they often have multiple authors; they are initially texts and yet meant to be directives and dialogue; they are constantly amended and revised. Rebecca's talk put the notion of "text" and "script" into a new complexity and in so doing, brought into question the very notion of a stable, original text.

The Franke Forum series at the Gleacher Center was graced this year by three compelling speakers: Thomas Pavel, Candace Vogler, and Rosanna Warren. Rosanna gave a terrific reading of her new poems. When she finished, there was dead silence in the room. Rosanna asked for questions, and no one spoke. I took the microphone to explain to her that we were so moved and overwhelmed by her poetry that we needed a little time to recover. Recover we did, and the questions flew fast and plentiful. A video recording of Rosanna's reading is available on the Franke website: franke.uchicago.edu.

What I admire most about the Franke is the way it provides a space that goes beyond the usual departmental structures and the disciplinary systems they enclose. Projects such as “Algorithms, Models, and Formalisms” or “Climate Change: The Limits of the Numerical,” to cite just two, push the boundaries of disciplines and reconfigure assumptions that spring from the unusual and fruitful juxtapositions explored. This, of course, is the legacy of Jim Chandler. Jim is missed, but Richard Neer, the incoming Director, will inherit this legacy and of course build one of his own. The Franke will continue to thrive under Richard; moreover, its roots in the Humanities Division are deep and of great importance to this enterprise we call the Humanities.

Françoise Meltzer
Interim Director, The Franke Institute for the Humanities
Over the past eleven years, the Center for Disciplinary Innovation (CDI) has provided faculty the opportunity to collaborate on over sixty unique team-taught, graduate courses across a variety of disciplines.

The CDI offers up to five team-taught courses each year at the graduate level with participating faculty from different disciplines. Each faculty member

COURSES, 2018-19

Wagner’s Ring of the Nibelung in Performance: Siegfried
David Levin, Germanic Studies
Steven Rings, Music

Related Lecture
Discussion of Lyric’s new production of Siegfried
Anthony Freud, Lyric Opera General Director

Opera Film, China/Europe: Thinking Media
Hybridity Across Cases
Martha Feldman, Music
Judith Zeitlin, East Asian Languages & Civilizations

The Global Plantation
Christopher Taylor, English Language & Literature
Adom Getachew, Political Science

COURSES, 2019-20

Politics of Media: From the Culture Industry to Google Brain
Patrick Jagoda, English Language & Literature
Kristen Schilt, Sociology

Cinema Without an Archive
Allyson Nadia Field, Cinema & Media Studies
Ghenwa Hayek, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations

Practices of Classicism in the French Seventeenth Century
Larry Norman, Romance Languages & Literatures
Richard Neer, Art History and Cinema & Media Studies

Journeys Real and Virtual. Travel in the Pre-Modern Mediterranean
Niall Atkinson, Art History
Karin Krause, Divinity School

Violence, Trauma, Repair
Sonali Thakkar, English Language & Literature
Natacha Nsabimana, Anthropology
On the course, *Wagner’s Ring of the Nibelung in Performance: Siegfried*

“It is rare to be able to discuss how opera stagings can enhance or change our understanding of specific works, particularly works for the theater, and to have the opportunity to study stagings from a forty-year period at length. Attending rehearsals of the Lyric Opera’s new production of *Siegfried* offered a unique chance to experience and study a work in a way that I have never been able to do within a classroom.”

– Stepan Atamian, Master of Arts Program in the Humanities

“The students were highly engaged and enthusiastic from the first class onward. David and I had not taught together before, and I could not be more pleased with how well that worked. We are already planning to do it again for the Graham School in 2020. In short, the course was a highlight of my fourteen years of teaching at Chicago.”

– Steven Rings, Music

Lyric’s new production of *Siegfried*
2015-19 Studies in Climate Change: The Limits of the Numerical

The Franke Institute was awarded a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to support a four-year international, interdisciplinary, and collaborative project entitled “Studies in Climate Change: The Limits of the Numerical.” The Franke hosted two, three-year postdoctoral scholars pursuing in-depth studies of the role numbers do and do not play in the humanistic understanding of environmental problems related to climate change.

The umbrella project—“The Limits of the Numerical”—covered three main strands of social policy. In addition

2018-19 EVENTS

October 5
Communicating Climate Change
Kim Stanley Robinson, Author
Kim Stanley Robinson has become one of the most well-known and respected science fiction writers in the world, with a reality-based approach in the spirit of Isaac Asimov that has made him a social thinker speaking “for the future and from the future.”

