

NIHILISM.HOPE

A graduate student conference
in cultural, social and political thought

April 22-24 2016

University of Victoria

Coast Salish and Straits Salish Territories

FADE IN:

Welcome to the annual CSPT graduate conference!

According to the legacy we have inherited, in a graduate program now finishing its twenty-seventh year, we are, on an annual basis, to conspire as a collective to organize a conference which will gather graduate students of cultural, social and political thought in order to discuss a theme, movement, problematic or impulse that we feel speaks to our particular moment or circumstance.

What is to be said of Nihilism.Hope?

It was a theme which manifested itself and began to cause a stir. How could one have a conference dedicated to nihilism? How naïve may one seem in guiding one's research by the concept of hope? What is the dot connecting the two? If this conference is to address a problematic of a particular moment and circumstance, the theme of Nihilism.Hope is intended to address both an impasse and a guiding force in the way contemporary theory is done. How may one be guided without a fixed source of meaning, and how may one do theory without a horizon? The dot connecting Nihilism and Hope was taken, in our call to fellow students, as a way to collapse the binary, in discussing these concepts with as little preconceptions as possible, to explore the possibilities of theory with or without meaning; with or without horizon.

The conference is free and open to the public in an attempt to make knowledge sharing a feasible manner. We encourage attendees to ask questions in a collegiate and respectful manner with the purpose of clarifying information as well as aiding the participants in their research endeavors. The panels have been scheduled such that none overlap, with the hopes that attendees will be able to attend any panel they want without having to sacrifice attendance at another. That being said, no panels have been scheduled back to back in the same room, leaving the possibility to linger following each panel to continue discussions, socialize with other attendees, or reflect on the day's topics.

We look forward to a conference full of paradox, creativity, and an overall challenging of foundational beliefs. Following Ulrich Beck in his commentary on the novel *Jacques le fataliste et son maître* by Denis Diderot, it can be said that we now live in a time "without beginning or end, in a space without limits, amid social landscapes whose future seems as present as it is infinite". Indeed, if we are the masters of our own fate, then whereto from here?

OPENING CEREMONY

FRIDAY APRIL 22 - 6:00 P.M.

Harry Hickman Building, Room 105.

The University of Victoria is located on unceded Coast Salish and Straits Salish Territories of the Lkwungen and WS'ANEC' peoples, sitting on an old Songhees village. As the conference is being held at and arising from an institution which grew out of a history of colonization and occupation which continues today, our conference will begin with a land acknowledgment by a local elder along with a discussion of the role academic institutions have played in the history and present of colonization as well as some comments on the conference theme of Nihilism.Hope. This acknowledgment and discussion is to occur early in our conference so that it may continue to be a topic of reflection as panelists present and interrogate their own research as well as reflect on the research of others.

VICTOR UNDERWOOD (ČĚLPIMET)

Victor was born and raised in Tsawout reserve in WS'ANEC'. Victor's was one of the first Band Manager hired in Canada and in his community where he worked until he realized that if he really wanted to help his people it would require that he seek out healing on his part. After doing his own healing work he accompanied his late wife Joyce to work in Kakawis Treatment Centre as Alcohol and Drug counselor. Since coming home, he's offered many people a place to find healing in his Sweat Lodge and other healing ceremonies.

Areas of Interest/Expertise: Health and Wellness, Culture, Language, Sweat Lodge, Traditional Medicines, Education, Children and Families, and Addictions.

FUTURE.PRECARITY

FRIDAY APRIL 22 - 7:00 P.M.

Harry Hickman Building, Room 105.

ANDREW JOHNSON

Twilight of the Humans: Nietzsche and the
Horizon of Apocalyptic Politics

Andrew Johnson has an MA in Philosophy from Louisiana State University, a BA from the University of Maine, and has taught at Husson University, Guangxi University, and Beijing Huijia International School. His major specialization is in Political Theory, but also works in American Politics, International Relations, Political Economy, and Criminology (specifically policing).

