THE COMMITTEE ON SOCIEL THEORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY



SOCIAL THEORY is one of the most significant, fastest growing arenas in the humanities and social sciences. We bring together scholars from a multitude of disciplines to consider the social constitution of individuals in contemporary and historical contexts. Social Theory studies such topics as the nature of the political, the structure of agency, cultural and economic processes associated with globalization, and the constitution of public space and civil society.

The Committee on Social Theory (CST) was formed in 1989 to enable multidisciplinary teaching and research in the theoretical study of social life. At the University of Kentucky, CST is committed to making connections between substantive research in the humanities and social sciences. Currently spanning fourteen departments, five schools, and including some seventy faculty associates, CST offers students and faculty an opportunity to study social theory across disciplinary boundaries.

CST serves to enhance graduate education, faculty research, and campus life. Students participate in a series of forums culminating in a graduate Certificate in Social Theory. These forums include team-taught graduate seminars, broad based theory courses, an editorial collective and public lectures. Faculty affiliates also participate in a range of activities, from team-teaching and hosting distinguished speakers to discussing works in progress. It is this range of opportunities for dialogue and interdisciplinary engagement that has over the past two decades made CST at UK a model of intellectual community.

CST is sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate School, and the Office of the Vice President for Research at the University of Kentucky.

For more information about our program, contact our administrative offices at (859) 257-1771.



Public Lectures:

Internationally Acclaimed Speakers

CST contributes broadly to the public milieu of UK through a high profile speaker series and regular public presentations by Social Theory affiliates. The Committee offers the following annual events: 1) the Spring Public Lecture Series; 2) the annual Distinguished Visiting Author events; and 3) Social Theory affiliate presentations.

Our spring speaker series has consistently garnered top scholars across an array of disciplines. The publicity generated by this event has earned UK national and international recognition. Four internationally acclaimed social theorists whose research centers on the seminar theme are invited to give a public lecture. Our invited speakers present the UK community with a range of disciplinary perspectives brought to bear on a topic of particular urgency among social theorists, such as globalization, war, civil society, and consumption.

Each fall, CST invites a Distinguished Author for a two-day event. This visit gives us an opportunity to engage in depth the work of an influential scholar of social theory through public lectures and workshops that often include the author's work in progress alongside published materials.

In addition, each year the CST invites affiliated faculty from across the university to present work in progress to our colleagues. These short presentations over the lunch hour allow affiliates to keep abreast of each other's latest research programs and further enhance intellectual life at UK.

Distinguished Authors since 2005:

- John Paul Jones III
- Jean Comaroff
- Nancy Armstrong
- Elizabeth Povinelli
- Joan Wallach Scott
- Walter Benn Michaels
- John Hartigan

Selected list of past Spring Lecture Series speakers:

- Ed Soja
- Judith Butler
- Iris Young
- Chantal Mouffe
- Charles Tilly
- Arturo Escobar
- Doreen Massey
- Elizabeth Grosz
- Timothy Mitchell
- Carolyn Merchant
- David Harvey
- Linda Alcoff
- Klaus Theweleit
- Jane Jacobs
- Anne McClintock
- Neil Smith
- Hamid Naficy
- Marianne Hirsch
- Jonathon Fox
- Dana Nelson
- Joshua Gamson



"Without a doubt, my engagement with the Committee on Social Theory was one of the highlights of my intellectual travels. The Committee on Social Theory is the rarest of intellectual spaces: graduate students and faculty seeking to examine critically globally emergent public cultures, political forms, and intimate socialities through sustained interdisciplinary conversation. Visiting CST at the University of Kentucky wasn't simply giving a talk or leading a class but being granted the key to the door of a dense intellectual world."

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- Elizabeth Povinelli, Professor, Anthropology & Gender Studies Director, Institute for Research on Women and Gender, Columbia University

Earning a Certificate in Social Theory

Graduate Students participating in Committee activities have the opportunity to earn a Graduate Certificate in Social Theory. This Certificate offers students systematic multidisciplinary training in social theory. In total, the Certificate requires ten hours of course work, can be pursued in tandem with regular degree programs, and is open to all graduate students at the University of Kentucky. Students acquire both a broad basis in social theory and have the experience of taking team-taught, interdisciplinary courses from Social Theory affiliated UK faculty. As part of earning the Certificate, students also become part of the disClosure Editorial Collective, through which they gain professional editorial and research experience.

The capstone course for the Certificate is the topical seminar, ST 600. This course is integrated with the Spring Lecture Series. It is our most challenging and inspired venue for creating the trans-disciplinary theoretical learning environment that CST values. This seminar has trained some of our most successful graduate students who have gone on to publish papers grounded in the specifically interdisciplinary insights achieved in ST 600. Some topics of ST 600 over the past two decades have been Objectivity and its Other (1991,) Disciplining Boundaries (1994), Whiteness (1997), Masculinity and the Male Body (1999), Metropolis (2001), Localizing Globalization (2003), Intimacy (2005), Migrations, Displacements, Mobilities (2007), War (2008), Consuming Cultures (2009), Law, Sex, Family (2010), Self/Story (2011), and Security (2012).



