

London Conference in Critical Thought 2017

London South Bank University

30 June & 1 July 2017

Call for Papers

The sixth annual London Conference in Critical Thought (LCCT), hosted by the School of Law and Social Sciences at London South Bank University, will offer a space for an interdisciplinary exchange of ideas for scholars who work with critical traditions and concerns. It aims to provide opportunities for those who frequently find themselves at the margins of their department or discipline to engage with other scholars who share theoretical approaches and interests.

Central to the vision of the conference is an inter-institutional, non-hierarchical, and accessible event that makes a particular effort to embrace emergent thought and the participation of emerging academics, fostering new avenues for critically-oriented scholarship and collaboration.

The conference is divided into thematic streams, each coordinated by different researchers and with separate calls for papers, included in this document. We welcome paper proposals that respond to the particular streams below. In addition, papers may be proposed as part of a general stream, i.e. with no specific stream in mind. Spanning a range of broad themes, these streams provide the impetus for new points of dialogue.

- Art in the Time of Capital.
- A/Political Feeling.
- Bridging Memory, Temporality and the Digital.
- Constructing Cultures of Collective Freedom.
- Desire and the Political: Exploring the Not-All of Language.
- Economies of Cultural Knowledge.
- Theorizing Ethics and Politics in Ethnographic Practice.
- The Good is Perfected by Care.
- Habit, Addiction, and Thought.
- NUDGE: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Choice Architecture.
- Politics and the Theological.
- Politics of Poverty.
- Radical Hospitality.
- Vernacular Aesthetics of the Global City.

Please send paper/presentation proposals with the relevant stream indicated in the subject line to paper-subs@londoncritical.org. Submissions should be no more than 250 words and should be received by the **31 March 2017**.

Participation is free (though registration will be required).

Further details on the ethos and organisational structure of the LCCT can be found at londoncritical.org. Contact us at inquiries@londoncritical.org.

Please send submissions to: paper-subs@londoncritical.org
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Art in the Time of Capital

Stream Organiser: Martin Young

Capitalism has radically informed consciousness of time. Across diverse historical moments, from the Protestant Reformation to the colonial imposition of European temporal ideologies, to the supposed advent of global digital synchronicity, modern conceptions of time have been inextricably tied to capitalist production.

Economic forces, via the structuring of work and modes of production, have primarily governed notions of time which have been so deeply inculcated that we take them to be coterminous with reality itself (West-Pavlov 2013)

This stream engages with two related questions: **How have capitalist time schemes shaped artistic and cultural production? and How have art and culture responded to capitalist time?** In his seminal discussion of time-discipline, E. P. Thompson (1967) locates its emergence in folk narratives, medieval poetry, Elizabethan drama, and eighteenth century ballads. However, just as his survey of time-discipline itself has been subjected to necessary revision, criticism, and expansion, so the understanding of its impact on artistic production invites fresh thought. The tensions of capitalist time have appeared as the subject of artistic reflection across centuries and media, as in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, Lang's *Metropolis*, and Parton's *9 to 5*. Moreover, the production and reception of art and entertainment have been intimately shaped by the temporal strictures of capitalism from Meyerhold's biomechanics to hip-hop's looped samples to Netflix collecting data on when people pause shows in order to refine the structuring of future episodes.

This stream welcomes contributions in a variety of forms (including 15-20 minute papers, artistic presentations, performances, and shorter provocations) which engage with the complex constitutive relationship between the temporality of capitalist production and the art, culture, and entertainment that emerge from and in response to it.

A/Political Feeling: Relations of the Post-Fact Moment

Stream Organisers: Kemi Adeyemi, Sampada Aranke, Christine Goding

What do we make of recent claims that the industrialized West has entered a "post-fact" moment? In popular discourse, "post-fact" doesn't just refer to a time of heightened propaganda or political deception - it suggests a shift in the relationship between politics and feeling. In the US and in the UK, anxieties of a post-fact reality have taken shape around the election of conservative regimes that overtly (to some) mobilize feelings over evidence-based assurances to secure their nomination. The satirist Stephen Colbert names this phenomenon "Trumpiness": an allegiance to politicians based on what their promises license you to feel, while knowing the promises aren't feasible or true. Many of Trump's supporters know that building a wall separating Mexico from the US isn't really practical, just as the pro-Brexit camp admitted the Vote Leave campaign's promises to redirect EU funds to national healthcare were a shot in the dark. And yet these and other oftentimes outrageous and unverified declarations continue to draw mass approval.

