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Oregon Humanities Center

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Spring 2015

Deresiewicz: why American higher education is broken and how to fix it

William Deresiewicz is no stranger to Ivy League education. His undergraduate degree (biology and psychology), Master's (journalism), and PhD (English) are all from Columbia University. He taught at Columbia as a graduate instructor for five years, and was then a professor of English at Yale for ten years, from 1998–2008. He left academia in 2008 to become a full-time writer.



in their lives. He was left with the sense that the whole system of elite education too often "... manufactures young people who are smart and talented and driven, but also anxious, timid, and lost, with little intellectual curiosity and a stunted sense of purpose...."

Deresiewicz will share some of his thoughts on higher education in America today as this year's **Kritikos Professor in the Humanities**. His Eugene lecture, "**What is College For? A Defense of the Liberal Arts,**" will take place on **Wednesday, May 13th, at 7:30 p.m. in 156 Straub Hall** (a new 500-seat auditorium), and will be followed by a book sale and signing. His Portland lecture, "**Education in a Neoliberal Age,**" will be on **Thursday, May 14th, at 7:30 p.m. at the UO in Portland, 70 NW Couch Street.**

In his Eugene lecture Deresiewicz will

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Symposium explores the boundary between indigenous communities and settler society

Each year the OHC hosts between two and five Research Interest Groups or RIGs. These interdisciplinary groups of UO faculty and graduate students gather on a regular basis to discuss readings and share their research findings in areas of common interest.

On April 30th and May 1st, this year's Indigenous Philosophy RIG will host a symposium titled "**Colonial and Decolonial Connections**" which will focus on the boundary between indigenous communities and settler society. This boundary is a contested site of social and



Beth Piatote



Ty Kāwika
Tengan



Kyle Powys
Whyte

political conflict, cultural revitalization, identity formation, and resistance. The conversations

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OHC announces 2015–16 fellowship awards

The Oregon Humanities Center supports exciting and innovative research by faculty and graduate students. Humanities scholars expand and illuminate our understanding of human experience through the exploration and interpretation of a wide range of cultural questions.

Faculty Research Fellowships

provide a term free from teaching to pursue research full time as part of a community of scholars

Sonja Boos, German and Scandinavian: “From Mind to Brain/Amusia and Aphasia in Franz Grillparzer’s *Poor Musician*” (Spring 2016) **VPRI Completion Fellowship**

Lara Bovilsky, English: “Almost Human: The Bounds of Personhood in Early Modern England” (Fall 2015) **Ernest G. Moll Research Fellowship in Literary Studies**

Kirby Brown, English: “Stoking the Fire: Nationhood in Early Twentieth Century Cherokee Writing” (Fall 2015) **VPRI Completion Fellowship**

Stephen Dueppen, Anthropology: “Historical Ontologies and Human Experience: Human/Animal Relations in an Ancient West African Community” (Fall 2015)

Luke Habberstad, EALL and Religious Studies: “Courtly Cultures and Politics of the Early Chinese Empires” (Fall 2015)

Mark Johnson, Philosophy: “Embodying Philosophy: Embodied Mind, Meaning, and Value” (Winter 2016) **Provost’s Senior Humanist Fellowship**

Kate Mondloch, History of Art and Architecture: “Eye Desire: New Media Art, Feminism, and Technoculture 1990–present” (Fall 2015) **VPRI Completion Fellowship**

Mark Quigley, English: “Shadows of a Gunman: Reframing Postcolonial Cinematic Consciousness in *The Informer*” (Winter 2016) **VPRI Completion Fellowship**

Lynn Stephen, Anthropology: “Writing Testimony and Expanding the Public Sphere: Elena Poniatowska in Mexico” (Fall 2015) **Provost’s Senior Humanist Fellowship**

Mary E. Wood, English: “Writing Displacement, Medicine, and Well-Being in the Age of Global Capitalism” (Fall 2015) **Ernest G. Moll Research Fellowship in Literary Studies**

Alternates

Stephanie Clark, English: “Prayer and the Gift: Theories of Prayer in Anglo-Saxon England” (Fall 2015) *Alternate for an Ernest G. Moll Research Fellowship in Literary Studies*

Ted Toadvine, Philosophy and Environmental Studies: “Deep Past, Deep Future: Anachronicity in the Anthropocene” (Fall 2015) *Alternate for an Oregon Humanities Center Research Fellowship*

