



NEUBAUER
COLLEGIUM
FOR CULTURE AND SOCIETY

CONCEPTS OF AESTHETIC FORM

*A conference of The Idealism Project: Self-Determining
Form and the Autonomy of the Humanities*

JAN 13 – 15, 2017

Neubauer Collegium
University of Chicago



Sponsored by the **Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society** with additional support provided by **The Franke Institute for the Humanities**, **The Committee on Social Thought**, **The Department of Philosophy**, **The Department of Germanic Studies**, and **The Center for Interdisciplinary Research on German Literature and Culture**.



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

This conference is devoted to the concept of form in humanistic inquiry. It is especially interested in the kind of formal generality at issue in humanistic disciplines, and the differences between such formality and, for example, the concept of scientific law. Our approach is exploratory, and we begin with no fixed commitments, but our initial orientation assumes that what distinguishes objects of study in the humanities—literature, art objects, music, etc.—is that they are the objects they are by virtue of the self-understanding embodied in these objects, and that humanistic inquiry attempts to articulate the self-understanding and purposiveness that is the basis of the distinct unity of the objects themselves.

We are interested both in basic transformations in the history of philosophical thought about these issues, from Plato and Aristotle to Kant and Hegel and many others, as well as in the embodiment of different alternatives of such formal unity in various art works and in critical thinking about these works.

ABOUT THE IDEALISM PROJECT

Recent public responses to “the crisis in the humanities” have emphasized the cultural value and liberating effects of humanistic education. This is well and good, but it must be supplemented by a rigorous theoretical interrogation of just what the humanistic disciplines claim to know and teach. The Idealism Project seeks to excavate and systematically rethink what is perhaps the most ambitious attempt to understand humanistic study as a distinct and autonomous form of knowledge: the movement of idealism in late 18th- and early 19-century German thought and letters. The idealist tradition constitutes, in our view, the most compelling theoretical resource for explicating such fundamental issues of humanistic inquiry as the nature of embodied meaning and value. Our specific object of inquiry is the unique type of formal universality to which any claim to humanistic knowledge must refer. Our wager is that this universality is anchored in the concept of form properly understood. It is this concept upon which the distinctive unity and thus intelligibility of the plastic arts, literature, and human action itself rests. The notion of form has a rich philosophical history that reaches back to Plato and Aristotle and extends forward to Goethe, Kant, Hegel, and to many contemporary philosophers. An understanding of this history, in our view, is indispensable to the systematic articulation of the idealist notion of “self-determining form.”



CONFERENCE AGENDA

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13

10:00 a.m.

Introductory Remarks
David Wellbery
University of Chicago

10:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Richard Neer
The University of Chicago
“Wonders Taken for Signs”

Moderator: **Sarah Nooter**
The University of Chicago

12:15 p.m.

Lunch Break

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Rachel Zuckert
Northwestern University
“Adaptive Naturalism in Herder’s
Aesthetics”

Moderator: **Matthew Boyle**
The University of Chicago

4:00 p.m.

Coffee Break

4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Julia Peters
Universität Tübingen
“Hegel’s Notion of Spirit and the
Indispensability of Art”

Moderator: **James Conant**
University of Chicago

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14

10:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Toril Moi

Duke University
“Rethinking Literary History”

Moderator: **Eric Santner**
The University of Chicago

12:15 p.m.

Lunch Break

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Sebastian Gardner

University College London
“Artistic Form and Post-Kantian
Formalism”

Moderator: **Robert Pippin**
The University of Chicago

4:00 p.m.

Coffee Break

4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Andrea Kern

Universität Leipzig
“The World of Art”

Moderator: **Gabriel Richardson Lear**
The University of Chicago



SUNDAY, JANUARY 15

9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Leonardo Lisi

Johns Hopkins University
"Tragic Form in Ibsen"

Moderator: **Florian Klinger**
The University of Chicago

11:30 a.m.

Lunch Break

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Christian Martin

University of Munich
"Poetry as a Form of Knowledge"

Moderator: **Matthias Haase**
The University of Chicago

3:30 p.m.

