

# SOCIETY FOR CRITICAL EXCHANGE

## WINTER THEORY INSTITUTE

### February 8-11, 2018

FOURTEEN DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARS FROM ACROSS THE U.S. IN THREE DAYS OF ENGAGING DISCUSSION.

**About SCE** The SOCIETY FOR CRITICAL EXCHANGE is North America’s oldest scholarly organization devoted to theory. Our various interdisciplinary projects, conferences, and symposia serve to advance the role of theory in academic and intellectual arenas. Our projects encompass a broad spectrum of disciplines, most prominently literary and cultural studies, legal studies and practices, economics, philosophy, and pedagogy.

**The 2018 Institute** The Society for Critical Exchange (SCE), in collaboration with the University of Houston-Victoria, School of Arts and Sciences is pleased to announce the topic of the eight annual SCE Winter Theory Institute: *Biotheory*.

The Greek bios means “life.” Connected with the Greek logia meaning “knowledge of,” it is a mainstream field of natural science dating back to the Lyceum of Aristotle. However, in the modern world, the study of biology came to be regarded as entirely separate from philosophy. Biotheory today is reconnecting biology with philosophy in new and interesting ways. The philosophy of biology traditionally was organized into three basic interpretations of biological phenomena: Reductionism, Vitalism, and Organismicism. However, Michel Foucault can be credited for reviving the Greek investigation of bios in ways different from mainstream philosophy of biology by introducing a form of power based on “the right to take life or let live.” Today biopower and biopolitics occupy an expansive and expanding realm within contemporary theory. Both also have deep connections with adjacent areas of concern such as biotechnology, biosecurity, and thanatopolitics. Biotheory today encourages theoretical speculation on one of the most basic of all philosophical questions, “What is Life?”

*The following presenters will be addressing these issues and other topics of interest.*

#### Christopher Breu

Christopher Breu is Professor of English at Illinois State University. He is author of *Insistence of the Material: Literature in the Age of Biopolitics* and *Hard-Boiled Masculinities* and editor of the forthcoming collection, *Noir Affect*. He also is coeditor of the recent *symplokē* special issue on “Materialisms.”

*“Biopolitics and Infrastructure”*



Christopher Breu



Jeffrey S. Librett

#### Jeffrey S. Librett

Jeffrey S. Librett is Professor of German at the University of Oregon. He is the author of *The Rhetoric of Cultural Dialogue: Jews and Germans from Moses Mendelssohn to Richard Wagner and Beyond* and *Orientalism and the Figure of the Jew*, and numerous essays on literature, philosophy, and psychoanalysis.

*“Psychoanalysis and Biopower: Foucault to Derrida”*

#### Jeffrey R. Di Leo

Jeffrey R. Di Leo is Dean of Arts & Sciences and Professor of English and Philosophy at the University of Houston-Victoria. He is also Executive Director of SCE. His books include *Higher Education under Late Capitalism* and *American Literature as World Literature*. His forthcoming book is *Bloomsbury Handbook of Literary and Cultural Theory*.

*“Late Capitalism on Vinyl: On the Biopolitics of Music”*



Jeffrey R. Di Leo



Paul Allen Miller

#### Paul Allen Miller

Paul Allen Miller is Vice Provost and Carolina Distinguished Professor at the University of South Carolina. His most recent works are *Plato’s Apology of Socrates* (with Charles Platter), and *A Tibullus Reader*. His *Diotima at the Barricades: French Feminists Read Plato* was recently published by Oxford.

*“Against or Agamben: or Living your Life, Zōē versus Bios in the late Foucault”*

#### Sean Grattan

Sean Grattan is Lecturer of American literature at the University of Kent. His first book is *Hope Isn’t Stupid: Utopian Affects in Contemporary American Literature*. His work has appeared in *Twentieth Century Literature*, *Genre*, *Mediations*, *Utopian Studies*, and *Social Text* and he is the coeditor of the special issue of *Cultural Critique* titled “What Comes After the Subject?”

