

Communities in Conversation Series Features Diverse Lineup for 2013-2014

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Rhodes College's Communities in Conversation will present 10 events for the 2013-14 academic year. Preeminent scholars and outstanding intellectuals such as Judith Butler, Robert Darnton, and *The Atlantic's* Ta-Nahisi Coates will discuss contemporary issues and contentious topics. From an account of "How Judaism Became a Religion," to "A History of Genius," this public lecture series highlights how scholarly conversations can illuminate a variety of subjects of general interest. All lectures are free, open to the public and take place on the Rhodes campus unless otherwise noted.

Sept. 30: Leora Batnitzky, "How Judaism Became a Religion," McCallum Ballroom, Bryan Campus Life Center at 6 p.m. (5:30 p.m. reception)

Leora Batnitzky will tell the story of how Judaism came to be defined as a religion in the modern period—and why Jewish thinkers have fought as well as championed this idea. Ever since the Enlightenment, Jewish thinkers have debated whether and how Judaism—largely a religion of practice and public adherence to law—can fit into a modern, Protestant conception of religion as an individual and private matter of belief or faith.

Oct. 10: Robert Darnton, "Digitize and Democratize: Libraries, Books, and the Digital Future," UC Theatre, University of Memphis at 6 p.m. (5:30 p.m. reception)

Robert Darnton argues that in the current digital environment, books and libraries are more important than ever. Their importance will increase as the digital future is designed. In the lecture, he will discuss the Digital Public Library of America, which brings together the riches of America's libraries, archives, and museums and makes them freely available to the world.

Oct. 11: Symposium on Shakespeare and the Book, Blount Auditorium, Buckman Hall at 9 a.m. (8:30 a.m. coffee)

Lukas Erne of the University of Geneva will present "Disseminating Printed Shakespeare in Early Modern England," and Michael Witmore of the Folger Shakespeare Library will present "Writing Literary and Cultural History at the Level of the Sentence."

Oct. 24: J. Baird Callicott, "Judeo-Christianity, Zen-Buddhism, and Environmental Ethics," Blount Auditorium, Buckman Hall at 6 p.m. (5:30 p.m. reception)

In 1967, Lynn White Jr., a UCLA historian of medieval technology, published "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis" in *Science*. The article stimulated the development of secular environmental philosophy in the 1970s and also comparative environmental religion a decade later, two approaches to environmental ethics.

Nov. 13: Darrin McMahon, "Divine Fury: A History of Genius," McCallum Ballroom, Bryan Campus Life Center at 6 p.m. (5:30 p.m. reception)

McMahon will draw on his new book *Divine Fury: A History of Genius* to discuss what Europeans in the 19th and early 20th centuries described as "the religion of genius." Ranging from the ancients to the moderns, from poets to the whiz kids of Silicon Valley, McMahon will seek to question what genius has meant, and what it still might mean today.

January-February: Tournées French Film Festival

For a second year running, Rhodes will host the Tournées French Film Festival featuring contemporary French films.

Feb. 13: Aram Goudsouzian, "Down to the Crossroads: Civil Rights, Black Power, and the Meredith March Against Fear," Blount Auditorium, Buckman Hall at 6 p.m. (5:30 p.m. reception)

Goudsouzian will tell the story of the last great march of the civil rights era and the first great showdown of the turbulent years that followed including efforts by James Meredith, Martin Luther King Jr. and Stokely Carmichael.

Feb 27-March 1: Memphis Center Conference: "Public Memory: From the Civil War to Civil Rights," Bryan Campus Life Center

Through presentations and workshops, documentary screenings and musical performances, the conference

will engage a wide audience in discussions of how the journey from civil war to civil rights continues to affect an understanding of the past, present and future. Ta-Nehisi Coates, senior editor of *The Atlantic*, will present the keynote address on Feb. 28. Other presenters include Thavolia Glymph and Timothy Tyson of Duke University, Aram Goudsouzian and Susan O'Donovan of The University of Memphis, Hasan Jeffries of Ohio State University, and Kate Masur of Northwestern University.

March 24: Maud Mandel, "Muslims and Jews in France: History of a Conflict," Blount Auditorium, Buckman Hall at 6 p.m. (5:30 p.m. reception)

Mandel will discuss how Muslims and Jews in France have related to each other in diverse ways throughout this history—as former residents of French North Africa, as immigrants competing for limited resources, as employers and employees, as victims of racist aggression, as religious minorities in a secularizing state, and as French citizens.

April 10: Judith Butler, "Thinking Binationalism with Martin Buber and Edward Said," Bryan Campus Life Center at 6 p.m. (5:30 p.m. reception)

Binationalism is a concept that has different legacies in Jewish and Palestinian political thought, sometimes the focus of skepticism and sometimes of hope on both sides. This lecture will bring together the thought of Said and Buber to ask, does binationalism have a history that can still be told, a future that might be lived? Visit Communities in Conversation on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). For more information, contact Dr. Jonathan Judaken, the Spence L. Wilson Chair in Humanities at Rhodes, at judakenj@rhodes.edu or (901) 843-3292.

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