April 3
Authentic Fictions and Immersions
Ken Eklund, Visiting Artist, Arizona State University
Ken Eklund, an artist who works in game design, creates “authentic fictions” that immerse people in alternate realities that play out in and illuminate the real world.

May 29
ALT+CTRLS: Metagaming the Standard Interface
Stephanie Boluk, University of California, Davis
Patrick LeMieux, University of California, Davis
Stephanie Boluk and Patrick LeMieux both work in the fields of media and game studies. Together they are authors of the book Metagaming: Playing, Competing, Spectating, Cheating, Trading, Making, and Breaking Videogames.

July 15
Imagining Futures: Realizing Algorithmic and Climate Scenarios Through Transmedia Design
Michael Bodeen, Sound Designer
Michael Bodeen works on storytelling through sound.
to the climate change strand at Chicago, there was a healthcare strand at Cambridge, and a higher education strand at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Taken as a whole, “The Limits of the Numerical” explored some of the most pressing questions for the contemporary human sciences. What is the effect of the pervasive introduction of numerically based quantification into all aspects of social evaluation? When does the use of numbers work against the very values (such as precision, ease of communication) they are introduced to support? How do numbers as a system of evaluation clash with social values that cannot be so quantified?

ASSOCIATED FACULTY

Fredrik Albritton Jonsson, History
Dipesh Chakrabarty, History
James Chandler, English Language & Literature
Michael Greenstone, Economics
Joseph Masco, Anthropology
Benjamin Morgan, English Language & Literature
Emily Lynn Osborn, History
Eric Slauter, English Language & Literature

For more information on “The Limits of the Numerical” Project, please visit: franke.uchicago.edu

FutureCoast, a game by Ken Eklund

Kim Stanley Robinson
Stephanie Boluk
Patrick LeMieux
The Algorithms, Models, and Formalisms Project supports research on the relationship between algorithmic techniques and academic disciplines. Building on the Disciplines & Technologies Project, this project continues the important work of understanding the nature, course, and consequences of the interaction between new technology and disciplinary practices, this time focusing on algorithms, models, and other formalisms.

2018 RESIDENTIAL SCHOLAR

Tyler Reigeluth

Prior to his Chicago residency, Tyler Reigeluth was Postdoctoral Scholar at the Université du Québec à Montréal where he conducted interdisciplinary analysis of the social and ethical stakes surrounding the Montreal smart city project. Reigeluth’s areas of specialization include the philosophy of technology and science, political theory, and critical sociology.

During his residency, Reigeluth laid the groundwork for a long-term research project on some of the major philosophical and social questions that arise when considering machine learning technologies within education. Reigeluth will explore the relationships between learning as a spontaneous activity and education as a form of instituted learning.

2018-19 EVENTS

November 6
Can a Learning Machine be a Teaching Machine?
Tyler Reigeluth, University of Chicago

April 18
Mechanical Calculation and the History of Intelligence
Lorraine Daston, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science and University of Chicago

May 30
Predicting the Past: How Closure Became Disruption
Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, Simon Fraser University

June 3
Algorithmic Mirrors of Human Biases
Aylin Caliskan, George Washington University
ASSOCIATED FACULTY

James Chandler, English Language & Literature
Lorraine Daston, Social Thought
James Evans, Sociology
Frances Ferguson, English Language & Literature
Patrick Jagoda, English Language & Literature
Adrian Johns, History
Karin Knorr Cetina, Sociology
Joseph Masco, Anthropology
Jason Salavon, Visual Arts

Wendy Hui Kyong Chun

Aylin Caliskan

Morphogenetic Structuralism, archimorph.com
Interlocutors in a global span of studies from prehistoric, classical, renaissance, and modern eras, the Franke Fellows extended their disciplinary outlooks throughout eight fields in the humanities and the social scientific discipline of political science. As the group of fellows discussed each fellow’s work-in-progress, each project unfolded innovative, provocative perspectives across customary conceptual boundaries: prehistoric Mediterranean city-states were re-envisioned as a cultural community; classical Greek texts mined for political asylum in a democratic context; global cultural exchange tracked from Manila to the renaissance Habsburg Empire; nascent Victorian economic models critiqued for their technical focus; interfaces between African-American comic filmmaking and Hollywood genres discovered; the Italian cultural context to the nuclear threat explored; the development of Latinx poetry examined across linguistic and regional boundaries; and the “inside” perspective that each of us has analyzed in relation to our judgments and choices. Other projects linked law and German literary realism, pre-cinematic optical technologies and Victorian fiction, Hindus and Muslims in relation to the Bengali language, cinematic detail and film theory, expansive contexts for early twentieth-century ‘Italian’ authors, and ethnomusicology and video games.

