

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS: Affect and Social Justice

*philoSOPHIA: Society for Continental Feminism*, 11th Annual Meeting

Thursday, March 30<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017

Florida Atlantic University (FAU), Boca Raton, Florida

**EXTENDED Deadline for Abstract, Panel, and Workshop Proposals: Nov 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

[Coming Soon: hotel and registration info, plus more on accessibility to and at the conference!]

The 11th annual meeting of *philoSOPHIA* will run from Thursday evening, March 30<sup>th</sup> through Sunday morning, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017, on FAU's campus in Boca Raton, FL. Our keynote speaker, Sara Ahmed, has written groundbreaking books such as *Queer Phenomenology* (2006) and *The Promise of Happiness* (2010), and regularly blogs on issues of social justice (<https://feministkilljoys.com>). In addition to traditional panel sessions, we are excited to feature a closed-session workshop, "Queer Ethics: On Vulnerability," organized by Jana Sawicki, Falguni Sheth, and Diana Taylor, as well as two plenary sessions on Teresa Brennan and on Affect, Injustice, and Social Critique.

This year's theme, Affect and Social Justice, honors the legacy of Teresa Brennan, who was Schmidt Distinguished Professor of Humanities at FAU—and founder of a groundbreaking PhD for Public Intellectuals—before her untimely death early in 2003. Brennan's early work, bridging psychodynamics with physics, theorized oppression through the lens of energetics and 'social pressure'; later, she would extend this to the 'exhaustion' of global capitalism, especially to its draining force on people and places marked as 'resources' in the global 'South'. In *The Transmission of Affect* (2004), published posthumously, Brennan claimed a "New Paradigm" for understanding how the social shapes the biological. Since we are not, after all, "self-contained" subjects, Brennan turns to the ethical stakes of this paradigm shift: How can we educate our senses, resist 'projection', and attune our reserves of 'living attention' to better discern those relations—variously intimate, impersonal, institutional—in which we find ourselves, with concern for justice and injustice in those relations?

While papers concerning aspects of feminist philosophy, feminist theory, queer theory, critical philosophy of race, and continental philosophy are all welcome, the *philoSOPHIA* program committee invites new work on affective and emotive aspects of social justice, including those scripts that keep oppressive conditions in place (e.g. fear of the 'dangerous individual,' discomfort with queer, trans, and/or disabled bodies, complacency toward climate change) and those disruptive feelings (e.g. surprise, empathy, curiosity, and—arguably—shame) that might resist 'stuck' scripts.

Submissions may deal with any of the following questions (but are not limited to them):

- What is ‘affect’ and how does it differ from ‘emotion,’ ‘feeling,’ ‘passion,’ etc.?
- How does ‘affect’ impact philosophies of embodiment, health and illness, and/or environmental and ecological relations?
- What is the contemporary relevance of ‘affect’ as an ethical, social-political, post-humanist, and/or psychological concept?
- What – if anything – about theorizing ‘affect’ makes it a ‘feminist’ or ‘queer’ project?
- To what extent can one ‘feel’ with others? What happens, ethically and politically, when we view images of social suffering – to quote Susan Sontag, when we “regard” the pain of others? Or, to invoke Judith Butler, how are these affectively ‘framed’?

We also invite proposals for our closed-session workshop, “Queer Ethics: On Vulnerability,” which presents an exciting opportunity for junior scholars and graduate students to dialogue with prominent feminist voices in queer theory, critical philosophy of race, postcolonial theory, and Foucault studies on the place of ‘vulnerability’ in a poststructuralist ethics. Please see p. 3 of this document for an extended description.

#### Guidelines for Submission:

Abstracts and panel proposals should be submitted in an email attachment suitable for anonymous review. You may submit one of the following:

1. An individual abstract (500-700 words).
2. A panel proposal (500 words) with individual abstracts (500-700 words each).
3. A closed-session workshop abstract (500-700 words) for our philoSOPHIA Workshop on Queer Ethics and Vulnerability, sponsored by Jana Sawicki, Falguni Sheth, and Dianna Taylor (please see p. 3 for an extended description).

In a separate document (attached to the same email), please include your name and contact information along with your proposal title. Please list audio/visual requests, but bear in mind that these will be approved on a case-by-case basis, giving priority to accessibility for all conference participants. More information will be available soon on conference accessibility, building from the 2016 philoSOPHIA accessibility [guidelines](#) and the invaluable resources of the Society for Disability Studies, [SDS](#). The program committee encourages and prioritizes conference submissions engaging the works of people of color, gender non-conforming persons, and/or disabled persons.

**Please submit proposals electronically to [philosophia2017@gmail.com](mailto:philosophia2017@gmail.com) by 11:59pm on Tuesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016. For all inquiries related to the 2017 conference, please contact conference organizer Lauren Guilmette directly at [lguilmette@fau.edu](mailto:lguilmette@fau.edu).**

**Closed Session Workshop, sponsored by Jana Sawicki, Falguni Sheth, Dianna Taylor**Queer Ethics: On Vulnerability

In *Precarious Life*, Judith Butler develops themes found in her earlier writings on human dependency, loss, attachment, and social death. She draws upon the work of Foucault and Deleuze in order to envision a community of biopolitical subjects and posit an ethics based upon shared vulnerability to pain and loss – in short, on the precariousness of life (*bios*). At the same time, like Agamben, Butler describes a resurgence of sovereign power that reduces subjects to bare life (*zoe*). In a creative revision of psychoanalytic discourses, she analyzes the affective dynamics occluding structures that produce unequal access to the means of securing life. Finally, she appeals to Foucault's understanding of critique as virtue – a form of critical engagement in which ethical subjects must act “without guarantees,” and thereby risk themselves by positing values that are without foundation (*desujetissement*)

In this workshop we invite papers that engage questions within poststructuralist ethics more generally concerning the viability of shared vulnerability as a touchstone for ethics, political philosophy and legal institutions. Do such approaches, however revised, necessarily rely upon an implicit universalistic account of human nature? On problematic Hegelian dynamics of self and other? Upon colonialism and racism? Might we turn instead to a more affirmative Spinozist ontology for rethinking ethics and politics? Is it possible to reconcile notions of shared vulnerability with (legal, social, communal, political) productions of vulnerability? Could we reconsider the prospect of a revised liberalism found within dominant strands of 20<sup>th</sup> Century continental ethics?

Papers should be no longer than 8-10 pages and must be submitted to Jana Sawicki ([jsawicki@williams.edu](mailto:jsawicki@williams.edu)) no later than Monday, March 13, 2017. Selected papers will be pre-circulated 10 days before the conference to enable participants to read them ahead of time. Closed session(s) will be devoted to discussing the papers and the issues they raise. We will run more than one closed session if necessary to enable maximum participation.