*“It’s All Good; It’s All Fucked: Wellness as Metaphor”*



Sean Grattan



Brian O’Keeffe

#### Brian O’Keeffe

Brian O’Keeffe is Senior Lecturer in the French department at Barnard College, Columbia University. He is also Associate Director of the Barnard Center for Translation Studies.

*“Borderline Animal”*

#### Christian Haines

Christian Haines is Assistant Professor of English at Dartmouth College. He is completing a book entitled *A Desire Called America: Biopolitics, Utopia, and the Literary Commons*. He serves as a contributing editor for *Angelaki*. He is also conducting research for a second book, *The Scored Life*.

*“Earth, Plastic, Flesh, or Extracting Life in the Anthropocene”*



Christian Haines



Rebekah Sheldon

#### Rebekah Sheldon

Rebekah Sheldon is Assistant Professor of English at Indiana University and the author of *The Child to Come: Life After the Human Catastrophe*. She is currently at work on a new project about queer occultism.

*“More New Enclosures: Orphan Black, Blade Runner 2049, and Other Narratives of Miraculous Fertility”*

#### Peter Hitchcock

Peter Hitchcock is a Professor of English, Film Studies, and Women’s Studies at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He is Associate Director of the Center for Place, Culture and Politics at the Graduate Center. His latest book is *Labor in Culture, or, Worker of the World(s)*.

*“The Biometrics of Revolution”*



Peter Hitchcock



Nicole Simek

#### Nicole Simek

Nicole Simek is Associate Professor of French and Interdisciplinary Studies at Whitman College. She is the author of *Hunger and Irony in the French Caribbean: Literature, Theory, and Public Life* and *Eating Well, Reading Well: Maryse Condé and the Ethics of Interpretation*.

*“The New Philosophers’ Stones: Materiality in a Disenchanted Age”*

#### Aaron Jaffe

Aaron Jaffe is the Frances Cushing Ervin Professor at Florida State University. He has published *Modernism and the Culture of Celebrity* and *The Way Things Go: An Essay on the Matter of Second Modernism*.

*“Bio-Exhaust: The Hatred of Ben Lerner”*



Aaron Jaffe



Liane Tanguay

#### Liane Tanguay

Liane Tanguay is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Houston-Victoria. She is the author of *Hijacking History: American Culture and the War on Terror*. Research interests include the neoliberal state of exception in popular culture.

*“Ideology, Immunity, and American Biopolitics”*

#### Kir Kuiken

Kir Kuiken is associate professor of English at the University at Albany, SUNY. He is the author of *Imagined Sovereignities: Toward a New Political Romanticism* with Fordham University Press, as well as essays on Wordsworth, Shelley, Goethe, Deleuze, Derrida, Heidegger, Benjamin, and others.

*“Bio-Inscriptionality: On Derrida’s Life/Death Seminar”*



Kir Kuiken



Zahi Zalloua

#### Zahi Zalloua

Zahi Zalloua is Professor of French and Interdisciplinary Studies at Whitman College and editor of *The Comparatist*. He has published *Montaigne and the Ethics of Skepticism*, *Reading Unruly*, and *Continental Philosophy and the Palestinian Question*. His forthcoming book is entitled *Theory’s Autoimmunity*.

*“Immunizing Life: Derrida, Esposito, and Mbembe”*

The Institute will take place from **Thursday, February 8 to Sunday, February 11** from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Presentations will take place in the University of Houston-Victoria Publishing Center. The Publishing Center is located on the third floor of the Center building, room 301. Additional details regarding the Society for Critical Exchange or the upcoming Winter Theory Institute can be found at the Society for Critical Exchange’s website (<http://societyforcriticalexchange.org/>) or by contacting **Executive Director, Jeffrey R. Di Leo** ([dileo@symploke.org](mailto:dileo@symploke.org)).