**FRANKE FACULTY FELLOWS**

**Matthew Boyle**, Professor, Philosophy; *Transparency and Reflection*

I analyze the special perspective “from the inside” that each of us has and how this perspective enables us to understand our judgments and choices.

**Rachel Galvin**, Assistant Professor, English Language & Literature; *The Hemispheric Poetics of Latinx Literature*

I examine how dialogues across linguistic and regional boundaries have been pivotal for the interlocking development of poetry, with a central focus on U.S. Latinx poetry.

**Elaine Hadley**, Professor, English Language & Literature; *The Dismal Science of Economics and the Lost Art of Political Economy*

I look at four moments in the nineteenth century when foundational terms of neoclassical economics were established at the expense of other more humanistic descriptions of economic thought.

**Demetra Kasimis**, Assistant Professor, Political Science; *Classical Greek Thought and the Aporias of Refuge*

I explore the enduring ways that classical Greek texts address political asylum in a democratic context, despite lacking both a human rights framework and a legal definition of refugees.
Maria Anna Mariani, Assistant Professor, Romance Languages & Literatures; *Italy and the Bomb. Literary Recreation in a Nuclear Age*
I reconstruct the Italian cultural response to the nuclear threat.

(Cont. on page 12)
Miguel Martínez, Assistant Professor, Romance Languages & Literatures; Third New World. Manila’s Literary Culture and the Global Renaissance
I track how Manila’s lettered elites turned the periphery of the early modern Habsburg empire into the center of an imagined new world.

James F. Osborne, Assistant Professor, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations; The Syro-Anatolian Culture Complex
I examine a collection of eastern Mediterranean city-states in the Iron Age (1200–600 BCE), enabling mobility, ethnolinguistic fluidity, and influence on neighboring cultures.

Jacqueline Stewart, Professor, Cinema & Media Studies; Our Comedy of Blackness: The Films of Spencer Williams
I survey the career of prolific African American director, writer, and actor Spencer Williams, and the comic mode of filmmaking he crafted to address Black audiences.
“A more intangible result of my fellowship year has been the opportunity to develop relationships with scholars elsewhere in the Humanities Division, and especially to learn from their work during our biweekly sessions.”

– James Osborne

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– James Osborne

“During the fellowship year, I wrote two new chapters for the dissertation and revised the whole manuscript. I presented papers at two conferences and had an article from one chapter of the dissertation accepted for publication in the journal Victorian Literature and Culture. I received my PhD on June 15, 2019.”

– Amanda Shubert

Julianne Grasso, Doctoral Candidate, Music; Video Game Music, Meaning, and the Possibilities of Play
I explore the meaning behind the dynamic interactivity of player, game, and sound.

Silvia Guslandi, Doctoral Candidate, Romance Languages & Literatures; Belonging to the Threshold. Appartenenza and Sradicamento in Early Twentieth-Century “Italian” Literature
I investigate the cross-cultural, cross-national, and cross-lingual influences that informed the poetics of several early twentieth-century Italian authors.

Noa Merkin, Doctoral Candidate, Cinema & Media Studies; Little Patch of Yellow: On the Detail in Film
I analyze cinematic detail and the role it plays in film theory, analysis, and viewing.

Ahona Panda, Doctoral Candidate, South Asian Languages & Civilizations; Philology and the Politics of Language: The Case of Bengali, 1893-1955
I look at how Hindus and Muslims were both divided and united politically over the Bengali language.

Amanda Shubert, Doctoral Candidate, English Language & Literature; Virtual Realism: Victorian Fiction as Optical Technology
I examine how the sense of realism in Victorian fiction is shaped by the visual effects of pre-cinematic optical technologies like magic lanterns and moving image toys.

Alexander Sorenson, Doctoral Candidate, Germanic Studies; Trials by Water: Law, Sacrifice, and Submergence in German Realism
I consider how the literature of German Realism (ca. 1840-1890) employs water symbolism to portray the relationship between law and sacrifice.
AFFILIATED DISSERTATION COMPLETION FELLOWS

This group of Dissertation Completion Fellows in the Humanities engendered incisive discussions about each other’s works-in-progress, exploring topics far from their specialist studies, and gaining new outlooks on current research in humanities more broadly: aesthetics, whether in Persian lyric poetry or in current Black literature; newly construed contexts for understanding monumental enclosure walls in ancient Egypt or for nineteenth-century German-language realist narratives; relations between a transatlantic playwright and his plays; anthropology and literature in Haitian writings; Hebrew and German modernisms and the Jewish home; or Hindi fiction and global histories of the environment.