JANICE FENG

A Future that Cannot be Foreseen: Queer
Futurity and Alterity

I recently received my MA from Cultural, Social Political Thought and Political Science at University of Victoria. My research interests are feminist and queer theory, phenomenology of gender and sexuality, and post-structuralism. I am interested in the question of power and violence in relation to gender and sexuality, and in my works I seek to locate and expose the ways in which such violence render itself invisible in the process of normalizing bodies. I have been tremendously influenced by Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Judith Butler.

ROBERT PANTALONE

"Good night, Malaysia Three-seven-zero":
Knowledge in the Absence of Evidence

Robert Pantalone has a BA from Acadia University in Politics and is currently completing a Masters in Social and Political Thought there. He is the co-founder and managing editor of *To Be Decided**, a journal of interdisciplinary theory. His research focusses on situating cryptography in language theory.

A discussion will follow, led by DR. ARTHUR KROKER, professor from the Department of Political Science.

NIHILISM.HOPE

FRIDAY APRIL 22 - 8:15 P.M.

Harry Hickman Building, Room 105.

DUSTIN ZIELKE

Between Nihilism and Hope: the
Apocalyptic Given World and an Unreal
Possible World

Dustin is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Victoria in the Cultural Social and Political Thought program (Sociology). His dissertation is a phenomenological ontology of the role of possible worlds in the constitution of critical subjectivities. He holds an MA and an MPhil in Philosophy from K.U. Leuven, where he specialized in phenomenology. At Leuven, his MA thesis was on Heidegger's conception of the gods and his MPhil thesis was a phenomenological explication of *deja vu*. He also holds an MA in CSPT (Interdisciplinary) from the University of Victoria and a BA in Religious Studies from the University of British Columbia.

DANIEL COOK

Another Way of Playing: Deleuze's
Nietzsche on Nihilism and Hope

I am a graduate student in Philosophy at Concordia University. My research interests include the phenomenological tradition, contemporary re-interpretations of Plato, as well as continental critiques of normative ethics. My current project involves the problem of origins in Levinas's *Totality & Infinity*.

TIM BERK

Technological Destining and the
Preparation for the Gods: A Dialogue
Between Heidegger and Grant

Tim is a first year PhD student, studying political theory at the University of Toronto. His project will interrogate the coherence of the concept of 'multiple modernities' with a view to exploring the relationship between technology and cultural diversity. He is currently a Graduate Associate at the Centre for Ethics.

A discussion will follow, led by DR. PEYMAN VAHABZADEH, professor from the Department of Sociology.

BREAKFAST

SATURDAY APRIL 23 - 9:00 A.M.

Harry Hickman Building, lobby. A light breakfast will be served.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

SATURDAY APRIL 23 - 9:30 A.M.

Harry Hickman Building, Room 105.

DR. MICHAEL TRUSCELLO

Political Suicide

MICHAEL TRUSCELLO is an Associate Professor in English and General Education at Mount Royal University in Calgary, Alberta, and a member of the PETROCULTURES research cluster at the University of Alberta. His research interests include anarchism, the politics and poetics of infrastructure, petrocultures, and media studies. He is the author of THE INFRASTRUCTURE SOCIETY (MIT Press, 2017), which examines cultural theory and the poetics of infrastructure through contemporary artistic forms such as film, literature, and photography. He is co-editor with AJAMU NANGWAYA of WHY DON'T THE POOR RISE UP? (AK Press, 2017). He is also developing INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, which he co-edits with DANIEL PARÉ.

In 2013, he co-edited with URI GORDON a special issue of ANARCHIST STUDIES on anarchism and technology. In 2012, he explored The New Topographics, Dark Ecology, and Energy Infrastructure in the journal IMAGINATIONS. And his analysis of the materiality of the road in the Road Movie genre appears in the 2012 anthology from McGill-Queen's University Press, HIT THE ROAD, JACK: ESSAYS ON THE CULTURE OF THE AMERICAN ROAD.

In 2011, he released the documentary film CAPITALISM IS THE CRISIS: RADICAL POLITICS IN THE AGE OF AUSTERITY. He is currently developing a short film on suicide and politics, based on an interview with FRANCO "BIFO" BERARDI.