Following this, A/Political Feeling is interested in the ways that post-fact rhetoric encourages and is reflective of distinct modes of relation that are disciplined under neoliberalism, through attempts to reassert empire, and reinvigorate nationalisms in the (digital) information age. Our main question, then, surrounds the production of, and responses to, post-fact "facts" that increasingly shape our public and private lives.

We welcome explorations of the production and experience of a post-fact moment as it is being played out in politics, everyday life, and visual and performing arts, paying particular attention to how the post-fact moment resonates in conversation with race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and difference writ large.

Some guiding questions to this stream include, but are not limited to:

- What kinds of relations or non-relations are made possible by the prioritization of "feelings" over "facts"? What is the relationship between neoliberalism and affect in a post-fact moment?
- What are the impacts of fact and non-fact based news, social media, and technology in the information age?
- How does the post-fact moment rehearse, restage, or depart from histories of nativism/nationalism, empire, and racism?
- What does a counter-politics look like? Is it a return to fact?

In addition to these questions, we welcome submissions interested in:

- Whiteness and (non-)relation; Digital/Virtuality; Mythology; Trumpiness; Affect, feeling, and emotions; Apathy and related forms of disconnection; Queer Theory/Studies; Lies and delusion.
- A global rise of neoconservatism and right-wing regimes; Fake News and fact-checking; Nostalgia and anxieties about the future; Hope and faith; Hacking and whistleblowing; Protest gatherings and political activism; Migration, immigration; Histories of fear-based rhetoric.

Bridging Memory, Temporality and the Digital

Stream Organisers: Abdelrahman Hassan, Eman Shahata and Jessica Ciucci

Over the past 30 years, there's been an explosion of writings in the social sciences and humanities on memory and the different ways subjects and collectivities remember and make sense of the past in the present. Social scientists and historians have looked at how pasts are produced rather than given, at how memories are used to invent imagined spaces (Said, 2000). In the search for multiplicity of voices, anthropologists have engaged with Deleuzian concepts of virtuality and actualization of pasts (Hodges, 2008), considered Pierre Nora's work on situating memories through different sites (Shaw 2002, Basu 2007) and challenged teleological notions of temporality. Thus, a focus on multiplicity has led to theorizations moving beyond Halbwachs' concept of 'collective memory' (1992) to talk about 'mnemonic practices' (Olick and Robbins, 1998). Artists and social scientists (Frank, 2016 and Kleist and Jansen, 2016) have also shown interest in futurity with questions around reconstructing and reworking sites of memory (such as archives) geared towards future-making.

In an epoch where, as historian Nora claims "the imperative is to record everything, to preserve every indicator of memory" (1989), important questions arise concerning the will to remember and the stakes of production of shared memories. These concerns are further complicated with the pervasiveness of digital technologies in our everyday lives.

The practice of digital temporalities has reshaped time perception, historically flattened by a linear scheme that hid its tridimensional elements. However, what are the implications of these virtual processes in our daily experiences? How can we describe the processes of remembering and forgetting within our digital worlds? Could we think of the internet as an archive? The storage of personal information has had a great impact on how we look at our personal data and the act of remembering has become more trivial. The social platforms or better, the virtual houses we inhabit, give sense to this triviality through an expansion of the present as an everlasting, collective moment. The use of searching engines like Google and Yahoo have created ambiguities in the perception of our virtual pasts. The anguish provoked by the storage of apparently "irrelevant" information about ourselves leads to deeper questions around time and memory as creation and property.

This stream hence calls for submissions that interlink studies on memory, critical theory and the digital. Drawing on and challenging the mentioned notions of memory and remembering and exploring their interactions with theorizations of the digital.

Possible submissions could focus on:

- Memory and performing collective subjectivities of online resistance.
- Misinformation and Digital Memory.
- Spatiality of memory and the internet 'as a place'.
- Questions on the temporality of memory in the digital.
- The digital labour of maintaining and producing online memory.
- Memory and digital 'othering' processes.
- Implication of data centristic reconstructions of memory.
- Theorizations of digital memory and the construction of futurism.
- The constitution of memory around online viralities.
- Applicants are welcome to engage in conversations on the intersections of digitality, temporality, and Memory. The conversations would help the participants conceptualize new critical accounts of 'Memory' and the 'Digital' and explore arising themes.

Constructing Cultures of Collective Freedom

Stream Organisers: James Trafford and Tom Trevatt

Contemporary politics is in disarray. In Europe and North America, are we witnessing the termination of the “third-way” “depoliticisation” of politics as coterminous with the demise of neoliberalism? Or, the revelation of the brutal truth of this conjecture? Emerging from these specific socio-political constellations appears, at first sight, to be forms of both left and right populism, in which borders are given primacy ahead of markets, and ethnocentrism at the expense of global trade. Do these movements suggest that new forms of collective action are possible, in ways that were actively prevented by neoliberalism’s construction of the individual-as-entrepreneur? Or, are these new political conditions going to produce novel forms of isolation as our current political common sense is replaced with new forms of subjectivity, social relations and cultural norms?

