

FEATURED SPEAKERS

Monday, September 23rd



The unexpected value of not understanding languages: nurturing the craft of incomprehension

10:00 – 10:50 a.m. Janet Ayers Academic Center 4090

At least as far back as the Babel myth, there is a broad and deep tradition of framing not understanding the language of others as problematic. Yet not only does linguistic incomprehension not necessarily lead to conflict, there are unexpected possibilities for coexistence inherent in the inability to speak the language of the other. As sociological perspectives on language have shown, humans have a remarkable capacity to maintain relationships in the face of incomprehension and misunderstanding. Drawing on a variety of examples - including 'astronaut talk' and the translation on warning messages on chocolate eggs - this lecture will suggest ways in which the craft of incomprehension might be developed as an aesthetic and empathetic practice.

Keith Kahn-Harris, Ph.D., is a sociologist and writer, based in London. He is a senior lecturer at Leo Baeck College and a senior research fellow at the Institute for Jewish Policy Research. The author or co-author of eight books, editor of several collections and many articles and reviews, his career bridges academia and multiple other worlds. His work has appeared in publications including The Guardian, New Humanist, Prospect, Haaretz, The Forward, New Statesman and more. His most recent books are The Babel Message: A Love Letter to Language (Icon) and What Does A Jew Look Like? (in collaboration with Rob Stothard)



On the Individual and Historical Acquisition of Language

2:00 – 2:50 p.m. Janet Ayers Academic Center 4090

Humans, unlike other animals with language, must acquire their language, each individually, although it must be waiting there for us as a historical product of other humans, and we alter it in history, making it (the most?) prominent aspect of what Heidegger terms our thrownness (Geworfenheit), that is, how human beings are "thrown" into existence without a sense of where we come from or why.

Sebastian Rand, Ph.D. (Northwestern University, 2006), is an expert in German Idealism, particularly Hegel, and is an affiliate faculty member at the Jean Beer Blumenfeld Center for Ethics. His research focuses on how German Idealists, especially Hegel, understood the goals and methods of the natural sciences, particularly mathematical physics and, more recently, biology. His work explores the distinction and integration of naturalness and normativity, a theme he also examines in contemporary Continental philosophy.



Transcending Borders through Language: The Poetry and Craft of Emmy Pérez

6:00 – 7:30 p.m. Janet Ayers Academic Center 4090

Emmy Pérez, Texas Poet Laureate of 2020, has lived in the Texas borderlands for 24 years. She is the author of the poetry collections With the River on Our Face (University of Arizona Press) and Solstice (Swan Scythe Press). Her latest collection, Paper America: New and Selected Poems, is forthcoming from TCU Press in 2025. Copies of With the River on Our Face will be available for purchase after the reading.

Emmy Pérez graduated from Columbia University (MFA) and the University of Southern California (BA). Pérez received a 2022 United States Artist Fellowship and has been honored with awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, Poets Laureate Fellowship, and others. She is a professor and department chair at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, where she teaches in the creative writing MFA and undergraduate programs. Pérez has also co-founded Poets Against Walls and actively mentors students while engaging in community-based writing programs.

FEATURED SPEAKERS

Tuesday, September 24th



Translation and Interpreting as a Profession

3:30 – 4:45 p.m. Janet Ayers Academic Center 4090

The presentation will provide an overview of the fields of translation and interpreting as a profession. You will learn about the differences between both professions, skills and requirements, fields of specialization, as well as career opportunities in the language-services industry.

Viktorija Bilić, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor and Chair of Translation and Interpreting Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in Translation Studies from the University of Heidelberg, specializing in German, English, Spanish, and Croatian. She teaches workshops in German-English translation, literary translation, and computer-assisted tools. Her research focuses on historical translation and pedagogy. In the past five years, she has published two books, four articles, and presented at over two dozen national and international conferences.

Wednesday, September 25th



"You lousy-speaking immigrant": The Politics of Language in the Early Church

10:00 – 10:50 a.m. Janet Ayers Academic Center 4090

This lecture looks into the politics of language in the early church, particularly in Roman Corinth. In the first century, the city of Corinth received immigrants from many places. So, when the believers of Jesus in Corinth gathered together, they would likely have spoken their native languages. The hint of the multilingual situation of both the Corinthian church and the larger Roman Corinth can be found in 1 Corinthians 14. The issue of “tongues” is a multilingual struggle. It is a window by which we can see how early followers of Jesus dealt with the diversity of languages around them.

Ekaputra Tupamahu, Ph.D., is an associate professor of New Testament at Portland Seminary and George Fox University, earning his PhD from Vanderbilt University in 2019. His research focuses on the politics of language, race theory, postcolonial studies, and global Christianity, particularly the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement. Oxford University Press published his 2022 book *Contesting Languages*, and his work has appeared in various scholarly journals. Tupamahu has received several fellowships and serves on committees within the Society of Biblical Literature.