

Campus Theme 2020-21

Thinking Uncertainty

Oscillating between a still uncertain present and growing calls for a sooner-than-later return to "normal," the very idea of a "normal" or "everyday" is brought into question. What is "normal everyday life"? If it is characterized by routine and the familiarity of habit, is an "everyday" that refuses to settle into a stable routine even thinkable? What kind of "certainty" is it that is only certain that nothing is certain? What will be the "new normal," and what does that expression really mean? What should be the "new normal"? How is the certainty of uncertainty connected to freedom, political life, economic independence and interdependence, to our relationship to time and space, history, nature, and even our own bodies?

Perhaps the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus was prescient when he said, "No one ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and the person is not the same person." In other words, change is the essential feature of the universe. If change and vicissitude are part of our very existence, could it be that certainty and uncertainty are in our minds, not objective states of affairs?

In light of the unexpected circumstances we find ourselves in, and the opportunities it may open, we propose to continue exploration of the theme of **Uncertainty** for the academic year 2020-21. As we have with all our previous themes, we will continue exploration of this theme with a new sense of urgency and its significance for all aspects of our lives.

All events will be organized, scheduled, and coordinated with guidelines from the Provost's Office.

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