The simple suggestion that neoliberalism atomises society to individual “entrepreneurs”, so that we are incapable of building collective action might be too short-sighted. For example, the seeds for the kinds of cultural siloing we are witnessing now have been sown in the liberal emphasis upon an often depoliticized program of recognition, at the expense of structural change, and also the neoliberal use of difference as part of a cosmopolitanism “asset”. Moreover, insofar as recognition based politics has been co-opted into both liberal and neoliberal political modes of governance in the form of identity politics, the notion that emphasizing concrete and situated standpoints is inimical to, and corrective to the injustices of universalizing liberalism is to misunderstand the problematics of liberalism, and its relationship with power. Most pertinently, the depoliticisation of culture actively obscures the ways in which liberalism and neoliberalism rely upon massive local and global inequalities, both material and normative, that are occluded by the removal of such difference from the realm of the political.

It in this context that we think that there is a significant need to reconsider the construction of collective freedoms, in order to think beyond the political constellations of both neoliberalism and populism, and to consider ways in which we can actively engage in the reconfiguration of structural power. Freedom under neoliberalism is constructed around the belief in the (demonstrably false) freedom of the market – for individuals to be able to make rational, free choices – and not through the construction of commonality. These conditions, created in part by the focus on identity politics, allow us to ignore how political action can, and should, be directed at structural change, specifically, at the achievement of universal emancipation. Undergirding this research is a conviction that equally distributed freedom should be the express aim of any political action, not the construction of privileged spaces of closely guarded freedoms divorced from constructive collectivity.

We invite papers on aspects of contemporary political and cultural freedom, especially addressing contemporary political discourse, and the tools that might be useful for a project of construction.

Topics for discussion may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- concepts of freedom.
- freedom after neoliberalism.
- neoliberalism and identity.
- group solidarities.
- cultural constructions of solidarity.
- the relationship between freedom and equality.
- populism and democracy.

Recent publications that may be of interest include:

- Amanda Beech – “Matters of Freedom”.
- Ray Brassier – “Unfree Improvisation/Compulsive Freedom” / “Wandering Abstraction”.
- Wendy Brown – *Undoing the Demos*.
- Nancy Fraser – “Rethinking Recognition”.
- Michel Foucault – “The Subject and Power”.
- Reza Negarestani – “The Labour of the Inhuman”.
- Catherine Rottenberg – “The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism”.
- Nick Srnicek – “Accelerationism: Epistemic, Economic, Political”.
- Roberto Unger – “Deep Freedom”.
- Linda Zerilli – *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom*.

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Desire and the Political: Exploring the Not-All of Language

Stream Organisers: Serene Richards & Leticia Paes

If our contemporary era can be marked by the spectacle's complete triumph - as Agamben remarks on Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* - what does this mean for politics? If the possibility for politics emerges in, and through, an articulation of language, what does our 'spectacular' language say about our politics? As Agamben suggests, it appears that capitalism has not only allowed for the expropriation of productive value, but, more imperceptibly, aimed at the alienation of the human being from language, and thus disrupting its communicative potential. In this sense, what is it that the human being can and cannot say? What is it that must remain unsaid?

For Deleuze, a possible line of flight exists in the form of a poetic understanding of language. Where the writer, for example, stutters in language and makes language stutter. This is distinct from making the speaking being as such stutter, so that the affect and intensity of stuttering exists in language, and is not an affectation of the speaker. For Deleuze, the possibility exists to make a foreign language out of language, citing examples from Beckett, among others. Agamben makes a similar claim. While familiarity with the mother tongue is that which is most proper to the human being, language is at the same time accompanied by the unfamiliar and the unexpected. The poet, while mastering language, must therefore also abandon linguistic conventions and make a foreign language out of language. In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the conceptualisation of '*Lalangue*' as opposed to the linguistic conceptualisation of language, also offers a potential space for disruption. As Jean-Claude Milner has shown, *lalangue* offers a mode of communication that opens up a space for desire. Against the Saussurian conceptualisation of the 'sign,' shown to foreclose the subject, and thus inscribe in each the One, Milner asserts that there exists a Not-All of naming; the *parlêtre*.