CRITIQUE.PROGRESS

SATURDAY APRIL 23 - 11:30 A.M.

David Strong Building, room C118.

RYAN BEATON

Nihilism and Hope in the Self-Overcoming
of (European) Sovereignty

Ryan is originally from Montreal. He studied math and philosophy before moving into law. His work in math was on the set-theoretic foundations of arithmetic. His work in philosophy focused on the secularisation of moral philosophy in Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche.

EMILY ARVAY

Can A Sneer Express Hope? Will Self's
Book of Dave Suggests So

Emily Arvay is doctoral candidate in the Department of English at the University of Victoria. Her dissertation on contemporary post-apocalyptic prose takes particular interest in the cataclysms envisioned by Will Self, David Mitchell, and Chris Adrian, among others. Although the bulk of her dissertation examines recent disaster fiction, secondary areas of interest include metafictional experimentation, post-human theory, and eco-critical approaches to the study of literature. For more information on her research, please contact earvay@uvic.ca.

MILAN BERNARD

The Notion of Progress: Paradise, Crisis,
Marxism and The Dark Knight

Milan Bernard is an M.A. Candidate in Political Theory at University of Toronto, and holds a B.Sc. in International Studies (Political Science) from Université de Montréal. His current interests are the notion of progress and the development of ideas, as well as their applications in different fields of political science.

A discussion will follow, led by DR. SIMON GLEZOS, professor from the Department of Political Science.

LUNCH

SATURDAY APRIL 23 - 12:45 P.M.

Harry Hickman Building, lobby. Lunch will be served.

BODY.MIND

SATURDAY APRIL 23 - 1:30 P.M.

David Strong Building, room C118.

AL WHITNEY

Being dying and the Plasticity of Death

Al Whitney is a third year doctoral candidate at the Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism, Western University. She completed her masters at the University of Victoria in Sociology. She explores contemporary forms of dying, primarily through the work of Malabou, Derrida, Heidegger, and Freud.

STEPHANIE BETHUNE

Understanding Male Suicide Rates through
New Materialisms

Stephanie Bethune is in her first year of Cultural, Social, and Political Thought at UVic. While she enjoys continental theory, she is deeply committed to formal logic. Navigating this apparent contradiction consumes most of her days. When she is not enthusiastically engaging in lively social debates or integrating her clunky dancing into equally awkward prose you can find her escaping from "parties" in foreign bathtubs feverishly reading any fiction available.

LAUREN HOOPER

Seeing Monster: The Ultrasounds,
Feminisms and Complexity

Lauren Hooper is in her second year of graduate school and 23rd year of embodied life. She has a passion for red wine, Foucault, and Deleuze, and their positions in her rhizome of desire are in a state of flux. Red wine usually comes out on top, though. When she's not buried in a pile of books you can find her unironically taking in a themed spin class or bleaching her bathtub.

A discussion will follow, led by DR. STEVE GARLICK, professor from the Department of Sociology.

CREATIVE WRITING

SATURDAY APRIL 23 - 2:45 P.M.

Harry Hickman Building, Room 110.

SENKA ERIKSEN

A selected reading of her poetry

Senka is currently a PhD graduate student in the IGOV program at the University of Victoria. She writes fiction and poetry as a way to intuitively understand, express and share experiences, perceptions and feelings in connection to embodied memory. Her writing seeks to explore the impermanence/permanence of moments of being.

YUSUF SAADI

A reading from his novella COMPOSITION

Yusuf Saadi is an MA student in English at the University of Victoria. His poetry/fiction has appeared in literary journals including *Grain*, *Prairie Fire*, *PRISM international*, *Vallum*, and *untethered*.

COFFEE.TEA

SATURDAY APRIL 23 - 3:30 P.M.

Harry Hickman Building, lobby. Coffee, tea and snacks.

What is coffee? What is tea? Can one have both? This panel will grapple with the concepts of 'coffee' and 'tea' as two fundamentally inseparable ideas—in contrast to the notion of these two terms being diametrically opposite and/or mutually exclusive, as they are sometimes understood.

SPACE.SOCIETY

SATURDAY APRIL 23 - 4:00 P.M.