Bastien Craipain, Doctoral Candidate, Romance Languages & Literatures; *Writing Race, Culture, and Nation: Haitian Anthropology and Literature, 1859-1915*

I trace the relationship between anthropology and literature in the works of three Haitian intellectuals in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

José Estrada, Doctoral Candidate, Romance Languages & Literatures; “El monstro con su figura”: *Ruiz de Alarcón’s Transatlantic Self-Fashioning*

I interpret Alarcón’s theater as a form of self-fashioning, arguing that he inverts his monstrosity associated with his appearance and place of origin.

AFFILIATED DISSERTATION COMPLETION FELLOWS, 2018-19

Top row, left to right: Bastien Craipain, Jessica Resvick, Margot Browning, Associate Director, Michal Peles-Almagor, Oren Siegel; Bottom row, left to right: José Estrada, Joya John, Ksenia Ershova
Lauren Jackson, Doctoral Candidate, English Language & Literature; *Black Vertigo: Attunement, Aphasia, Nausea, and Bodily Noise, 1970 to the Present*  
I analyze how vertigo constitutes the singular organizing aesthetic among representations of Black life in Black literature and culture.

Joya John, Doctoral Candidate, South Asian Languages & Civilizations; *Nature Displaced: Postcolonial Hindi Literature and the Environment, 1954-2015*  
I show how Hindi fiction, usually read within critical histories of the nation state and area studies, might be re-read within global histories of the environment.

Jane Mikkelson, Doctoral Candidate, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations; *Worlds of the Imagination: Bidel of Delbi (d.1721) and Early Modern Persian Lyric Style*  
I study the entanglements between imagination, Persian lyric poetry, and Islamic thought.

Michal Peles-Almagor, Doctoral Candidate, Comparative Literature; *The Place of Writing: Language and Home in Twentieth-Century Hebrew and German Literature*  
I examine the impact of the intertwined worlds of Hebrew and German modernisms on the conceptualization of the Jewish home.

Jessica Resvick, Doctoral Candidate, Germanic Studies; *Reading Recognition: The Poetics of Poetic Realism*  
I look at nineteenth-century German-language realist narratives through a historical and epistemological lens.

Oren Siegel, Doctoral Candidate, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations; *Walls of the Ruler: The Development of Monumental Enclosure Walls in Ancient Egypt*  
I analyze the functional and symbolic purposes of monumental enclosure walls that surround and divide towns, palaces, and fortresses in ancient Egypt.
Fellows, 2019-20

Selected by the Governing Board of the Franke Institute for the Humanities, the fourteen incoming Franke Fellows hail from eight departments in the Humanities, and two departments in the Social Sciences:

FRANKE FACULTY FELLOWS

Emily Austin, Assistant Professor, Classics; *Grief and the Hero: The Futility of Longing in the Iliad*

Jessica Swanston Baker, Assistant Professor, Music; *Too Fast: Music and the Aesthetics of Speed in the Caribbean*

Larissa Brewer-García, Assistant Professor, Romance Languages & Literatures; *Salvation, Reconsidered: Black Freedom in Colonial Spanish America*

John Muse, Associate Professor, English Language & Literature; *Theater and the Virtual*

Anna Schultz, Associate Professor, Music; *Songs Left Behind: Gender, Migration, and Translation among India’s Bene Israel*

Jennifer Wild, Associate Professor, Cinema & Media Studies; *Concrete Aesthetics: Materiality, Politics, and History in the Image*

James Wilson, Assistant Professor, Political Science; *The Democratic Grounds of Justice*

Mareike Winchell, Assistant Professor, Anthropology; *After Servitude: Cartographies of Indigenous Justice in Bolivia*

FRANKE DISSERTATION COMPLETION FELLOWS

Daniel Carranza, Doctoral Candidate, Germanic Studies; *Morphological Poetics in the Age of Goethe*

Sam Lasman, Doctoral Candidate, Comparative Literature; *Dragons, Fairies, and Time: Imagining the Past in Medieval Persian, French, and Welsh Narrative*

Yiying Pan, Doctoral Candidate, East Asian Languages & Civilizations; *Symphonic Spaces, Synthesized Knowledge: Environment, Society, and Governance of Eastern Sichuan Highlands, 1723-1864*

Bradley Spiers, Doctoral Candidate, Music; *Galatea’s Song: Anthropic Music-Making and the Genesis of Artificial Life*