This stream is interested in both the critique of 'spectacular language' and its relationship to politics. But it also seeks to explore the potential for political flight, resistance and innovation of language in itself when it is freed from conventional norms of representation. Beginning from the premise that the constitution of an ethico-political subjectivity is inextricably linked to language, can dreams or *lalangue* - as the site of the unconscious - be excluded from the subject as such? What we seek to explore is a potential use of language that can exist beyond a simple meaning-generating system. How does the One of language function in relation to that which it excludes? How does this exclusion shape the potential for an ethico-political subjectivity?

Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- The unsayable and the voice, in law and literature.
- The limits of communicability.
- The production of desire through language in law and/or politics.
- *La langue* and the language of the unconscious.
- A poetic language and use of the poem.

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Economies of Cultural Knowledge

Stream Organisers: Toby Bennett & Alexandra Reynolds

Neo-liberal capitalism has asserted the primacy of “knowledge” in the cultural sphere. Its “Knowledge Economy” agenda has renewed the dialectics of reason and faith, autonomy and control, progress and tradition. “Creative Industries”, with their attendant emphasis on innovation, information and intellectual property, loom large in this renewal – as do accelerating market and managerial logics in the structures of education and governance that feed the broader “Cultural Economy”. Yet a period of “flexibility” and “disruption” appears to have prefaced a crisis of liberalism: post-truth, alternative facts and anti-expertise abound. What, for cultural actors, is to be welcomed or feared in this climate?

Culture takes formal, informal, traditional, emergent forms; it traverses the arts, the popular, the scholarly, the commercial; engages communities, elites, activists. Hence “cultural knowledge” cuts across an array of communities of practice, whether of political-institutional insiders or outsiders. Orthodox intellectual frameworks (based on the scientist’s lab) tend to prioritise the codification of knowledge, locking ideas down into stable facts that can be transferred, reproduced and built upon. Divergent cultural knowledges tend, by contrast, to be united by a commitment to discursive, interpretive, experiential and critical inquiry: craft, tradition and aesthetic judgment are emblematic forms. Though codification is sometimes assumed necessarily to do violence to cultural knowledge, it might equally illuminate ways in which the latter becomes patterned by the divisions, exclusions and exploitations of society at large.

Nowadays, artist-entrepreneurs are as likely to find funding from a Research Council, Innovation Accelerator or corporate partner as the Arts Council. Under the aegis of participation or co-creation, public knowledge (voluntarily or otherwise) becomes “content” and “data” for cultural institutions and corporations, who in turn use “research” and “insight” to push political arguments, as well as develop and market products. Evidence-based policymaking bleeds into policy-based evidence-making. Within and against such organisations, activist and grassroots groups spread counter-knowledges, developing an undercommons that might disrupt hegemonic cultural discourse. Academia has an expanding role populating these different spheres of activity, reproducing their subjects, tools, spaces and networks. This stream seeks greater understanding of relations between knowledge, culture and economy. It asks two questions. How are cultural knowledges situated, practiced and legitimated, such that they enter into circuits of production, distribution, consumption and valorisation? What can focused attention on cultural knowledge reveal about the broader context of social and political change?

Possible pathways might explore:

How expertise is made via researchers, teachers, advisors, brokers, analysts, “thought leaders”, knowledge exchange, apprenticeship, discipline-formation, credentialisation.

The technical infrastructure of logistics, funding, markets, labour, management, monetisation, ownership, logging, measurement, prediction, analysis.

Alternative knowledges of non-hegemonic communities, exploring how knowledge can be raced, classed, gendered or otherwise become minoritarian, as well as the role of gossip, rumour, myth, conspiracy theory.

Critical investigations are welcomed, whether contemporary or historical, from a range of theoretical and disciplinary positions. The stream assumes that the conceptual and the material are co-constitutive; as such, the mutual engagement of empirical description with critical re-theorisation is encouraged.

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Theorizing Ethics and Politics in Ethnographic Practice

Stream Organisers: Lucia Trimbur & Vron Ware

While researchers in the humanistically-grounded social sciences such as anthropology, sociology, and geography have written extensively on the epistemological foundations of ethnography (e.g. Marcus 1998; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Behar 1996; Clifford 1988; Rosaldo 1986; Fabian 1983) as well as on how to undertake ethnographic fieldwork (e.g. Emerson, Fretez, and Shaw 1995; Van Maanen 1988; Loftland and Loftland 1984), less work has examined in-depth the many political and ethical decisions ethnographers confront and must resolve during their time in the field. These decisions are dialogical in nature and have larger meanings; as such, they have much to tell us beyond the immediate ethnographic moment.