Coffee Break

4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Daniel Morgan

The University of Chicago
"The Lure of the Image"

Moderator: **Tom Gunning**
The University of Chicago

6:00 p.m.

Concluding Remarks

Robert Pippin

The University of Chicago

6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Reception

PARTICIPANTS

MATTHEW BOYLE

Matthew Boyle is Professor of Philosophy and Professor in the College at the University of Chicago. He is the author of, among others, the following articles: “Two Kinds of Self-Knowledge,” “Active Belief,” “Transparent Self-Knowledge,” “Essentially Rational Animals” and “Additive Theories of Rationality: A Critique”. He is also the author of numerous studies on Kant’s critical philosophy: “Kant and McDowell on the Spontaneity of Judgment” has been recently published (2015) and “Kant on Logic and the Laws of the Understanding” is forthcoming from Harvard UP in a volume of essays on the history logic. Further forthcoming articles are “Kant’s Hylomorphism” and “Kant’s Categories as Concepts of Reflection.” Throughout his work, he explores the bearing of Kantian ideas on contemporary philosophical debates in the philosophy of mind, action, and perception. Most notable in this regard is his forthcoming paper on “The Rational Role of Perceptual Content.”

JAMES CONANT

James Conant is Chester D. Tripp Professor of Humanities, Professor of Philosophy, and Professor in the College at the University of Chicago. He received both his B.A. (1982) and Ph.D. (1990) from Harvard University. He was Assistant, then Associate, and then Full Professor, over a period of nine years, at the University of Pittsburgh, before moving to Chicago in 1999. He works broadly in philosophy and has published articles in Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Mind, Aesthetics, German Idealism, and History of Analytic Philosophy, among other areas, and on a wide range of philosophers, including Kant, Emerson, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Josiah Royce, William James, Frege, Carnap, Wittgenstein, Putnam, Cavell, Rorty, and McDowell, among others. He is currently working on four book-length projects: a monograph on skepticism entitled *Varieties of Skepticism*, a co-authored collection of essays with Cora Diamond entitled *Wittgenstein and the Inheritance of Philosophy*, a book on film aesthetics entitled *The Ontology of the Cinematographic Image*, and a collection of interpretative essays on a variety of philosophers entitled *Resolute Readings*. Together with Jay Elliot, he is about to bring out the volume of the *Norton Anthology of Philosophy on The Analytic Tradition*. From 1990 to 1993 he was a Fellow at the Michigan Society of Fellows, from 2008 to 2009 at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, and from 2012 to 2013 at the Lichtenberg-Kolleg of the University of Goettingen. In 2012 he was awarded the Anneliese Meier Prize by the Humboldt Foundation.



SEBASTIAN GARDNER

Sebastian Gardner is Professor of Philosophy at University College London. His earliest research interest, which materialized in his first book, was in the philosophy of psychoanalysis. Since then his work has concentrated chiefly on Kant and post-Kantian philosophy. He has written on Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and the aesthetic turn in post-Kantianism. A collection of papers that he co-edited with Matthew Grist, *The Transcendental Turn*, appeared this year. He is presently working on the legacy of Kant's Third Critique.

TOM GUNNING

Tom Gunning is Edwin A. and Betty L. Bergman Distinguished Service Professor of Art History and of Cinema and Media Studies. He works on problems of film style and interpretation, film history, and film culture. His published work has concentrated on early cinema (from its origins to WWI) as well as on the culture of modernity from which cinema arose (relating it to still photography, stage melodrama, magic lantern shows, as well as wider cultural concerns such as the tracking of criminals, the World Expositions, and Spiritualism). His concept of the "cinema of attractions" has tried to relate the development of cinema to other forces than storytelling, such as new experiences of space and time in modernity and an emerging modern visual culture. His book *D.W. Griffith and the Origins of American Narrative Film* traces the ways film style interacted with new economic structures in the early American film industry and with new tasks of storytelling. His book on Fritz Lang deals with the systematic nature of the director's oeuvre and the processes of interpretation. He has written on the Avant-Garde film, both in its European pre-World War I manifestations and the American Avant-Garde film up to the present day. He has also written on genre in Hollywood cinema and on the relation between cinema and technology. The issues of film culture, the historical factors of exhibition and criticism and spectator's experience throughout film history are recurrent themes in his work.

