

**FALL 2003 FACULTY SEMINAR**  
**Directed by Jeffrey Nealon,**  
**Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Humanities**

The Center for the Humanities invites applications from faculty interested in participating in the Fall 2003 Faculty Seminar directed by Jeffrey Nealon, Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Humanities. Up to ten faculty members will be selected as Fellows to meet weekly to discuss selected readings on the seminar theme "Post-Postmodern: Globalization, Symbolic Capital, and Resistance." The seminar will meet Tuesdays from 4:15-6:00 p.m. A weekly lunch meeting will also be scheduled, and it is expected that the seminar group will continue their lunch meetings into the spring semester.

**Seminar Theme: Post-Postmodern: Globalization, Symbolic Capital, and Resistance**

In his famous essay "Postmodernism; or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," Fredric Jameson defines postmodernism as a cultural dominant, a kind of "logic" that cuts across economic, social, aesthetic, and cultural spheres alike. So, to get a handle on postmodern American aesthetics, one would need to examine the upshot of 1971's Smithsonian agreement (which officially took the dollar off the gold standard) alongside the more obvious cultural fallout of the Vietnam War or the Civil Rights movements. While we postmoderns have collectively gotten pretty good at discussing political and cultural movements in relation to aesthetic ones, we're still not so good at talking specifically about the complex relations among *economics* and various sites of cultural production. So the major task of this seminar will be to revisit some recent attempts to think through the specific relations between economics and cultural production today.

Remember that Jameson's "Postmodernism" essay was first published in 1984, when the Berlin Wall was still firmly in place, Reagan's new morning in America still dawning; the Dow Jones was struggling to run at 1200, and people were just beginning to talk about AIDS. The first Mac computer was introduced in 1984, with 286k of RAM. Wide access to the internet was still the stuff of science fiction. Freshman students coming to college this semester were likely born in 1984. We live, in other words, in a very different world from the early 80s, and the economic component of our "cultural dominant" is no longer 80s-style postmodernism or late capitalism.

The task of the seminar will be to construct a kind of genealogy of the present, trying to build a vocabulary to talk about "the new economy" (the triumph of symbolic and finance capital, post-Fordism, globalization, the centrality of stock and futures markets, virtual reality, the new surveillance techniques of the war on terrorism, etc.) and the new economy's complex relations to cultural production in the present moment, where capitalism seems nowhere near the point of its exhaustion, but moving handily across the globe—seldom "late capitalism," usually "just-in-time." Transnational capital has largely adopted the deconstructive "anti-essentialist" language of fluidity, hybridity, and the celebration of "difference": if the resistance offered by postmodernism was largely resistance to totalized essentialisms (static understandings of race, gender, nation, identity), it seems that vocabularies of resistance need to be recalibrated to deal with these new global realities.

Likely readings include essays or sections of books by folks like Jameson, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Gilles Deleuze, Susan Strange, Michel Foucault, Amitava Kumar, Doug Henwood, Richard Dienst, Robert JC Young, Gayatri Spivak, Emily Apter, Pierre Bourdieu, and Arjun Appadurai.

**Workshop:**

To allow faculty to prepare for the seminar, a week-long summer workshop will be scheduled for August 18-22. Faculty will meet to discuss readings suggested by Professor Nealon. A stipend of \$650 will be provided to participants.

**Application Procedure:**

The Center seeks participants from a broad range of disciplines and from all the divisions. To apply faculty are asked to submit a 1-2 paragraph description of their interest in the seminar topic.

**Deadline for Applications:**

Applications must be turned in by Friday, March 14, 2003 to Alan Schrift, Director of the Center for the Humanities.

**Review Committee:**

The Center for the Humanities Advisory Board will review the applications. Further information about the Center and Professor Nealon can be found at: <http://web.grinnell.edu/CentHumanities/index.html>