Faculty Teaching Fellowships

provide a summer stipend for course development plus course enrichment funds

April Haynes, History: HIST 2xx Sex in History (Winter 2016) **Wulf Teaching Professorship**

Heidi Kaufman, English, and **John Russell**, Libraries/Digital Scholars Center: ENG 451/551 Digital Humanities and the 19th-Century Atlantic World (Spring 2016) **Coleman-Guitteau Teaching Professorship**

Colin Koopman, Philosophy: PHIL 4xx Information Ethics (Winter 2016) **Wulf Teaching Professorship**

Arafaat Valiani, History: HIST 2xx Consumption in Urban South Asia (Spring 2016)

Alternate

Marsha Weisiger, History: HIST 199 History through Documentary Film (Winter 2016)

Dissertation Fellowships

provide one term free from teaching to allow full-time work on the dissertation (awarded in partnership with the UO Graduate School)

Anna Kovalchuk, Comparative Literature: “Creating the Cosack: A Comparative Study of Nation Formation in Ukrainian and Russian Literature” (Winter 2016)

Brandon Rigby, Romance Languages: “Polysemy of the Space Between: Self-translation in Contemporary Transatlantic Bilingual Poetry” (Winter 2016)

Xian Wang, East Asian Languages and Literatures: “Flesh and Stone: Mystification and Demystification of Female Martyrdom in Chinese Literature, 1642–1966” (Fall 2015)

Alternates

1st Alternate: **Katherine McAlvage**, English: “Romanticism and the Material Body: Perception, Social Power, and Affective Potential” (Winter 2016)

2nd Alternate: **Lisa Beard**, Political Science: “If We Were Kin: Identification and Intimacy in Anti-Racist Politics” (Winter 2016)

3rd Alternate: **Jordan Green**, English: “Eros in Nineteenth-Century English Elegiac Poetry: Pleasure, Knowledge, Genre” (Winter 2016)

4th Alternate: **David Alexander Craig**, Philosophy: “Kant, Animality, and Human Nature” (Winter 2016)

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Deresiewicz *continued from page 1*

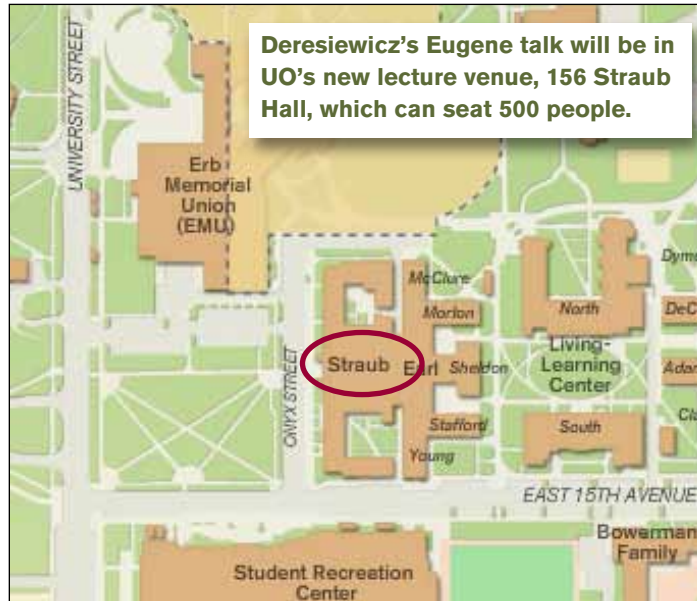
discuss the meaning and value of a liberal arts education, and its relevance in today's world. He asks, "What does it mean to 'learn how to think,' and what are you supposed to think about and why?" In his Portland talk, he will look at how neoliberal ideas have reshaped our understanding about the value of education into purely practical terms. He will also examine the growing trend on college campuses to talk about "leadership" rather than "citizenship," and compare what it means to grow up today with what it was fifty years ago.

Deresiewicz is the author of two books: *A Jane Austen Education: How Six Novels Taught Me About Love, Friendship, and the Things that Really Matter* (2011); and *Excellent Sheep: The Miseducation of the American Elite and the Way to a Meaningful Life*

(2014). In the summer of 2008, Deresiewicz published an essay in *The American Scholar* titled "The Disadvantages of an Elite Education" that immediately went viral. It has now received over one million views online.