Pao-chen Tang, Doctoral Candidate, Cinema & Media Studies; *The Animist Imagination of Cinema*

Brandon Truett, Doctoral Candidate, English Language & Literature; *Art War: The Transnational Imaginary of the Spanish Civil War, 1936 to the Present*
On the first or second Wednesday of the month, once every quarter, University alumni and friends gather for a public lecture by a University faculty member at the downtown Gleacher Center. For the twentieth year, the Visiting Committee to the Division of the Humanities Centennial Endowment has funded these lectures for the Franke Forum, and the receptions that follow. To reserve a seat for an upcoming forum, please email franke-humanities@uchicago.edu.

2018-19

November 14
Thomas Pavel
Gordon J. Laing Distinguished Service Professor in Romance Languages & Literatures, Comparative Literature, and the College; Why Should We Trust Literature?

March 13
Candace Vogler
David B. and Clara E. Stern Professor in Philosophy and the College; Thinking Fast, Slow, and Wisely: Practical Wisdom and How it Develops

May 8
Rosanna Warren
Hanna Holborn Gray Distinguished Service Professor in the Committee on Social Thought and the College
Women, Power, Magic, and Damage: New Poems

2019-20

November 13
Anne Walters Robertson
Claire Dux Swift Distinguished Service Professor in Music and the College; Dean, Division of the Humanities
Beads, Books, Armor, and Coins: Sacred Music and the Material Culture of the Late Middle Ages

March 11
Mauricio Tenorio
Samuel N. Harper Professor in History, Romance Languages & Literatures, and the College; “History on Foot: Walking Cities”

May 13
Bill Brown
Karla Scherer Distinguished Service Professor in American Culture, Departments of English Language & Literature and Visual Arts and the College; To be announced

Recent Franke Forums can be viewed on the Franke YouTube channel: youtube.com/frankeinstitute

For more information on the Franke Forum series, follow us on Twitter: @UChiFrankeInst

20/20
Twenty Years of Franke Forum Lectures
Helping faculty members stay abreast of their colleagues’ current work from any department in the humanities or humanistic social sciences, the Every Wednesday Luncheon Series was created twenty-two years ago to provide University humanities faculty with regular opportunities to assemble informally. On most Wednesdays during the academic year, a faculty member gives an informal talk over a catered lunch at the Institute about his or her work-in-progress and afterwards responds to questions from the audience. For each talk, participants also include five graduate students who are invited on behalf of the speaker. In addition to “Every Wednesday” talks about ongoing faculty members’ works-in-progress, this series also presents talks by new faculty members in the humanities, by visiting professors, about collaborative projects, and about current affairs.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

**Wendy Doniger**, South Asian Languages & Civilizations
*Academic Writing as Autobiography: Writing The Donigers of Great Neck: A Mythologized Memoir*

**Patrick Jagoda**, English Language & Literature
*Gaming Orientation*

**Laura Letinsky**, Visual Arts
*A Proposition, or on the Allure of Photography*

**David Nirenberg**, Social Thought
*Math and Monotheism*

**Howard Nusbaum**, Psychology
*Understanding Wisdom Through Psychological Science*

**Mark Payne**, Classics
*Postapocalyptic Fiction*

**Marshall Sahlins**, Anthropology
*The Politics of the Enchanted Universe*

**Rebecca West**, Romance Languages & Literatures
*What is Screenwriting?*

**Jennifer Wild**, Cinema & Media Studies
*The Image and Historical Matter*

NEW FACULTY

Luis Bettencourt
Sarah Johnson
Kara Keeling
Tina Post
NEW FACULTY

Luis Bettencourt, Ecology & Evolution  
*Complexity Science for Humanists*

Sarah Johnson, English Language & Literature  
*A Missing Ending*

Kara Keeling, Cinema & Media Studies  
*Digital Media and (Im)proper Bodies*

Tina Post, English Language & Literature  
*Minimalism and the Aesthetics of Black Threat*

Danielle Roper, Romance Languages & Literatures  
*Blackface in Miami*

Benjamin Saltzman, English Language & Literature  
*Riddles, Cryptographic Errors, and Intellectual Humility*

Anna Schultz, Music  
*Gender and Translation in Jewish India*

Anna Elena Torres, Comparative Literature  
*Yiddish Avant-Gardes*

Erik Zyman, Linguistics  
*The Fundamental Operations of Syntax*

PROJECT LUNCHEON

Erika Dudley, Senior Program Manager, Civic Knowledge Project  
*Coffeehouses and Public Discourse*

