**Theorizing Violence**

**Workshop Program**

**York University, Toronto, Canada**

**May 15-16, 2016**

**Vari Hall 1154**

**Keele Campus**

**York University**

**MAY 15, 2016 SUNDAY**

**2.00 PM – 3.45 PM Gathering and Engagement with “What We Lose in Metrics” (Public Studio) Exhibition at Art Gallery of York University**

Art Gallery of York University Accolade East Building, York University.

Directions: <http://theagyuisoutthere.org/everywhere/?p=4994>

**4.00 PM – 5.30 PM Representations and Visibilities**

Chair/Discussant: **Robert Latham**, Department of Political Science, York University.

* Violence and Visibility: A Critique of Hannah Arendt’s Conceptualisation of Violence, **Alexander Blanchard**, School of Politics and International Relations, Queen Mary, University of London.
* Exhibiting the Art on Violence in the Middle East to the West, **Balca Arda**, Department of Political Science, York University.
* Horror and Spectacularisation of Violence: the Case of Beheadings by the Islamic State, **Elisa Impara**, Department of Criminology, Kingston University.

**6.00 PM Dinner (Location TBA)**

**MAY 16, 2016 MONDAY**

**10.30 AM – 12.00 PM Acts and Performances**

Chair/Discussant: **Özgün Topak**, Department of Political Science, York University.

* The Presence of Absence: Theorizing the Connection between Violent Practices and Violent Images in the French *Banlieues,* **Luuk Slooter**, Centre for International Conflict Analysis and Management (CICAM), Radboud University.
* Irom Chanu Sharmila – The woman with a feeding tube: Body, violence, and state of exception, **Tanvi Pate**, Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Warwick.
* Violence and Humanness in Cavarero and Butler, **Tim Huzar**, Centre for Applied Philosophy, Politics and Ethics University of Brighton.

**12.00 PM – 1.00 PM Lunch Break**

**1.00 PM – 2.30 PM Colonialism, Race and Gender**

Chair/Disscussant: **Hira Singh**, Department of Sociology, York University.

* Unsettling Notions of Structure in Settler-Colonial Studies, **Calvin ZL Lincez**, Department of Political Science, York University.
* (Em)Bodied Violence: The Question of Structural Discussions and The Disappearance of Theoretical Approaches to Gendered and Sexual Violence of Colonialism, **James FitzGerald**, Department of Political Science, York University.
* Contextualizing racialized gendered violence in Canada, **Hijin Park**, Department of Sociology, Brock University.

**2.30 PM – 2.45 PM Coffee Break**

**2.45 PM – 4.15 PM Capitalism, Body and Surveillance**

Chair/Discussant: **Himani Bannerji,** Department of Sociology, York University.

* Capitalism, Modernity and Violence, **Robert Latham**, Department of Political Science, York University.
* Violence, body, and nature in capitalism: A dialectical materialist critique, **Raju Das and Rupinder Minhas**, Department of Geography, York University.
* Surveillance and Violence: Why are the two expanding together under neoliberalism?, **Midori Ogasawara**, Department of Sociology, Queen’s University.

**4.15 PM – 4.30 PM Coffee Break**

**4.30 PM – 6.00 PM Resistance, Struggle and the Political**

Chair/Discussant: **Raju Das**, Department of Geography, York University.

* A Political Ontology of Terrorism: Equivalence, Difference and the Sustenance of Violence, **James Fitzgerald**, School of Law and Government, Dublin City University
* Political Struggle and the Intermediary Spaces of the Operational Level of

Politics, **Arto Artinian**, Department of Political Science, Borough of Manhattan Community College, City University of New York.

* Rupturous Subjectivities: Reterritorialising Violence and Revolution in the Digital, **A.T. Kingsmith**, Department of Political Science, York University.

**7.30 PM Dinner (Downtown Location TBA)**

**Theorizing Violence**

**Workshop, May 15-16, 2016**

**York University, Toronto, Canada**

**Workshop Theme**

This workshop aims to bring together scholars - working at various stages in their academic/intellectual careers and across disciplinary boundaries - to explore the basis and possibilities of theorizing violence, as it applies to subjectivity, the material, the social, the political and the philosophical.

Physical violence is a common feature of daily life and often experienced as spectacular acts, on the streets of Ferguson, Baltimore, Cologne and Paris, on the shores of Greece, within Syria and Iraq, and in the forests and on the hills of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

However, violence is all around us in another, and arguably, more profound and normalized way as everyday acts that are symbolic, linguistic, and epistemic as well as structural.  It exists when the words of the oppressed and the exploited are deliberately ignored. It exists on the downtown street corner where a homeless person sits in the winter; in the lead-laden water supply of Flint, Michigan; in the slums of the global periphery; in the territories where the indigenous peoples live under constant threat of dispossession; and at the workplace via the coercive logic of capital.