David Strong Building, Room C118

BENJAMIN O'HERAN

Lameness, Weakness, & Hypocrisy: Existing
in the Settlerpocene

Benjamin O'Heran PhD candidate at the University of British Columbia's Political Science program. They recently finished their MA at the University of Victoria's Indigenous Governance Program where their research centered on settler allyship & using Critical Animal Studies as a way of envisioning new relationships with Indigenous lands and waterways.

MARK ZION

Law's Nihilism and/as Hope in the
(Mis)Anthropocene

Mark Zion (JD Alberta, LLM Victoria) is a PhD student in UVic's Law and Society program. Drawing on critical legal thought, Indigenous thought, as well as Deleuze, Haraway, Wark, Rancière, and others, he evaluates the political and temporal aesthetics of neoliberal law in the (Mis)Anthropocene, ultimately aspiring to develop (against all warnings) a "radical sublime" counter-aesthetic.

A discussion will follow, led by DR. WARREN MAGNUSSON, professor from the Department of Political Science.

BODIES.CONTROL

SATURDAY APRIL 23 - 5:15 P.M.

Harry Hickman Building, Room 110.

TYLER CHARTRAND

Mobility Control and Labour: Genealogies
of Canadian Practices of Status and Space

Tyler Chartrand (BA, Western; MA, UVic) is a PhD student in Political Science at York University. He researches information, communication and mobility technologies in Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program and its historical antecedents. He has been a service provider and activist in youth organizing, homelessness, migrant justice, and collective bargaining.

JENNIFER MATEER

Slow violence and water politics in North
Western India

Jennifer Mateer is a 4th-year doctoral student (ABD) in the Department of Geography at the University of Victoria. Her research seeks to understand the ways in which new water management strategies impact the hydro-social cycle and the more-than-human world. Some main concepts that she works with are biopower, slow violence, alternative ethnographies, post-development, neoliberalism, environmental justice, and political ecology.

MATTHEW SPENCER

Hope for Murderers? Situating hope
within the section 718 principles.

Matthew is completing the final semester of his Master's of Law at UVic. An active member of the UVic community, Matthew recently completed the LATHE certificate, has TA'd in both Engineering and Law and served on appointments and appeals committees. Outside of UVic Matthew is a proud uncle, experimental home chef, yogi and once competed in a talent show as one-half of a human cannon ball.

A discussion will follow, led by DR. JAMES ROWE, professor from the Department of Environmental Studies.

BREAKFAST

SUNDAY APRIL 24 - 9:00 A.M.

David Strong Building, room C118. A light breakfast will be served.

KNOWLEDGE.SILENCE

SUNDAY APRIL 24 - 9:30 A.M.

David Strong Building, room C116.

JULIAN EVANS

Inhabiting an earth that is not for us: Eugene
Thacker, David Abram and the question of
cosmology

Julian Evans is a Masters student in the CSPT program at UVic researching anarchism, friendship, and Foucault. He received a B.A. at Concordia, grew up on Vancouver Island, and has an interest in phenomenology, Deleuze and ecological philosophy. He has worked as a designer and web developer, written and published zines, and tries to find time to DJ parties and work on building a tiny home.

VLADIMIR CRISTACHE

Nothing but Language: Massimo Cacciari and
Giorgio Agamben on "the Mystical"

Vladimir Cristache is a third-year doctoral candidate at Western University's Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism. Apart from his interest in photography theory, cinema studies, political theology, the history of mysticism, and the limits of critique, he is currently writing a dissertation surrounding the pre- and post-history of Walter Benjamin's concept of "Ideas" in The Origin of German Tragic Drama and is in the process of outlining a book on the first phase of Italian Theory, 1960-90. He holds M.A. in English from The University of Toronto and a B.A. in English from The University of British Columbia

MIKE USHE

Rituals and Taboos Related to Death as a
Repository of Traditional African Religious
Ideas: Evidence from the Tiv of Central Nigeria