We propose a stream that would address the silence in current discussions about ethnography by thinking through and theorizing the many complicated ethical and political situations that can unfold during this unique form of research. Theorizing Ethics and Politics in Ethnographic Practice would explore the dynamics of particular fieldwork dilemmas and analyse how they simultaneously emerge from larger social structures and relations of power. We anticipate focusing on circumstances of ethnographic intimacy in which the “right” decision is murky; for example, a participant requests but does not repay a loan, a respondent lies when the untruth is clear to all involved, or an ethnographer is prohibited from entering a research subject’s home because of the former’s perceived class, caste, or racial background. Reaching hard-to-access individuals or communities either because of gatekeepers or personal security issues presents another set of issues that deserve closer scrutiny.

Theorizing Ethics and Politics in Ethnographic Practice seeks to understand fieldworkers’ own experiences of such problems encountered during the research process and to connect these experiences with racial, class, and gender hierarchies and the forms of power within. Our idea for this stream emerges from longstanding conversations among researchers based in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia, and we hope our stream would therefore be wide-ranging in geographic scope. Our primary objective is to bring analyses of these important and often-uncomfortable fieldwork predicaments to the largest possible audience and begin a much-needed conversation. We also hope the stream would serve as a resource for those whose fieldwork is ongoing.

‘The good is perfected by care’: Broadening the horizons of care theory

Stream Organiser: Murray Robertson

A wellspring of academic work on care has bubbled up in the last thirty years, following the publication of Carol Gilligan’s *In a Different Voice* and subsequent care ethic theory. This interest in an ethic of care has been mirrored by a resurgent critical focus on care labour, spearheaded by the writing of workerist feminists such as Silvia Federici and Mariarosa Dalla Costa. Both these approaches to theorising care have gained visibility at a time of an acute crisis of care provision. Both respond to political imaginaries that fail to properly account for the centrality of care. Importantly, both work towards a politics of care.

To construct such a politics of care we need to stress the ‘importance of understanding the political values involved in caring’ (Fisher & Tronto, 1990: 56). While acknowledging the significance of the above schools of thought, this stream seeks out esoteric and overlooked perspectives on care that help to flesh out the values of caring, inform contemporary care debates and struggles, and problematise care ethics and/or critiques of care labour. From such novel standpoints, a broadened horizon of care theory is aimed for.

Papers which bring together, critique, or expand multiple disciplines of thought are particularly encouraged, as are those which champion practices of care as their theoretical foundations. Suitable papers which seek to expand the theoretical borders of care might address, but are not limited to:

- Classical understandings of cura; their relation to consolation and the Good.
- The care of sympathy in Smith, Hume, and Schopenhauer.
- Psychological accounts of care.
- Foucault’s self-care.
- Sorge in Heidegger.
- Feminist care ethics.
- Julia Kristeva’s maternal ethics.
- Workerist accounts of care and social reproduction.
- Audre Lorde and self-care as warfare.
- Disparities of care, love, and attention in Simone Weil and Iris Murdoch.

Habit, Addiction, and Thought

Stream Organisers: Ed Thornton & Fay Dennis

“... most Substance-addicted people are also addicted to thinking, meaning they have a compulsive and unhealthy relationship with their own thinking.”¹

In this transdisciplinary stream we aim to bring together academics and practitioners from a range of different disciplines to explore the relationship between habit, addiction, and thought. The stream will be open to all those who are looking for an environment in which to think collectively about the social, cultural and cognitive implications of addictive behaviour. We hope that this group will include academics from disciplines such as psychology and philosophy, practitioners working with the social and clinical aspects of addiction, and those with lived experiences of addiction.

As part of this stream we hope to critically assess a number of connected questions, including how contemporary theories of addiction can help us to understand many of those human actions, be they personal or collective, that are not traditionally considered as addictions. For example, the processes that constitute life, such as eating, sleeping, and reproducing, are all incessantly repetitive and habitual, but can they be considered and analysed using the categories of addiction?

We are especially interested in exploring the relationship between thought and addiction. One way we hope to do this is by reassessing the role that the concept of habit plays in the history of philosophy by considering its proximity to the concept of addiction. For example, what happens if we problematize Hume's claims in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* that human volition is a determination of thought acquired by habit, and that belief is “nothing but a peculiar sentiment, or lively conception produced by habit” (141-142) by replacing the concept of habit with that of addiction? Habit also forms the basis for ethics in the work of Aristotle, Aquinas, and Locke, and as the foundation of belief for thinkers such as C. S. Peirce, John Dewey, and William James. What effects will be produced if we rethink these philosophical references to habit as implying the specific kind of acquired, habitual process commonly called addiction?