MATTHIAS HAASE

Matthias Haase is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Chicago. His research is focused on foundational topics at the intersection of ethics and philosophy of mind. A central historical interest is the tradition of German Idealism, especially the aspects that are tied to Aristotle. He has also written on Wittgenstein and Frege. His current research project is devoted to the question whether there are specifically *practical* species of knowledge, reason and truth—and what this means for the philosophical account of our fundamental concepts of ethics like *good*, *ought*, *justice* as well as *action*, *character* and *will*. Haase's previous appointments were at the Philosophisches Seminar at Universität Basel and Institut für Philosophie at Universität Leipzig, with a two-year visiting fellowship at Harvard between them. His graduate studies were conducted at Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt Universität Berlin, and finally Universität Potsdam, and he spent several years at the University of Pittsburgh as a visiting scholar before completing his doctoral degree.

ANDREA KERN

Andrea Kern is Professor in the Department of History of Philosophy at the University of Leipzig. She is co-director of the Leipzig Institute for Advanced Studies in Analytic German Idealism. The foci of her research are epistemology, philosophy of perception, skepticism, philosophical anthropology and aesthetics. She also works in the history of philosophy, with particular expertise in Aristotle, Aquinas, Kant and Wittgenstein. Her two major books are *Sources of Knowledge* (2006) and *Beautiful Pleasure: A Theory of Aesthetic Experience* (2000). She is the leading figure in Germany working in both the areas of contemporary analytic epistemology and the interpretation of *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, as well as on their mutual bearing on one another.



FLORIAN KLINGER

Florian Klinger is Professor in the Department of Germanic Studies at the University of Chicago. He graduated from the Peter Szondi Institute of Comparative Literature at Freie Universität Berlin and received his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Stanford University in 2010. He is a member of Harvard's Society of Fellows, where he was a Junior Fellow from 2010-2014. Florian had a previous career as a professional musician and holds an Artist Diploma, Violin, from the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Munich. His book *Urteilen*, which proposes a conception of human judgment for our present, was published in 2011. A second book, *Theorie der Form: Gerhard Richter und die Kunst des pragmatischen Zeitalters*, a pragmatist account of aesthetic form, came out in 2013. A revised English translation is forthcoming with University of Chicago Press. With Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht he co-edited a volume of essays on the topic of latency, entitled *Latenz: Blinde Passagiere in den Geisteswissenschaften*. Florian is currently working on a book that undertakes to replace nature-based and culture-based accounts of life with an account that relies on a certain notion of performance.

GABRIEL RICHARDSON LEAR

Gabriel Richardson Lear is Professor of Philosophy and in the Committee on Social Thought, and is Chair of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Chicago. She works on ancient Greek and Roman philosophy. Her influential book, *Happy Lives and the Highest Good: An Essay on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (Princeton, 2004), is about the relationship between morally virtuous action and theoretical contemplation in the happiest life. She has written several articles about Plato's aesthetics and is currently writing about the role of beauty as an ethical concept. She received her Ph.D. in Philosophy from Princeton University in 2001.

LEONARDO LISI

Leonardo F. Lisi is Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies at the Humanities Center at Johns Hopkins University. His primary interests include European literature of the long nineteenth century; European modernism; Kierkegaard and German idealism; tragedy and the tragic; and philosophical aesthetics, with a particular focus on the evolution of literary forms and their relation to German idealist aesthetics. He is the author of *Marginal Modernity: The Aesthetics of Dependency from Kierkegaard to Joyce*. Currently he is at work on two new book projects. The first, tentatively entitled *The Fate of Suffering: Form, Philosophy, History in Modern Tragedy*, traces the evolution of modern tragedy and its philosophical discourses. The second, *Kierkegaard and the Logic of Faith: A Systematic Interpretation*, offers a systematic account of Kierkegaard's thought by placing it in the context of post-Kantian philosophy. His future research projects include a book-long commentary on Kierkegaard's *Either/Or* as well as a study on the aesthetics of seduction from Richardson's *Clarissa* to James's *The Golden Bowl*.