Rev. Fr. Dr Ushe .N. Michael is a priest of the Catholic Diocese of Sokoto, Nigeria. He is a Senior Lecturer at the National Open University of Nigeria, Lagos. Dr. Ushe obtained the following qualifications: Diploma in Religious Studies and Bachelor of Arts, Religious Studies from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, Bachelor of Theology from the Pontifical Urbanian University, Rome, Post-Graduate Diploma in Education, Masters of Arts, Religious Studies in African Traditional Religion, Masters of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy in Religious Studies (African Traditional Religion) from the University of Jos, Nigeria. He has published many books, chapters in the books and articles in peer reviewed Journals both at the international and local levels. Dr. Ushe is presently the Head of the Department, Christian Theology, School of Arts and Social Sciences, National Open University of Nigeria, Lagos.

A discussion will follow, led by DR. EMILE FROMET DE ROSNAY, professor from the Department of French.

IDENTITY.VULNERABILITY

SUNDAY APRIL 24 - 10:45 A.M.

David Strong Building, room C118.

TIM PERSONN

"Laugh at each master": Irony as
Proximity

I am a PhD candidate in English and CSPT at the University of Victoria. Currently, I am a fellow at UVic's Centre for Studies in Religion and Society. My dissertation on philosophy and affect in contemporary fiction is funded by a Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship.

ARAGORN!

An introduction to Anarchist Nihilism

Aragorn! is a publisher at Little Black Cart, a writer of small things including Nihilism, Anarchy, and the 21st century, an organizer of events in the Bay Area. I speak on topics like nihilism, decision making, anarchist practices, media of various sorts, publishing in particular, sectarianism, etc. I spell my name with a ! as a warning (It is pronouncing Aragorn Bang).

ASHER FAERSTEIN

Taking Up Self-Negation as Possibility:
Giovanni's Room and the Queerly Unviable
Subject.

Asher Faerstein is a Montreal-born queer and trans writer whose work focuses on language and power, borders and bodies, vulnerability, alienation, and queer futurity. Most of Asher's oeuvre can be found in remote corners of the internet on long forgotten .com confessionals or in drafts folders, though an essay and a few trangsty poems have been published. They recently graduated from Concordia with a BA in English Literature and Interdisciplinary Studies in Sexuality.

A discussion will follow, led by MARK ZION, a doctoral student from the Department of Law.

LUNCH

SUNDAY APRIL 24 - 12:00 P.M.

David Strong Building, room C116. Lunch will be served.

SOLIDARITY.MOVEMENT

SUNDAY APRIL 24 - 12:45 P.M.

David Strong Building, room C118.

SOPHIE MAJOR

Narrating Solidarity: Examining David
Foster Wallace as Richard Rorty's
Liberal-ironist

Sophie Major is an interdisciplinary graduate student at UC Berkeley, bridging political philosophy to international climate change politics. Some of her current research areas include the genealogy of resilience policy, and the role of narrative building and literature in contemporary politics.

ROBERT HLATKY

Prefigurative Politics and the Anarchist
Movement in the Pacific Northwest

I'm a PhD student in sociology at the University of Victoria. Currently, my primary research interest relates to how anarchist politics are practiced in local contexts in Canada and the Pacific Northwest. I'm a collective member of Camas Books & Infoshop and the Victoria Anarchist Bookfair as well as an organizer for the Retail Action Network.

RYAN VAN DEN BERG

A Case for Political Passions in Civic
Education

Ryan van den Berg grew up in Ottawa and is currently an M.A. student at UBC's Department of Educational Studies. He also holds a B.A. in Canadian Studies from Mount Allison University. His main research interests include civic and citizenship education, democracy studies, civic dissent, and masculinity.

A discussion will follow, led by DR. BILL CARROLL, professor from the Department of Sociology.

PRESENTATION

SUNDAY APRIL 24 - 2:00 P.M.

David Strong Building, room C116.

SARA NADERI

The divinity of the "subject" or the
colonization of subjectivity

Sara Naderi is a PhD student at the department of Sociology in University of Victoria. Her research interests include women's studies, post-colonial studies, cultural studies, sociology of religion and sociology of knowledge. Sara's main interest is questioning and criticizing modern subjectivity. She is seeking for possibility of alternative and critical subjectivities. Some part of her researches was published in Journal articles and a book entitled "Introduction to Feminine Narrative of the city: A study on women's lived experience". She can be reached at: snaderi@uvic.ca.

