

After the Political, Aesthetic Affiliation

**Tuesday,
April 25, 6-8p.m., c.t.
Casino Cas 1.811**



Brian Price, PhD
Cinema Studies Institute
University of Toronto

I will elaborate an aesthetic theory of solidarity with respect to Olivier Assayas's TV show *Irma Vep* (2022). Assayas has long detailed the many ways in which political agreement and political unification can be understood on a global scale in terms that refuse the friend/enemy distinction, which has long defined unification within political practice and nationalist discourse. We will consider how seriality creates the conditions for difference within repetition that makes agreement necessary and yet only on the basis of resemblance and a-synchronicity; how continuity itself depends on difference. If we are truly the same, if we could describe politics in terms of the friend/enemy relation, would we ever need to come to an agreement? And if we do not, then surely this means that what is left for politics is only coercion and never cooperation. In Assayas's work, as in life, what holds together does so in view of difference and never despite it, making politics a practice premised on cooperation rather than coercion and identity. At the core of this talk will be a consideration of what it means for an American actress, who is not really American, to play a role made famous first by Musidora (France), then by Maggie Cheung (Hong Kong), as if to suggest a relation to American cinema that is no longer expressed antagonistically but as an effect of aesthetic affiliation.

**American Studies Research
Colloquium**

Summer Term 2023

For more information, please contact

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Why Write? Literature and Political Agency: A Few Comments

Tuesday,
May 23, 6-8p.m., c.t.
Casino Cas 1.811



Prof.-Dr. Pierre-Héli
Monot
LMU München

Why do social actors turn to literary texts whenever they seek to enforce normative changes?

How can we explain the vast quantity of polemical literature published since the invention of the printing press?

How can literary theory and history deal with this kind of material?

Pierre-Héli Monot is Professor of Transnational American Studies (Political Theory, Aesthetics, and Public Humanities) at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität of Munich. He is the Principal Investigator of the ERC Starting Grant "The Arts of Autonomy." He has held Visiting Fellowships at Harvard, Brown, Oxford, and King's College London. His next book in German discusses bourgeois conceptions of revolutionary politics (2023).

American Studies Research Colloquium

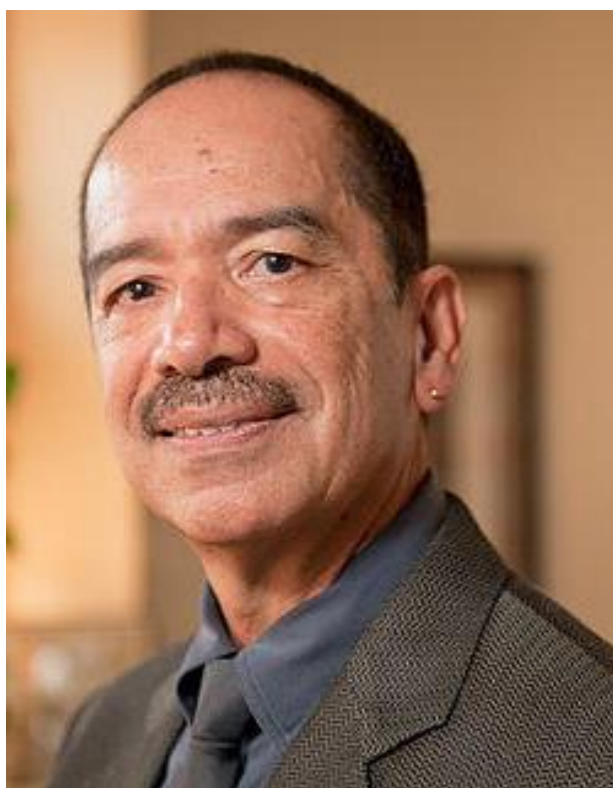
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Speculative Realism & Metafiction: Jennifer Egan's Utopian Fantasies

Tuesday,
June 6, 6-8p.m., c.t.
Casino Cas 1.811



Ramon Saldívar, PhD
Stanford University

This talk begins from Egan's satirized notion of the "utopian fantasy" of a postracial near-future hyper-technologized U.S. polity. In Egan's *A Visit From the Goon Squad* (2011) and *The Candy House* (2022), the idea of a postracial utopian fantasy helps identify the historical contradictions in the explanations for the persistence of racial injustice, discrimination, and oppression in terms that can then be related to the form and language of the literary text. I address the significance of the novel's central metaphor of social media and the internet as elements of a complex social system for searching for and recovering memory and lost time, and the consequences and limitations of reading Egan's works as "mnemonic art" in the forms of speculative fiction, speculative realism, and speculative history.

Ramón Saldívar, professor of English and Comparative Literature and the Hoagland Family Professor of Humanities and Sciences at Stanford University, was awarded the National Humanities Medal by President Barack Obama in 2012. His teaching and research focus on the areas of literary criticism and literary theory, the history of the novel, 19th, 20th and 21st century literary studies, cultural studies, globalization, and issues concerning speculative fiction, quantitative formalism, transnationalism, and ChicanX studies.

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Get Out; Or, How to Read a Sunken Form

**Tuesday,
July 4, 6-8p.m., c.t.
Casino Cas 1.811**



Eugenie Brinkema, PhD
MIT

For all that Jordan Peele's lauded horror film *Get Out* (2017) appears to traffic in the conventional negative affects of the horror genre—*anxiety, suspense, panic, shock*—I will argue in my talk that the film in fact models a formal account of violence, one that grounds its critique of racialized terror and the dynamics of aggressions both micro- and macro - in its juxtaposition of the relationship of black life and survival to the question (and critique) of how to describe and interpret different formal registers of the image.

Eugenie Brinkema is Professor of Contemporary Literature and Media at MIT and currently a fellow at the University of Amsterdam. Her research in film and media studies focuses on violence, affect, sexuality, aesthetics, and ethics. In dialogue with critical theory and continental philosophy, she argues for the speculative value of formalist readings in texts ranging from horror films to works of the new European extremism, from gonzo pornography to contemporary photography. Her books include *The Forms of the Affects* (2014) and *Life-Destroying Diagrams* (2022), both published with Duke University Press.

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