CHRISTIAN MARTIN

Christian Martin is Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter (Assistant Professor) in Philosophy at the University of Munich. His major research interests are in German Idealism, philosophy of language, and aesthetics. In addition, he has done work on early analytic philosophy, on Frege, Wittgenstein, and Sellars, and on Heidegger and Benjamin. In 2015-16 he was a Feodor Lynen Fellow at the University of Chicago. Prior to that he held a postdoctoral fellowship from the German Academic Exchange Service (also spent in Chicago) and a Visiting Scholar grant within the framework of the Berkeley-Munich Cooperation for Research in the Humanities. An edited volume entitled *Language, Forms of Life, and Logic: Investigations after Wittgenstein* is forthcoming from De Gruyter. His first monograph, *Ontologie der Selbstbestimmung*, published in 2012, won the "Academy Prize" of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences.



TORIL MOI

Toril Moi is James B. Duke Professor of Literature and Professor of Philosophy and English and Romance and Theater Studies at Duke University. Her major areas of research are in feminist and women's writing, the intersection of literature, philosophy, and aesthetics, and the tradition of ordinary language philosophy. She is currently working on projects on the emergence of European modernism, in feminist theory and women writers, and "pictures of language:" on the vision of language in ordinary language philosophy. Moi also works on theater, where she is particularly interested in the emergence of modernism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Her most recent book was *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy*, published in 2006.

DANIEL MORGAN

Daniel Morgan is Associate Professor in the Department of Cinema and Media Studies and the College at the University of Chicago. His research interests are in film and philosophy, classical film theory, experimental and avant-garde cinema, nonfiction cinema; animation; cinema and the other arts; European and Classical Hollywood cinema; modernism and realism; and new media. His work focuses largely on the intersection between cinema and aesthetics. He has written extensively on André Bazin and other figures within the history of film theory, and has also written about the broader implications posed by considerations of film form: the virtuosic camera movements of Max Ophuls; the perceptual games of Orson Welles; the shifts in subjectivity in Fritz Lang's early films; the production of conceptual knowledge in Robert Gardner's ethnographic documentaries; and the broader dynamics of camera movement and point of view. His first book, *Late Godard and the Possibilities of Cinema* (2012), is about the films and videos of Jean-Luc Godard since the late 1980s, especially *Soigne ta droite* (1987), *Nouvelle vague* (1990), and *Allemagne 90 neuf zéro* (1991)—as well as the video series *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1988-1998). Through detailed analyses of extended sequences, technical innovations, and formal experiments, the book argues for the importance of philosophical aesthetics for an understanding of Godard's late work. It also takes up wider debates on film and politics; the representation of history; the place of nature in cinema; and the relation between film and other media. He is currently working on a book on the use of philosophical aesthetics for thinking about problems of cinema, with a particular focus on camera movement. He is also co-authoring a book on film and philosophy with Richard Neer.

RICHARD NEER

Richard Neer is William B. Ogden Distinguished Service Professor of Art History, Cinema & Media Studies, and the College, and the Executive Editor of *Critical Inquiry*. He works at the intersection of aesthetics, archaeology and history, with particular emphasis on the role of phenomenology and theories of style in multiple fields: Classical Greek sculpture, neo-Classical French painting, and mid-20th century cinema. His Ph.D. is from the University of California at Berkeley (1998), his A.B. from Harvard College (1991). He has received fellowships and awards from the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, the J. Paul Getty Trust and the American Academy in Rome. His most recent books are *The Emergence of the Classical Style in Greek Sculpture and Art* and *Archaeology of the Greek World: A New History, 2500–100 BCE*. His current research topics include: ancient concepts of wonder and grace, the theory and history of connoisseurship, the sculpture of Charles Ray, and questions of evidence, criteria and judgment in some films by Malick, Mizoguchi and others.