Jennifer Wild and Françoise Meltzer  
*Teaching in the Center for Disciplinary Innovation*
Celebrating its twentieth anniversary, the Big Problems program provides a capstone curriculum for third- and fourth-year students, coordinated by the Franke Institute and the College. These elective courses offer students opportunities to broaden their studies from their departmental major by focusing on a “big problem”—a matter of global or universal concern that intersects with several disciplines and affects a variety of interest groups. By their nature, “big problems” call for interdisciplinary teamwork, yet their solutions may not be obvious or finally determinable. For more information, please see: collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/thecollege/bigproblems

**COURSES, 2018-19**

- **Alternate Reality Games: Theory and Production**  
  Patrick Jagoda, English Language & Literature  
  Heidi Coleman, Theater & Performance Studies

- **Censorship, Information Control, and Revolutions in Information Technology from the Printing Press to the Internet**  
  Adrian Johns, History  
  Ada Palmer, History

- **Disability and Design**  
  Michele Friedner, Comparative Human Development  
  Jennifer Iverson, Music

- **Energy and Energy Policy**  
  R. Stephen Berry, Chemistry  
  George Tolley, Economics

- **From Fossils to Fermi’s Paradox: Origin and Evolution of Intelligent Life**  
  Paul Sereno, Organismal Biology & Anatomy  
  Leslie Rogers, Astronomy & Astrophysics  
  Sarah London, Psychology

- **Narrating Migration**  
  Jo McDonagh, English Language & Literature  
  Vu Tran, Creative Writing

- **Urban Design with Nature**  
  Sabina Shaikh, Environmental Studies  
  Emily Talen, Urban Studies

**COURSES, 2019-20**

- **Climate Change in Media and Design**  
  Patrick Jagoda, Cinema & Media Studies  
  Benjamin Morgan, English Language & Literature

- **Disability and Design**  
  Michele Friedner, Comparative Human Development  
  Jennifer Iverson, Music

- **Drinking Alcohol: Social Problem or Normal Cultural Practice?**  
  Michael Dietler, Anthropology  
  William N. Green, Neurobiology

- **Inequality: Origins, Dimensions, and Policy**  
  Allen Sanderson, Economics

- **Medical Ethics: Central Topics**  
  Daniel Brudney, Philosophy

- **Science and Christianity**  
  Dorian Abbot, Geophysical Sciences  
  Daniel Fabrycky, Astronomy & Astrophysics  
  Lea Schweitz, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

- **Thinking Psychoanalytically: From the Sciences to the Arts**  
  Anne Beal, Social Sciences

- **Urban Design with Nature**  
  Sabina Shaikh, Environmental Studies  
  Emily Talen, Urban Studies
FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS

On the course, **Disability and Design**

“I learned how to critically reevaluate terms that many people might take for granted—disabled, abled, non-disabled, impaired—and how these notions are socially and/or medically constructed. Some of the most valuable parts of the course were rethinking the way that we think about disability in a work- and productivity-based context, and how ‘disability’ and the reasons why it might be frowned upon aren’t self-evident.”

“I gained a better understanding of disability rights, accessibility, and universal design. This course opened my mind to new ways of thinking, learning, creating space, building community, and experiencing the world. It was an incredible course with wide-reaching implications and an amazing variety of topics.”

On the course, **From Fossils to Fermi’s Paradox: Origin and Evolution of Intelligent Life**

“I learned that the evolution of life on Earth is inextricably connected to the evolution of stars within the universe. This class explored the interconnectivity between cosmology, physics, astronomy, and biology to great extents: acquiring such a wide range of pieces of knowledge from different fields during just one quarter’s worth of time made the course worthwhile to take. I learned that platypuses are extremely strange phenomenal creatures, in terms of evolutionary biology; and that similarly can be said about octopuses; and that humans might not be all that special, with respect to everything else within the universe. I learned about the different reasons for why we probably won’t encounter aliens during our species’ lifetime; and that, while we may not ever encounter aliens, there might still be some very important lessons that we can learn from endeavors to explore the concepts of ‘alien’, ‘human’, ‘intelligent’, and ‘living’. Such lessons, I believe, can and will be developed over time, by both myself and those within the community.”

On the course, **Narrating Migration**

“I gained the skills to discuss historical texts, and learned about multiple instances of migration. I’d never known there were so many migration stories across the world. The course delved into this topic of study in such a fascinating and eye-opening way that challenged my assumptions about stories of narration.”