In 2009 he delivered a speech at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point that was also later published in *The American Scholar*, "Solitude and Leadership," and it, too, went viral. He is a contributing writer for *The Nation*, and a contributing editor for *The New Republic*. His writings span such topics as books, higher education, culture, and politics.

Both lectures are free and open to the public. For information, or for disability accommodations (which must be made by May 6th) please contact us at ohc@uoregon.edu or call (541)-346-3934.



Fellowships *continued from page 2*

Graduate Research Support Fellowships provide \$1000 in dissertation support during the fellowship year

Rachel Eccleston, Comparative Literature: "Princely Feminine Graces: Virtue and Power in Early Modern English and Spanish Literature"

Joseph Griffin, English: "Congruent Affinities: Reconsidering the Epideictic"

Thomas Schmidt, SOJC: "Re-Discovering Narrative: The Rise of Journalistic Storytelling in American Newspapers, 1969–2000"

Alexandra Slave, Romance Languages: "Painterly Writing and the Notion of *Écriture Artiste*, 1850–1900"

Consider including the OHC in your estate plans. Through charitable gift planning, you may find that you are able to make a much larger gift than you thought possible to support and strengthen the humanities at UO and to create opportunities for UO students and faculty for generations to come.

Let us know if you have already included the OHC in your will or estate plan. We want to thank you and ensure that your gift can be used as you intend.

Contact the University of Oregon's Office of Gift Planning at 800-289-2354 or giftplan@uoregon.edu

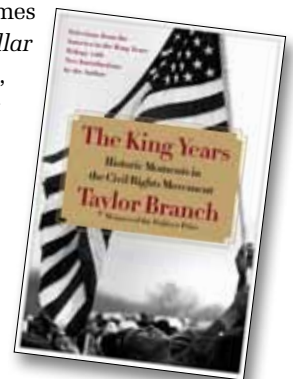
Civil rights historian speaks about the MLK years



Author and historian **Taylor Branch** will give a talk, "Myth and Miracles from the King Years," as the Spring 2015 Presidential Lecturer on **Thursday, April 16, 2015 at 7 p.m. in 156 Straub Hall.**

Branch is best known for his landmark narrative history of the civil rights era, *America in the King Years*. The trilogy's first book, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954–63*, won the Pulitzer Prize and numerous other awards in 1989. Two successive volumes also gained critical and popular success: *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963–65*, and *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965–1968*. Branch returned to civil rights history in his latest book, *The King Years: Historic Moments in the Civil Rights Movement* (2013).

Branch's visit to the University of Oregon is sponsored by the President's Office, the Oregon Humanities Center, Wayne Morse Center, the Clark Honors College, the Savage Professorship, and the School of Journalism and Communication. The lecture will be followed by a reception and book sale and signing. For more information contact Dave Hubin at hubin@uoregon.edu



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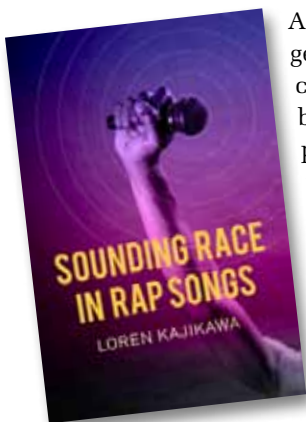
Sounding Race in Rap Songs

Loren Kajikawa, Musicology and Ethnomusicology

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

3:30 p.m.

Humanities Center Conference Room (159 PLC)



As one of the most influential and popular genres of the last three decades, rap has cultivated a mainstream audience and become a multimillion-dollar industry by promoting highly visible and often controversial representations of blackness. *Sounding Race in Rap Songs* argues that rap music allows us not only to see but also to hear how mass-mediated culture engenders new understandings of race.

Sinophone Malaysian Literature: Not Made in China

Alison Groppe, East Asian Languages and Literatures

Thursday, May 21, 2015

3:30 p.m.

Humanities Center Conference Room (159 PLC)

Sinophone Malaysian Literature: Not Made in China examines how diasporic Chinese subjects make sense of their Chinese and Malaysian identities in postcolonial Malaysia. By analyzing the literary texts of several of the most influential contemporary Malaysia-born, Chinese-language authors, Groppe shows how the texts' complex explorations of sentimental attachments, cultural contexts, and sources of power form the basis for a contested, fractured, unstable, and yet enduring Chinese Malaysian identity.