Other questions that participants may wish to consider include: Is thought inherently addictive? Does the capacity for abstract thought rely on unthinking habitual processes? If so, could these processes be understood as addictions? Is the distinction between habit and addiction discrete and binary or continuous and gradual? Is addiction best understood as a secondary and dysfunctional activity, in relation to rational thought, or can the power of addiction be understood without any reference to a normative model of rationality? Also, do addictions only exist at the human level, or are there addictive pre-individual processes ‘below’ the level of the human individual and addictive social processes ‘above’ the level of the human individual?

In the spirit of the LCCT we are especially interested in submissions that challenge the traditional conference format. Non-verbal forms of presentation, group participation, and other forms of interaction are highly encouraged. We are especially interested in sharing personal and professional experiences of addiction that disrupt the received wisdom concerning habit, addiction, and thought.

¹ This quote is taken from a passage of David Foster Wallace's novel *Infinite Jest* in which the character Don Gately, a recovering alcoholic, lists the many things that one learns when living in a halfway house for recovering addicts.

NUDGE: Interdisciplinary perspectives on choice architecture

Stream Organiser: Harriet Boulding

This stream seeks to critically assess the nature and potential of '*nudging*' that has become a popular approach amongst public policy makers seeking less invasive means to influence citizens' behaviour. Informed by the work of behavioural economists Thaler and Sunstein (2008), nudge interventions encourage people to make decisions which are beneficial to their health and wellbeing by structuring their environment in such a way as to influence the choices that they make. This 'choice architecture' could be as simple as arranging fruit and sweets in school cafeterias in ways that encourage children to make a healthier choice. To date, critical analyses of nudge politics have often taken place in and around the particular technocratic spaces from which the concept was developed. Policymakers and commentators have debated the efficacy and ethics of nudging whilst concomitantly seeking to hone the tools with which to shape our environment. We ask now how we might understand and engage with the concept of nudging beyond the normative frameworks of government and policy, through bringing broader disciplinary and interdisciplinary paradigms to bear on the concept.

Despite enjoying extraordinary popularity as a political tool, nudging has found a home in the spaces considered anodyne, safe, and inherently "apolitical". The term itself - '*nudge*' - is suggestive of a benign, friendly push in a certain direction, unworthy of critical investigation. Simultaneously, the strengthening of discursive democracy in recent years has led to an increasingly politically aware citizenry, who are exploring diverse means of engagement while becoming more critical of policy-making processes. This contradiction inheres in the spaces which are generated by technical-professional approaches to government policy which have the power to render political will (in)visible. Given the reliance of nudge approaches on the structuring of environment, participants might ask what contemporary materialist theories could tell us about choice architecture. We may also invite discussion of the role of agency in a nudge society, both in terms of autonomy of the self, but also with respect to the agency of matter and the role of the non-human actor. What does contemporary choice architecture tell us about conceptualisations of society? Who are the choice architects and how are they shaping the social and political landscapes in which we live? What constitutes intervention and how might it be conceived of as a process? Could choice architecture generate a transformative social space and/or contribute to a project of re-politicisation? Are the metaphors of 'architecture' and 'space' useful in envisioning choice?

At a time when public policy has become increasingly informed by behavioural expertise, we invite participants from a broad range of disciplines to consider how choice architecture might be theorised and how its political content might be traced.

Topics could include (but are not limited to)

- The efficacy of the concept of choice architecture.
- The ethics of nudge politics.
- The de/re-politicisation of nudging.
- New materialisms and the relationship between humans, nonhumans, and choice architecture.
- Digital nudges and human/computer interactions (HCI).
- Empirical discussions of choice architecture as it is applied in, for example, Health/Environmental planning/International Development.
- The intersection of art/design and choice architecture.
- Histories and futures of choice architecture.

Politics and the Theological

Stream Organiser: Melayna Llamb

What is the relationship of the theological to the political? While Carl Schmitt seemingly gave a straightforward answer to this – that all political concepts are secularised theological concepts – this stream takes as its starting point the complexity and indeed the ambiguity of this relation. At the centre of this relationship stand the notions of law, sovereignty and order. Indeed, these ‘political’ concepts, or concepts that help to delimit and examine the political realm are saturated with theological meaning and signification. From divine law to the order that is thought to be the result of a divine providence, and the ultimate sovereignty of God - political concepts are informed by their theological context, however the extent and form of their secularisation is one of the questions that may be pursued here.