“The most important thing I learned in this course is that migration is not a matter that solely affects the lives of migrants—as we traditionally think of them—but many more people; and in general, the effects of migration are things felt by all people.”

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Course book: *Narrating Migration*  
Field trip: *Disability and Design*  

2018-19 Annual Review  

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Course book: *Narrating Migration*  
Field trip: *Disability and Design*  

20/20  
Twenty Years of Big Problems Courses
Events, 2018–19

The Institute sponsors conferences on interdisciplinary topics in the humanities, including themes and issues drawn from the social sciences, that are co-sponsored with University of Chicago centers, departments, workshops, and divisions, as well as other institutions. During 2018-19, the Institute co-sponsored sixty conferences, lectures, and other events.

CONFERENCES

July

Invisible Bonds: the Enlightenment Science of Society from Mandeville to Hegel (summer seminar)

October

Self-Consciousness and Objectivity: A Workshop with Sebastian Rödl

Bazin@100

Industry and Industrialism in the Late Antique and Early Islamic Near East

Disciplines of Experiment

Plato’s Philosophy: Eros, Polis, Cosmos

Silencing the Past @ 25

Sectarian Identity and Community Formation in Islam

November

Issues of Translation and Adaptation in conversation with the Ilkhom Theatre of Tashkent, Uzbekistan and the Bata Theatre of Almaty, Kazakhstan

Buddhism, Thought, and Civilization: A Memorial Symposium for Steven Collins

Exhaustion: Tired Bodies, Tired Worlds

Linguistic Homelands: Modern Hebrew, Yiddish, and German

Literary Representations of Religious Ecstasy: From Ibn ‘Arabi to Saint John of the Cross

The Weight of Antiquity

In this interdisciplinary graduate student conference, speakers examined the limits, influence, and expressions of antiquity in Europe and across the early-modern world. The event’s themes included “Building a Classical Canon,” “Ancient Politics as a Mirror of Early Modern Identity,” and “Ancient Materials and Modern Images.”

Connecting the Dots Through Guo Baochang

This symposium focused on the renowned Chinese director Guo Baochang and the way his innovative work engages with Peking Opera across media—namely, film, TV, and the stage; for example, in his hit TV drama series in which Peking opera plays a major role.
February

The Legacy of Moishe Postone
Connecting the Dots Through Guo Baochang: Contemporary Chinese Opera, Film, TV
The Weight of Antiquity: Early Modern Classicisms

March

New Narratives for Contemporary Art
Thinking and Being
South Asia: The Political, the Public, the Popular
Persian and Iranian Studies in Honor of Heshmat Moayyad
Thought and Judgment
The Shanghai Jews: Risk and Resilience in a Refugee Community

April

2019 Weissbourd Conference: In Search of Asylum
Sluicing and Ellipsis at 50
More Soon: A Symposium Honoring Joe Roach
Plato, the Parthenon, and Liberal Education
Nativism, White Power, and Anti-Immigrant Violence in the United States
Lucretius On the Nature of Things: Bringing Enlightenment to the Romans
Counter-Readings: Modern Asian Literary Histories
Documenting the Archive
The Human Rights Crisis in Xinjiang

(Cont. on page 24)
CO-SPONSORS for EVENTS

- External Co-sponsors

  Chicago Area Consortium in Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy, Consulate General of France in Chicago, Consulate General of Spain in Chicago, Goethe-Institut Chicago, Human Rights Watch, The Lumen Christi Institute, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, Northwestern University, Mikhail Prokhorov Foundation, Smart Family Foundation, Sorbonne Université, Tinker Foundation, University of Illinois at Chicago, U.S. Department of Education, Alexander von Humboldt Foundation

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  Anthropology, Art History, Cinema & Media Studies, Classics, Comparative Human Development, Comparative Literature, Economics, English Language & Literature, Germanic Studies, History, Linguistics, Music, Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations, Philosophy, Romance Languages & Literatures, Slavic Languages & Literatures

- At the Franke Institute:

  The Adelyn Russell Bogert Fund supports activities involving the arts. This year, the Bogert Fund co-sponsored the following events:
  - Buddhist Cave Temples of China: A Sourcebook
  - Documenting the Archive
  - More Soon: A Symposium Honoring Joe Roach