Various epistemological positions and theories have sought to struggle with the problematic of violence in both its physical and metaphysical forms. We may discern some of the more ‘classic’ views in the works of Benjamin, Arendt and Fanon, and more recently, Agamben’s and Zizek’s efforts at conceptualizing violence.

Also relevant are Plato’s concern for concrete and ordinary violence in the form of rape; Utopian Socialist St. Simon’s assertions that “men… allow[ed] themselves to be governed by [the] violence and ruse” of the French aristocracy; Lefebvre’s exploration of how violence is implicated in the production of space, both conceptually (epistemologically) and materially (architecture); and Levinas’ preoccupation with war-as-violence and the possibilities it presents for overcoming concrete violence. Then, of course, Marx talks about the violence of capital, including primitive accumulation, and Lenin draws attention to the violent character of the capitalist state, that necessitates (violent) revolution; violence is also a central part of Maoist theory of society and class struggle.

Rather than focusing on empirical documentations and analyses of the horrors of violent events this workshop seeks to examine the problem of theorizing violence more generally.  It therefore welcomes papers that address such questions as:

-What are the analytical distinctions between pain, force, and violence, and their relation to the potentialities of violence? For instance, de Sade remarked: “It is always by way of pain that one arrives at pleasure.” Marx also famously stated: “Force is the midwife of every old society which is pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power.” Is violence, then, an act of ‘productive labour’?

-How has recent thinking advanced understandings of the relationship between violence and the body, including worker’s bodies, gendered bodies, sexualized and racialized bodies?

-What is the relationship between violence and tolerance? What forms of violence become acceptable, and what should we say about this acceptability? Does violence pre clude acceptability along lines argued Arendt?

-How do current theories of the state inform theories of violence, for example, around topics such as surveillance, new coercive practices and forms of bourgeois/liberal law?

-How might understandings of capitalism’s ontology of violence be changing, for example, in market logics and public practices from austerity, privatization, incarceration, and zonal exclusions? How might the ontological distinctions between the (invisible) social relations underlying violence, the threat of violence, and actual exercise of violence matter?

-How should we understand the relationship between violence and the political?

-Are links between violence and the class relations in capitalist societies, both advanced and less-developed, transforming with regard to violence against indigenous communities, the peasantry, striking workers, or Maoist ‘insurgents’, and other kinds of radical protesters?

-How do we theorize the connection between violence and the tendency towards what Ellen Wood called ‘endless war’, and ‘new imperialism’?

-What theoretical trajectories bear on the relationship between violence, non-violence, counter-violence, anti-violence, and pacifism, especially in relation to social movements/protests?

-Is violence, as suggested by Nietzsche and Heidegger and those theorists keying off of them, an inescapable dimension of social existence? What might we make of transcendental or transhistorical arguments concerning violence as it relates to the nature of being and life?

-How does violence operate as a spectacle? What are the political and ethical implications of its aestheticization? What are the possibilities and limits of an ethics of witnessing violence?

**Workshop Organizing Committee**: Raju Das (Geography, York), Robert Latham (Political Science, York), Rupinder Minhas (Geography, York), Özgün Topak (Political Science, York).

**Sponsors**

-Program on Critical Scholarship and Social Transformation (CSST) at York University. <http://criticaltransformation.blog.yorku.ca/>

-Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies, York

-Department of Political Science, York

-Department of Geography, York

-Graduate Program, Department of Geography, York

- Graduate Program in Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies, York

**Venue Details**

Vari Hall 1154, Keele Campus, York University. Workshop room will be announced later.

**Public Transport** <http://www.yorku.ca/web/futurestudents/map/keele_directions_transit.html>

Also visit: [www.ttc.ca](https://yorknewfrontiers.wordpress.com/directions/www.ttc.ca)

**Driving Directions**

<http://www.yorku.ca/web/futurestudents/map/keele_directions_car.html>

**Map of Keele Campus**

http://maps.info.yorku.ca/keele-campus/

**Events**

Sunday, May 15 York University:

with Public Studio “What We Lose in Metrics” (Public Studio) Exhibition at Art Gallery of York Sunday, May 15, 2016, 2pm

Directions: <http://theagyuisoutthere.org/everywhere/?p=4994>

Monday, May 16, 2016 Dinner at Downtown Toronto: 7.30 PM (Location TBA)