Walter Benjamin has opened a new vantage point from which to view the relation between the theological and political. Simultaneously repudiating the idea of history as a teleological movement towards a kingdom of God, and yet retaining an idea of the messianic - Benjamin’s constellational thinking allows a re-reading of the relation between the theological and political that is not unidirectional, but rather allows us to conceive of it as one of tension, with each inflecting the other. That is, the relation seen in this way is not one of supersession but rather, in decoupling the messianic from the teleological, Benjamin has prepared the groundwork for a different conception of political theology, one which is not tied to a conception of history as progression, or more generally, time as linear.

This examination of the relation between politics and theology allows a theoretical terrain from which to interrogate the possibility of a non-teleological revolutionary politics, the de-theologising of the messianic, the relation of political concepts and their temporal dimension, and the very nature of the process of secularization. In interrogating these ideas, this stream will aim at re-thinking the notions of sovereignty, law and order and their temporalities from across a range of disciplines. The writings of, among others, Hobbes, Hegel, Marx, Benjamin, Derrida, Schmitt and Agamben may be useful touchstones in this discussion.

The challenges posed by conceiving of the theological-political has far-reaching implications not only for philosophy, history, literature, theology, but also for emerging fields of study that transgress these disciplines, and indeed the practice of politics itself.

Themes that might be discussed (but not limited to) in this stream:

- Eschatology and the state.
- Secularisation and sovereignty.
- Messianic/divine/theological violence.
- The Katechon.
- Providence and government.
- The theological roots of order.
- Temporality and sovereignty: the messianic, teleology, eschatology.
- Order and contingency.

Politics of poverty: representations, imageries and subjectivities

Stream Organisers: Johanna Cortes-Nieto, Moniza Rizzini Ansari

Poverty is usually represented as a problem of scarcity which results from causes ranging from lack of growth and employment to individual failure. More nuanced representations include factors such as “toxic” environments, powerlessness, lacks of freedoms, and so forth. Critical representations frequently focus on the relationship between poverty and capitalism, and the poor as surplus populations subjected to control and management. We are currently looking into the different narratives produced about “the poor” and the many ways in which they impact our perceptions of life in poverty.

This stream invites proposals on critical, interdisciplinary and creative engagements with poverty and the politics of poverty which look beyond the traditional framework. We are especially interested in alternative methodologies and theoretical perspectives that engage with different fields of research, such as social cartography, oral history, arts, cinema, and so on.

We invite contributions which examine issues such as:

- Accumulation, dispossession and inequality under urban capitalism.
- Everyday life formation of the working class and the surplus populations.
- Poverty and processes of subjectivation.
- Imageries of the poor and the aesthetics of poverty
- Neoliberal (re)production of poverty and the subjectivity of the poor.
- Neoliberal technologies/techniques for the government of the poor: human capital, precarisation, debt, securitisation of poverty, and others.
- Charity, development and humanitarian aid as new forms of colonial power.
- Social movements and resistances to discourses and practices that produce social control of the poor.
- Rethinking the body: intersections of resiliency theories and/or the affective turn.

Radical Hospitality

Stream Organisers: Cecilia Canziani and Louise Garrett

This stream takes as its point of departure Jacques Derrida's interpretation of the historical and contemporary conditions of 'hospitality' in books such as *On Cosmopolitanism* and *Forgiveness and Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to respond*. Against Kant's 'perpetual peace', Derrida reads 'hospitality' as an aporia – an im-possibility embedded within the categorical imperative of unconditional hospitality. Hospitality and cosmopolitanism has also been addressed by (among others) Hannah Arendt in relation to the space of politics, Edward Said in the frame of cultural translation and exile, and John Berger and Zygmunt Bauman in relation to the European project and migrant experience. How do the conditions of migration and exile *now* complicate and re-inscribe the range of perspectives discussed by these authors?

Derrida understood 'hospitality' as an interrogative term to consider both public space as a bounded zone, in which the stranger/foreigner (*étranger*) is subject to the codes, rules and regulations of its host (city or state), and the common right of any stranger to any space; that is, the ethical imperative that the host receives whatever and whomever enters its domain. We are interested in analysing and addressing the possibilities of such hyperbolic, radical and unconditional hospitality in terms of both historical and contemporary cultural contexts. Given the present European and American political turns, in an environment marked by the Syrian crisis, questions of the contingencies of hospitality, refuge and sanctuary are ever more urgent.