SARAH NOOTER

Sarah Nooter is Associate Professor of Classics and the College at the University of Chicago. Her main research interests include ancient Greek poetry drama and their modern reception, with literary theory in a supporting role. Her research spreads outward from there into Greek theater, performance, the voice, language, genre and tradition. Her first book was *When Heroes Sing: Sophocles and the Shifting Soundscape of Tragedy*, which explores the lyrically powerful voices of Sophocles' heroes. She is currently finishing a book on voice in Aeschylus called *The Mortal Voice in the Tragedies of Aeschylus*. Her next book project will be *A Guide to Ancient Greek Poetry*.



MARK PAYNE

Mark Payne is Professor of Classics and the College, and in the John U. Nef Committee on Social Thought. He received his Ph.D. from Columbia University in 2003. He specializes in Hellenistic poetry, poetry and poetics, literary theory, animal studies, ecological theory and reception studies. His research focuses on the literary imagination and its recursive effects on our everyday life worlds. His first book, *Theocritus and the Invention of Fiction* (2007) brought recent theories of fiction to bear on pastoral as the first fully fictional world of the ancient literary imagination. His second book, *The Animal Part: Human and Other Animals in the Poetic Imagination* (2010) looked at how poets from Archilochus to William Carlos Williams engage with the lives of other animals. It received the 2011 Warren-Brooks Award for Outstanding Literary Criticism. His current book project, "The Choric Con-sociality of Nonhuman Life," investigates the representation of Nature as a choric presence around human life in Hellenistic poetry, German Romanticism, and the Anglo-American weird tale. He has written papers on many aspects of ancient poetry and its reception, from Pindar to Paul Celan, and he is currently working on the relationship between ancient poetics of play and the painting of Cy Twombly.

JULIA PETERS

Julia Peters is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Tübingen. She received her Ph.D. from University College, London in 2009. Her main research interests are in Kant and German Idealism, Aristotle, ethics and aesthetics. She has published several articles on Hegel's aesthetics, and in 2015 her first book appeared, titled *Hegel on Beauty*. In 2012 she edited a collected volume on *Aristotelian Ethics in Contemporary Perspective*.

ROBERT PIPPIN

Robert B. Pippin is the Evelyn Stefansson Nef Distinguished Service Professor in the Committee on Social Thought, the Department of Philosophy, and the College at the University of Chicago. He is the author of numerous articles on topics in German Idealism and later German philosophy, as well as the following books: *Kant's Theory of Form*; *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness*; *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem*; *Idealism as Modernism: Hegelian Variations*; *The Persistence of Subjectivity: On the Kantian Aftermath*; *Hegel's Practical Philosophy: Rational Agency as Ethical Life*; *Hegel on Self-Consciousness: Desire and Death in the Phenomenology of Spirit*; and *Interanimations: Receiving Modern German Philosophy*. In addition he has published on issues in political philosophy, theories of self-consciousness, the nature of conceptual change, and the problem of freedom. He is also the author of an important study on the relation between literature and philosophy, *Henry James and Modern Moral Life*. His numerous publications in German include *Die Verwirklichung der Freiheit and Kunst als Philosophie: Hegel und die Philosophie der modernen Bildkunst*. His *Nietzsche, moraliste français: La conception nietzschéenne d'une psychologie philosophique* appeared in French in 2006 and his *Nietzsche, Psychology, First Philosophy* in English in 2010. He is the author of two books on film, *Hollywood Westerns and American Myth* and *Fatalism in American Film Noir: Some Cinematic Philosophy*, and a book on the philosophy of painting, *After the Beautiful: Hegel and the Philosophy of Pictorial Modernism*. He was twice an Alexander von Humboldt fellow, is a winner of the Mellon Distinguished Achievement Award in the Humanities, and was a fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a member of the American Philosophical Society.