COFFEE.TEA

SUNDAY APRIL 24 - 2:45 P.M.

David Strong Building, room C118. Coffee, tea and snacks.

A continuation of the previous day's discussion on collapsing the binary between coffee and tea.

HOPE.HOPELESSNESS

SUNDAY APRIL 24 - 3:15

David Strong Building, room C116.

What can hope do, and what happens when it's lost? What supports collective joy and flourishing and what gets in the way? Rather than conceiving them as binaries, this panel will try to move with hope/hopelessness and joy/sadness as relational dualisms. In addition to thinking these concepts through western philosophy, these presenters will bring these questions into conversation with contemporary anti-authoritarian social movements and social spaces, as well as non-academic and non-western thinkers to ask how day-to-day life moves this way already, and what we can learn from it.

Ultimately, we will be asking what's at stake politically in how we seek change and do theory? Can theorizing itself be a joyfully embodied act, with desirable political consequences? What does it look like to organize in response to contemporary violence and oppression without a ground for understanding what 'getting better' looks like? These are all big questions and the panelists will open them up a little and move around in the space created by them, rather than providing any firm answers.

Each panelist will take a few minutes to engage with their work individually, then converse with each other, opening up resonances and dissonances between their work, and then open to the audience to have a more engaged conversation on these topics.

KIM SMITH

Kim Smith is a cat-bicycle-resonance-machine. Trembling aspens and magpies speak from Edmonton in Victoria. It would be cruel to be optimistic about a straightforward research topic, especially when it concerns queer lines hopelessly feeding on the ruins of optimism.

NICK MONTGOMERY

Nick Montgomery often loses hope in nihilism and sometimes he is able to believe in the world. He is struggling through a PhD and co-writing a book about how collective struggle depends on joy (the Spinozan kind), and joy needs militant struggle. Some keywords he likes thinking about include: joy, conviviality, Empire, alternatives, anarchism, permaculture, feminism, and decolonization. He also propagates fruit trees and perennials, does some organizing and facilitation sometimes, loves eating eggs, and runs a wild book sanctuary out of his home.

ENDNOTE ADDRESS

SUNDAY APRIL 24 - 4:30 P.M.

Harry Hickman Building, room 105.

DR. FRANCIS ADU-FEBIRI

Beneath the Nihilism - Hope Curve:
Emotions, Morals and Spirit

FRANCIS ADU-FEBIRI holds a Sociology PhD from the University of British Columbia. He is a Sociology professor and former Chair of the Social Sciences Department at Camosun, Victoria, BC. He has also taught sociology at University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University and University of Victoria. In addition, he has been an Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University and in the Department of Sociology, University of Victoria, serving on PhD dissertation and MA thesis committees. For many years he was an Associate of the faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Victoria. Dr. Adu-Febiri has done many academic presentations in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Europe, the United States and Canada. He has served on several panel discussions and has been a key note speaker on a few occasions. Francis has published on diversity, racialization, ethnicity, tourism, human factor development, and globalization. Dr. Adu-Febiri is the author of FIRST NATIONS STUDENTS TALK BACK: VOICES OF A LEARNING PEOPLE and also the co-author of SUCCEEDING FROM THE MARGINS OF CANADIAN SOCIETY: A STRATEGIC RESOURCE FOR NEW IMMIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS. Francis has been the Chair of the Ethno-cultural Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Children and Family Development, South Vancouver Island Region. He is the Co-Chair of the Camosun African Awareness Committee (AAC) and the President of the Canadian Chapter of the International Institute for Human Factor Development (IIHFD). He initiated the establishment of the African Heritage Association of Vancouver Island (AHAVI). He has received BCcampus funding and was a two-time recipient of Camosun's President Fund. Francis was a recipient of the 2007 International Spirit Award of Camosun and in November 2009 Camosun honored him with Community Impact Excellence Award. He has also received IIHFD Award as well as National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) Excellence Award, University of Texas at Austin.

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