



RACE GENDER GROUP  
AUTHENTICITY  
INTERSECTIONALITY  
INDIVIDUAL  
GENERATION



## Identity Politics and the Study of Literature

A CUSO research workshop with:

**Annabel Kim (Harvard)**

**Laurent Dubreuil (Cornell, US)**

Date: March 25-26, 2022

Place: A-124, Universität Bern, UniS, Schanzeneckstrasse 1

To register go to: <https://english.cuso.ch/upcoming-activities>

## Identity Politics and the Study of Literature

The study of literature and culture in Western universities has come to be dominated by identity politics. For some this has brought liberation from normative binary ideologies, for others a crippling limitation of debate. Non-Western critics and writers have, moreover, argued that it feeds into neoliberal individualism, turning attention away from the structural inequalities of the global capitalist order.

For this workshop we would like to propose that rather than reading literature through identity politics, we read identity politics through literature. The engagement may be explicit or more implicit as in literature and other forms of cultural mediation from the past, which offer different notions of identity, individual and collective. Historically, literature can serve — and has served — both to assert and to deconstruct identities. We will discuss how we understand identity politics and how it has impacted our own work as well as how notions of identity have been (re)shaped by modern technologies and the influence this has had on group thinking. We will look at how literature and other forms of cultural mediation — from whatever historical moment — engage with ideas of identity as well as with concepts such as ‘authenticity’ and ‘intersectionality’. Our aim would be to create a space for graduates in any field of literary and cultural study to engage in discussion of these issues which are crucial not only for our research as intellectuals but also for how we live as political and ethical subjects. Our two guests, Laurent Dubreuil (Cornell) and Annabel Kim (Harvard), who have both published important work on the topic, take different approaches, which we hope will generate a constructive, stimulating exchange.

We invite all doctoral candidates to register for this event. We ask those who would like to make a short presentation (10-20 minutes) to write to us as soon as possible and at any rate by 15 March. This does not have to be a finished paper. It can take the form of a set of questions or problems you have encountered. Or you might want to bring along for discussion a text you have found problematic or difficult.

Thomas Claviez, [thomas.claviez@ens.unibe.ch](mailto:thomas.claviez@ens.unibe.ch)

Margaret Tudeau-Clayton, [mtudeau@fastmail.fm](mailto:mtudeau@fastmail.fm)

February 3, 2022.

**CUSO Workshop**  
**Identity politics and the study of literature**

Date: **Fr, 25. + Sa, 26. March 2022**  
Time: **10:00 – 18:00**  
Room: **A-124 (Room for 20+ with Beamer)**  
Place: **Universität Bern / UniS, Schanzeneckstrasse 1**

Friday, March 25

10:00 Arrival and welcome

10:15-10:45 Roundtable: participants introduce themselves and their research, focusing specifically on how ‘identity politics’ has impacted their work. Discussion of what we understand by ‘identity politics’.

Coffee

11:00-12:30 Talk by Laurent Dubreuil: “Beyond the Identity Principle: Metaphysics, Politics, Literature and the Arts” followed by questions and discussion

12:30-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:30 Seminar led by Laurent Dubreuil on precirculated reading material:  
<https://harpers.org/archive/2020/09/nonconforming/>

15:30-16:00 Tea break

16:00-17:45 Presentations and discussion of work by doctoral students

18:00 Apéro followed by dinner

Saturday, March 26

9:30-10:00 Coffee

10:00-11:30 Talk by Annabel Kim: “Reading Outside the Lines: Literature as Disidentification,” followed by questions and discussion

Pause

11:35-13:00 Seminar led by Annabel Kim on precirculated material: ‘Introduction’ to *Unbecoming Fictions*

13:00-14:30 Lunch

14:30-16:00 Presentations and discussion of work by doctoral students

16:00-16:30 Tea break

16:30-18:00. Roundtable discussion with both guests on issues raised by the workshop.

18:00 Farewell apéro