ERIC L. SANTNER

Eric L. Santner is Philip and Ida Romberg Distinguished Service Professor in Modern Germanic Studies at the University of Chicago. He came to Chicago in 1996 after twelve years of teaching at Princeton University. He has been a visiting fellow at various institutions, including Dartmouth, Washington University, Cornell, and the University of Konstanz. He works at the intersection of literature, philosophy, psychoanalysis, political theory, and religious thought. His books include: *Friedrich Hölderlin: Narrative Vigilance and the Poetic Imagination*; *Stranded Objects: Mourning, Memory, and Film in Postwar Germany*; *My Own Private Germany: Daniel Paul Schreber's Secret History of Modernity*; *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life: Reflections on Freud and Rosenzweig*; *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald*; *The Neighbor: Three Inquiries in Political Theology* (with Slavoj Žižek and Kenneth Reinhard); *The Royal Remains: The People's Two Bodies and the Endgames of Sovereignty*. He edited the German Library Series volume of works by Friedrich Hölderlin and co-edited with Moishe Postone, *Catastrophe and Meaning: The Holocaust and the Twentieth Century*. His work has been translated into German, Spanish, French, Korean, Hebrew, Polish, Italian, and Portuguese. Eric Santner delivered the Tanner Lectures in Human Values at UC Berkeley in the spring of 2014; they appeared in 2015 with Oxford UP under the title, *The Weight of All Flesh: On the Subject-Matter of Political Theology*.

DAVID E. WELLBERY

David E. Wellbery, Chair of the Department of Germanic Studies, joined the faculty of the University of Chicago in 2001 as the LeRoy T. and Margaret Deffenbaugh Carlson University Professor where he holds appointments in the Department of Germanic Studies and the Committee on Social Thought. In 2005, he was awarded the Research Prize (Forschungspreis) of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in recognition of his scholarly achievement; in 2010 he received the Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm-Prize awarded by the DAAD. He has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung, the Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften (Leopoldina), and the Bayrische Akademie der Wissenschaften. In 2010, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Konstanz. He is the founding Director of the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on German Literature and Culture at the University of Chicago. Two of his books are classics of German literary history: *Lessing's Laocoön: Semiotics and Aesthetics in the Age of Reason* (1984) and *The Specular Moment: Goethe's Early Lyric and the Beginnings of Romanticism* (1996). His edited volume, *Positionen der Literaturwissenschaft: Acht Modellanalysen am Beispiel von Kleists "Erdbeben in Chile"* (1984) is in its fifth printing. He is editor-in-chief of the monumental *A New History of German Literature* (2004). He has been a fellow of Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin and the Carl Friedrich von Siemens Stiftung. Since 1998, he is a co-editor of the *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*. A collection of his essays, *Seiltänzer des Paradoxalen: Aufsätze zur ästhetischen Wissenschaft*, appeared in 2006. Together with Ernst Osterkamp, he published *Deutscher Geist: Ein amerikanischer Traum* (2010). His current research project is a large-scale study of Goethe's literary work and scientific and aesthetic writings that centers on the concept of endogenous form. He is also preparing a monograph entitled *Self-Relation: A Neo-idealist Theory of Literature*.



RACHEL ZUCKERT

Rachel Zuckert is Professor of Philosophy at Northwestern University. Her research focuses on Kant and his philosophical context, broadly understood: both his eighteenth-century predecessors and contemporaries, and post-Kantian, nineteenth-century philosophy. Her work has concentrated primarily on Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, including work on Kant's aesthetics and his conceptions of subjectivity and of affective sensibility more generally; on questions concerning the possibility of empirical knowledge on the Kantian view; and on Kant's philosophy of biology and (more broadly) the meaning, role, or status of "purpose" or teleology in Kant's system—as well as on related topics in late modern philosophy, particularly in the history of aesthetics. Current research projects include a book project on Johann Gottfried Herder's aesthetic theory and work on eighteenth-century theories of the sublime, as well as on various topics in Kantian political philosophy, philosophy of religion and philosophy of history.

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