We anticipate interdisciplinary approaches that illuminate and re-evaluate the currency of 'hospitality' as a term to examine how public space is regulated by its authorities as well as 'performed' (and transgressed) by its users – guests and hosts. This stream fosters current research and practice aimed at critically scoping and expanding concepts of 'radical hospitality' (in relation to space, mobility, migration, refuge, cosmopolitanism, travel, translation and related phenomena) in cultural contexts. Key considerations would include questions on how to operate in this increasingly fraught space of ongoing, contingent and restless translation and negotiation, in which the margins navigate and occupy the centres. Movement across borders, reorients 'home' as a space of coming and going, of 'between-ness,' of 'unrest.' How, then, is the potential of this space being articulated and utilised within cultural practices and spaces? How do we position ourselves or participate in this migratory space? Have participatory practices in art and politics been affected by the current scenario and do they have the potential to provoke new types of open, collaborative institutional and social structures? How do we act, hospitably, now? How does hospitality condition spatial politics? What is the law (or laws) of hospitality, and how do we negotiate its limits?

Using the ethics of 'radical hospitality', broadly understood, as a point of engagement or departure we would welcome papers proposing a wide variety of perspectives, including (but not restricted to) topics such as:

- what does 'radical hospitality' look like? How can the potentiality of 'radical hospitality' be imagined?
- friendship, solidarity and collective intention in relation to resistance and protest.
- artistic, curatorial and academic responsibilities and ethics in the frame of current political crises.
- story-telling, voice and listening.
- art and curatorial practices related to critical-spatial analysis spanning the visual arts, performance, sound, film, spoken word, design and architecture.
- hospitality in relation to participatory, collaborative, communal and activist art practice. Priority will be given to presentations of specific projects by artists, architects and designers (or collectives).
- hospitality and ethics of the curatorial.-the problematics of translation in connection to social spaces – migrant spaces in particular – and the languages of hospitality.
- history/theory of law in relation to [the ethics of] hospitality, as well as papers on the current situation that highlight relations between law, hospitality, migration and the 'refugee crisis'.-philosophical questions related to the conditions and ethics of hospitality.
- economic or sociological perspectives on hospitality, social space and migration.
- ecologies of (radical) hospitality.

In addition to academic papers, we would welcome innovative or alternative forms of presentations, interventions or performances by individuals or groups.

The Vernacular Aesthetics of the Global City

Stream Organisers: Lloyd Corporation (Sebastian Lloyd Rees & Ali Elisa) & Sophie Barr

This stream proposes to generate a critical debate around questions of 'vernacular aesthetics' in academic research on the global city and particularly invites contributions from those working on new propositions for interdisciplinary, inventive or artistic approaches to its study.

Recent research on the global city has sought to understand the contemporary state of rapid urbanisation, migration and development by focusing attention towards the 'ordinary' commercial street (Hall, 2015; Zukin, Kasinitz & Chen, 2016). A key part of this work has included visual investigations of the vernacular aesthetics of urban streets in 'super-diverse' cities like London, in an attempt to represent the informal economies and practices routinely ignored, deemed undesirable and/or dispensable to private and bureaucratic agendas of urban (re)development. Projects such as LSE's 'Ordinary Streets' (2011 - 13) have produced ethnographic explorations of streets elaborating the need for: the production of new vocabularies of value; mapping of 'creative' practices of socio-economic adaption to urban space; reframing urban informality as social and civic platforms for economic and cultural life as opposed to 'under-developed' spaces of poverty.

For artist duo Lloyd Corporation and UEL researcher and artist Sophie Barr, the 'ordinary street' has been a key site of research and artistic production. This has led to a recently initiated dialogue sharing questions, curiosities, inspirations and anxieties in the explorations of vernacular aesthetics. By hosting a stream we aspire towards bringing other voices into a discussion that seeks to both build upon but also deepen and challenge questions of vernacular aesthetics in the study of spaces and cultures of 'street'.

We ask what new kinds of sociological, ethnographic and artistic modes of practice are required to develop multi-sensory understandings of such phenomena if we are to produce rich new vocabularies of value and representation? Presently there seems to be an overreliance on the documentary image as the visual extent of ethnographic exploration and so we ask what does this miss? How might we capture the non-representational, the affective, the transient, temporal and mobile, the hidden, unseen, imaginary or background dimensions of the street? Further, we might ask whether the 'street' presents an adequate vantage point from which to observe the complex spatial and temporal connections of hyper-globalised urban spaces, particularly in light of the ever pervasive effects of digital cultures and infrastructures?

What problematic power relationships arise in the research of vernacular aesthetics? Can we eliminate the risk of 'othering' informal cultures or exoticising notions of migrant adaptation and improvisation? How might we challenge or reflect on the class, gender and racial privileges that underpin the 'study' of informal, precarious, cultures? And finally, given the increasing conflicts and volatility over the redevelopment of public space and processes of gentrification, how does this research agenda become active, politically mobilised and collaborative with the diverse communities it seeks to represent?

We are open to all manner of submissions including papers, performances, artworks and we welcome a range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary backgrounds.