"In 1993 I received a Masters in philosophy as well as a certificate in social theory. I continued to participate in social theory events at UK as I pursued my Ph. D. in philosophy (which I received in 1996). UK's Committee on Social Theory played a key role in my intellectual development. Much of my academic success can be attributed to the interdisciplinary education that I received as a student in the CST program. In my twelve years as a faculty member at St. Joseph's University I was often complimented for my ability to understand academic disciplines outside of my own. This ability continues to inform my teaching and research. My recent book, "Critical Theory and Democratic Vision: Herbert Marcuse and Recent Liberation Philosophies" has been praised by reviewers for its interdisciplinary approach to social and political theory. While UK has a tradition of excellence in many fields, I think that one of its under-recognized gems is CST. I have often said to colleagues of mine all over the country that in graduate school I had the time of my life. The social theory program at UK made an important contribution to that experience. "

- Arnold Farr, Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Kentucky

"Over a decade later, I still draw on the knowledge and resources I gained in the program as I mentor my own graduate students. CST is unlike any program I have since experienced or heard of and I have often hoped to see it replicated elsewhere. It is without doubt one of the key markers of what is good at UK. Long may it continue!"

- Eugene McCann, Associate Professor of Geography, Simon Fraser University

"My experience with the faculty and students of the program was absolutely formative, a kind of intense transformation of my approach to ideas and the world around me. The really fantastic thing about the program is that it lives and works beyond the classroom and the campus. Ultimately, we learned to approach academic life with a respect for different and sometimes competing disciplinary perspectives."

- Jeff Osborne, Assistant Professor of English, Murray State University

OPPORTUNITIES For Frculty Development

In addition to graduate education and a public lecture series, a central mission of CST is faculty development. Through the intellectual community of Social Theory, faculty affiliates have the opportunity to build relationships that foster collaboration, innovative research, and critical engagement across disciplines. These opportunities for faculty come through team-teaching graduate seminars, the public lecture series, Social Theory affiliate research presentations, and Working Papers. These interdisciplinary experiences often result in new research and collaborations. CST provides a platform for interdisciplinary initiatives and grants, such as the 2001-2005 Rockefeller Humanities Fellowships Program grant to the UK Appalachian Center and CST for the project, "Civic Professionalism and Global Regionalism."

CST is a vibrant intellectual community and is beloved by affiliated faculty who find in this forum the very best of academic life.

"The Committee on Social Theory is one of the real treasures of the campus. Its contributions to the intellectual life of campus have provided new ways of thinking about my own field and forged intellectual and personal connections with colleagues from across campus that I would not have found otherwise."

- Doug Slaymaker, Associate Professor of Japanese, University of Kentucky

"Sitting down with my co-instructors to design our ST seminars, I quickly realized that the theory and practice of interdisciplinary work are very different. We had to learn the strange academic culture of each discipline, all the idiosyncrasies and taboos, which make up our chosen fields of work, and find a way to communicate across the boundaries. There are very few institutions where such dialogue is possible. By teaching in Social Theory, I gained an appreciation for the practice of interdisciplinary work, and my research has improved because of my participation in the program."

- Andy Doolen, Associate Professor of English, University of Kentucky

"Intellectually, the Social Theory program is one of the best things the University of Kentucky has going for it. Personally, I have greatly enjoyed teaching ST courses and attending scores of first-rate lectures over the years. My own writing has benefited from the feedback I have gotten from Social Theory working papers sessions and I have developed an important, on-going writing relationship with one of our distinguished visiting speakers. I encourage all my colleagues and graduate students to participate in the program and I have found it to be an effective recruiting tool for attracting new sociology faculty to the university."

- Dwight Billings, Professor of Sociology, University of Kentucky

"CST has provided me with the opportunity to get to know colleagues from across the university, to share my work with faculty of astonishing critical acumen and great generosity, and to teach the single most exciting course I've ever been part of. Social Theory is a huge part of why I love my new job."

- Marion Rust, Assistant Professor of English, University of Kentucky

DIGCLOSURE

disClosure is an annual thematic publication dedicated to investigating and stimulating interest in new directions in contemporary social theory. The journal annually publishes articles, art, creative writing, interviews, and book reviews. By encouraging submissions from a variety of disciplinary, geographical, and theoretical perspectives and genres, this refereed journal seeks to expand the nature of what is studied by the academy and how it is studied.

The journal is edited by graduate students participating in CST. Themes of disClosure follow alongside the annual themes of ST 600 and CST's Spring Lecture Series. Students are responsible for all aspects of the journal, from the solicitation and review of manuscripts, art work, and poetry, to correspondence, publicity, distribution, fund-raising, book reviewing, and preparation of a camera-ready copy. Each issue has a Chief Editor, Managing Editor, Review Editor, and Art Editor who oversee the collective's efforts: and Committee members supply advice for the entire operation. The journal also has an internationally renowned editorial board that assists in the evaluation of submissions.

"Working on the editorial collective of disClosure was a richly rewarding experience. I gained valuable first-hand knowledge of the publication process and developed editorial skills that I subsequently put to good use as the editor of a state-based journal."

- Jeff Popke, Associate Professor, East Carolina University

"Learning how to source and edit material, and how to put a publication together, gave us confidence as we embarked on an academic career. My involvement in the Committee on Social Theory gave me crucial skills, significantly enhanced my knowledge of my own and other disciplines, and led to academic relationships that remain in existence, though now stretching across long distances. I use the Graduate Certificate in Social Theory as an ideal model to aspire to in my current graduate teaching in Ireland."

- Mary Gilmartin, Lecturer, National University of Ireland, Maynooth

"Editing disClosure issue #10 was an immensely intellectually rewarding experience. I have the 10th Anniversary postcard from 2001 attached to my office door to remind me of some of the richest memories while at UK."

- Paul Kingsbury, Assistant Professor, Simon Fraser University

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