

Rancière and A-disciplinarity (Binghamton, 28-29 Mar 14)

Binghamton University SUNY, Mar 28–29, 2014

Deadline: Jan 10, 2014

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The Seventh Annual
Comparative Literature Graduate Conference
Binghamton University (SUNY)
Literature, Politics, and Aesthetics:

Jacques Rancière and the Politics of A-disciplinarity

Interdisciplinarity has become a buzzword across the humanities; the term usually implies that scholars make use of the tools of another discipline while remaining within the boundaries of their own. The French philosopher Jacques Rancière points to the impossibility of this project, describing his work as "a-disciplinary" or "in-disciplinary." We propose a conference about Rancière for three reasons: firstly, he takes up questions and concepts that belong to multiple disciplines; secondly, his ideas have been adopted within different disciplines; and lastly, Rancière himself theorized the nature of disciplines and disciplinary boundaries.

In his article, "Thinking Between Disciplines: An Aesthetics of Knowledge," Rancière writes: "A discipline is always much more than an ensemble of procedures which permit the thought of a given territory of objects. It is first the constitution of this territory itself, and therefore the establishment of a certain distribution of the thinkable." Rancière maintains that disciplines are structures that dictate how knowledge will appear from the beginning of the investigation. In other words, the objects of knowledge taken up by a discipline are contoured and pre-determined by the disciplines themselves. Rancière speaks of disciplines as "war machines" in the sense that they are always engaged in an antagonistic and exclusionary process that makes interdisciplinarity an a priori impossibility. His works point to the fact that these older models of disciplines are insufficient and limit possibilities for thinking by "distributing the thinkable," "regulating dissensus," and "distributing positions."

In the wake of Rancière's work, the division between theory and praxis begins to give way and we are confronted with the impossibility of thinking our work within academia as a solitary practice that bears little relation to the outside world. Instead, Rancière points to the inherently political nature of our work both in terms of teaching students and our writing practices. With Rancière, we hope that rethinking these and related questions will pave the way for a democracy to come.

We invite talks/papers that deal with but are not limited to the following topics:

- Papers that set out to question and critique the limits of disciplines, thus producing new ways of reading and engaging with texts
- Talks that explore the status of one's own interdisciplinary work within a more traditionally organized department
- Papers outlining the ways Rancière's thought has been taken up in other disciplines
- Readings that engage specifically with Rancière's philosophy

Please send an abstract of at least 250 words along with your C.V. to adisciplinarity@gmail.com by January 10th.

Reference:

CFP: Rancière and A-disciplinarity (Binghamton, 28-29 Mar 14). In: Arthist.net, Nov 23, 2013 (accessed Jan 6, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/6491>.