May

- The 33rd Annual Middle East History & Theory Conference
- Emergence and Ground. The Dynamics of ‘Darstellung’
- Landscape Studies in the Near East: The Next 100 Years
- From Local to Global in East Asian Culture
- Chicago Linguistic Society’s 55th Annual Conference
- W.E.B. DuBois and the Chicago School
- Writing and Picturing Symposium, Part II
- Annual Ancient Philosophy Graduate Student Conference
- Chicago Tamil Forum
- Buddhist Cave Temples of China: A Sourcebook
- Translating Premodern Chinese Buddhist Texts: Five Ways of Reading Chinese Buddhist History

June

- “Let Me Hear Your Voice!” Women, The Song of Songs, and Public Discourse

LECTURES / WORKSHOPS / DISCUSSIONS

October–November

- Sound & Society Workshop
  Jonathan Sterne, McGill University
  The Barcelona Reader: Cultural Readings of the City
  Jaume Subirana, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

  Representaciones literarias del éxtasis místico en la literatura del Siglo de Oro español
  Luce López-Baralt, Universidad de Puerto Rico, Río Piedras
Mapping Identities: Stories of a Madagascar Homeland
Wendy Wilson-Fall, Lafayette College

Welcoming the Refugees: Lessons of the European Crisis from a French Perspective
Pascal Brice, French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons

February
The Salesman Only Rings Once: The Vacuum Cleaner in Midcentury British Culture
Maud Ellmann, University of Chicago

March
Tensiones en el campo literario vasco
Jon Kortazar, University of the Basque Country

April
India in Global Intellectual History
Faisal Devji, University of Oxford
Shruti Kapila, University of Cambridge
Nico Slate, Carnegie Mellon University

From Colony to Mandate: Tanzania after World War I
Michelle Moyd, Indiana University

Roundtable: “The Return of the Nineteenth Century?”
Book Discussion: Southern Accents
Michael Washburn, Humanities New York
Steven Rings, University of Chicago

(Cont. on page 26)
EXHIBITS/FILMS/PERFORMANCES

November–December
Bridge #15: Performance and Discussion
Poetry of Resistance in Russia Today, a poetry reading and discussion with Russian poet/activists Kirill Medvedev and Pavel Arseniev

February–March
Performance: Worlding, Writing—Trauma and the Aesthetics of Life Series: Bad News
Film Screening: Dream of the Bridal Chamber

April–May
Film Screening: Traces in the Snow
Performance: Bridge 2.1 (Crying Out Loud)
...

For more information about any of the events mentioned, please see franke.uchicago.edu.

Counter-Readings: Modern Asian Literary Histories
The conference on “Counter-Readings: Modern Asian Literary Histories” featured innovative counter-readings—revealing blind spots in our received knowledge and creating new avenues for productive research—from emerging scholars who employ novel approaches to the modern literature of East Asia. This event facilitated new collaborations for transnational frameworks on Asian literatures and area studies.

Thinking and Being: A Conference with Irad Kimhi
In an ‘author meets critics’ style of event, this conference focused on a ground-breaking intervention into the analytic philosophical tradition, namely, Irad Kimhi’s book on Thinking and Being, with papers about the book and in dialogue with Kimhi at the conference. Key topics included the character of laws of logic, the relation of logic and psychology, the linguistic character of thought and, above all, the unity of thinking and being.
For 2019-20, the Governing Board of the Franke Institute has awarded twenty grants to faculty members and graduate students for events on widely ranging topics, including the ones listed below. For information about these events throughout the year, please see: franke.uchicago.edu.

**AUTUMN**

“Not in Search of Messages”: A Primo Levi Study Day

Ancient Greek Curses in Context

The Attractions of the Moving Image: Honoring Tom Gunning

The Bridge

Jewish Difference Under Empire: Identity and Alterity Across France, the Maghreb, and Israel/Palestine

Marianne Midwest Lecture

Native and Non-Native Indigenous Languages in Chicago

North American Society for the Study of Romanticism: Romantic Elements

Polyhedric Greece

Religion’s Turn: A Chicago Conference in the Continental Philosophy of Religion

Vcologies 4: Disciplinary Approaches to Environmental Knowledge

**WINTER**

Ancient Armenia: Center and Peripheries

The Quest for Modern Language: The Politico-linguistic Imaginary Between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

Silk Road Imaginaries

**SPRING**

Connection, Transfer, Circulation

Errant Voices: Performance Beyond Measures

The Middle Ages in Midcentury Thought

Race and Ethnicity in the Russian and Soviet Empires

Sri Lanka’s Ethnic Conflict and Civil War: A Visual History, 1979 to 2018

Translating Premodern Chinese Religious Texts

From the poster for “The Attractions of the Moving Image: Honoring Tom Gunning”
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Twenty Years of Big Problems Courses and Franke Forum Lectures