

Alumni College 2019 – Session Descriptions

Feminist Reading: Situating Kate Millett and Andrea Dworkin in the Complicated History of Feminist Literary Criticism

[Leah Allen](#), Assistant Professor of Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies

The complicated history of feminism includes a certain amount of shame, shunning, and repudiation of figures deemed insufficiently feminist, insufficiently political, or the “wrong” kind of feminist. The history of feminist literary criticism is no different. When feminist reading strategies began to emerge in English departments at US universities during the 1960s and 1970s, many scholars and public intellectuals dismissed feminist readers such as Andrea Dworkin and Kate Millett as insufficiently literary. In this talk, I highlight the deep relationship between how Dworkin and Millett viewed literature in their work and how they're remembered today. This talk covers the history of literary criticism from the 1960s to the present by discussing the intervention that feminists made into literary study. In addition, this talk will examine how early feminist literary critics were treated, how they related to one another, and how cultures of judgment continue to characterize feminist reading.

"Who wants out?" Brexit, the Scottish and Catalan Referendums, and the Politics of Breaking Up.

[Xavier Escandell](#), Associate Professor of Anthropology, and [Gemma Sala](#), Associate Professor of Political Science

Many people in Europe want out. Among exit movements, the continued imminence of Brexit gathers all the attention but Euroscepticism is on the rise throughout the EU. In addition, demands for secessionism have been on the rise even in countries that had made big strides in accommodating national diversity. Moderate nationalisms in Catalonia and Scotland have lost ground to full on and strongly mobilized demands for independence in recent years. These trends are often interpreted as similar symptoms with common causes. They are characterized as populist reactions to globalization trends and increased immigration flows as well as the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis. In our presentation we will try to unpack the motivations behind these demands for exit. On the one hand, we will unpack the constituencies behind these movements. Who really wants out, who does not and why. On the other, we will explore the incentives and strategic opportunities that politicians considered when they put exit referendums on the table. By looking at the different actors behind their movements and their motivations we hope that our discussion will take us beyond broad and conventional understandings of these processes that tend to assume that one explanation fits all.

Othello Revisited: Performance and Difference in Shakespeare and Verdi

[John Garrison](#), Associate Professor of English, and [Kelly Maynard](#), Associate Professor of History

The tragic hero, Othello, has fascinated audiences for centuries. This session will concentrate on two central case studies: his original appearance in Shakespeare's play Othello (1604) and then his re-imagining as an operatic figure in Verdi's Otello (1887). In both instances, Othello represents a profound "Other" for fellow characters and for audience members alike: he is a former Muslim converted to Christianity and a dark-skinned soldier navigating aristocratic white society. What did it mean to create, perform, and witness the mysterious "moor" in each of these contexts?

This lecture will showcase the theatrical conventions and performative dynamics that distinguish Elizabethan theater and nineteenth-century opera from other art forms and from each other. We will explore the political, racial, and religious contexts of each work and use Othello as a lens through which to explore how theater and opera function – often problematically – to make sense of difference.

The Afterlife of Slavery: Teaching Difficult Histories through a Critique of Curriculum Violence

[Stephanie Jones](#), Assistant Professor of Education

This lecture will focus on how curriculum that is designed to teach difficult histories often resorts to acts of interpersonal violence and surveillance. Professor Jones will profile examples of classroom activities while also explaining how schools are maintained as sites of racialized trauma.

Climate Change and the Impact on Developing Countries

[Wayne Moyer](#), Professor of Political Science; Rosenfield Professor

The talk will begin by summarizing the current state of scientific knowledge on greenhouse gas emissions levels and trends, and how this is leading to climate change. We will detail the greenhouse gas emissions from different countries and from different sources. The discussion will then turn to discussing the impact of climate change on developing countries and to international action undertaken under the 2015 Paris Climate agreement to help developing countries adapt to climate change and mitigate future emissions. Finally we will consider necessary future action to limit climate change and reduce the vulnerability of developing countries.

Diversity & the Predicament of Good Intentions

Constanza Ocampo Reader '95

We think we understand diversity and know how to engage with it. But without taking the time to think about diversity in complex ways, we risk trafficking in the exact patterns we seek to avoid. An anthropologist helps us find ways to navigate the predicament of good intentions.

Disasters of War and Peace: Printmaking and the Politics of Witnessing

[Fredo Rivera '06](#), Assistant Professor of Art History

This class provides a unique opportunity to explore Grinnell College's art collection in our Print & Drawing Study Room in Burling Library. Our class will focus on two major print series - Francisco Goya's *Disasters of War* and Diane Victor's *Disasters of Peace*. Both provide examples of printmaking as political commentary, the former focusing on the Napoleonic invasions of Spain and the latter on post-apartheid South Africa. By looking closely at each of the prints within both series, we will utilize visual analysis to discuss both medium and subject matter. We will then consider the broader, contemporary relevance of these works, and their pedagogical value.

Note: this class will be offered once each day and require preregistration, as there are only 20 spots.

Welcome

[Leslie Gregg-Jolly](#), Interim Chief Diversity Officer; Professor of Biology

The welcome to Alumni College 2019 will share information about the Grinnell College Diversity & Inclusion Plan: how it has been implemented, assessed, and added to for the upcoming school year.