MEMO

To: Kathy Ensor, Chair, Rice University Senate Graduate Council  
From: Cary Wolfe, Founding Director, 3CT: Center for Critical and Cultural Theory  
Re: Graduate Certificate  
Date: April 19, 2016

I am submitting this application for approval of the Graduate Certificate in Critical and Cultural Theory, which 3CT has been awarding to students from various departments and schools since AY 2012-2013. To date, twenty-five students have participated in the Certificate program, six of whom are in the current cohort. Students who have been accepted into and are in good standing in a Rice graduate program may apply to the Certificate program. To date, we have served students in English, Religious Studies, Anthropology, Art History, and the School of Architecture. Once students complete the requirements, they are eligible to apply for a competitive one-time stipend of five thousand dollars. To date, we have awarded nineteen such stipends, together with roughly twenty thousand dollars (five thousand dollars per year) of support for graduate student research and travel related to conference participation and the like. 3CT has also lent support to a range of programming in different departments and units (including several conferences and symposia organized by graduate students), has collaborated with the Houston Cinema Arts Festival, the Contemporary Arts Museum of Houston, and other local organizations, and, in November 2015 was site host for the largest Humanities conference ever held on the Rice campus: the 29th Annual Meeting of the Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts, attended by over 400 delegates from around the world.

Purpose and Justification

3CT was founded to promote intellectual synergy and community among Rice faculty and graduate students whose work is informed by a deep and sustained engagement with critical and cultural theory and their ongoing development and permutations. Though housed in the School of Humanities, and drawing primarily on faculty and students from the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Architecture, the Center welcomes and encourages faculty and students in any field whose work is framed by an intensive engagement with critical and cultural theory and its methodological innovations. The program’s primary pedagogical aim is to help equip students to engage ambitious and synthetic research projects of social and cultural significance in a wide range of areas such as new media studies, race and ethnicity studies, science and technology studies, ecocriticism and environmental humanities, animal studies, medical humanities, transnationalism, art and architecture, psychoanalysis, and political and social theory--just to name a few of the more established pursuits in which a strong theoretical background is indispensable. The Center is therefore committed to the view that rigorous theoretical training enables empowering reflection upon the dominant forms of disciplinary norms, practices, and protocols and their historically and socially constituted nature. The Center thus aims to strengthen and enrich how its participants understand and relate to their own “home” disciplines.

Resources

3CT and its Certificate Program are supported for the foreseeable future by the School of Humanities, which provides annually: 1) Funds for up to ten, one-time stipends of 5,000 dollars for those who complete the Certificate Requirements; 2) 5,000 dollars per year to award to graduate students for
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research and research-related travel (conference presentations, etc.); 3) 8,000 dollars per year to cover expenses related to presenting the Fall and Spring Colloquia required of Certificate Students (travel expenses and honoraria for visiting speakers, etc.); 4) Annual S and E budget for the Center and its operations; 5) Salary and benefits for full-time Center Coordinator Thien Le.

Requirements

The Certificate requirements were established in 2012 after lengthy consultation with Nick Shumway, Dean of Humanities; Sarah Whiting, Dean of Architecture; Rosemary Hennessy, then-Director of the Center for Women, Gender and Sexuality; Paula Sanders, then-Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies; and various Department chairs. Given the enormous breadth of material that is covered by the designation “critical and cultural theory,” it was decided that a required core course or sequence (such as that found in the more restricted domain of the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality) would be inappropriately reductive and generic. The Program design was therefore structured to encourage students in a range of disciplines to pursue theory-intensive coursework inside and outside their home departments, and to explore the non-generic relationship between the conceptual resources made available by critical and cultural theory and the specific disciplines in which the students are engaged.

1) Status: The Certificate program is open only to students already enrolled and in good standing in a Rice graduate degree program.

2) Application: Students must apply for admission to the Certificate Program by the end of the registration period for Fall semester each year. The application should consist of a vita, a 2-3 page single-spaced description of the student’s research interests, of the primary theoretical commitments that frame those interests, and how the research intervenes in the current state of critical and cultural theory. A brief (one to two paragraph) letter of endorsement from the faculty member directing the student’s research is also required. Only students in good academic standing in their home departments may apply. Students will be informed promptly early in the Fall semester each year of their acceptance, and students not accepted may reapply once to the Certificate program.

3) Coursework: Students must complete four theory-intensive graduate seminars of their choice. Students must submit to the Center for approval a syllabus for each theory-intensive course, and they may do so at any time during a three-year period that begins with their acceptance into the program. The Center recommends, however, that students interested in applying for the Certificate seek approval for courses as they are taken. Each course must be completed with a grade of at least A-, and required core courses for other graduate degree or certificate programs, such as English 600 or SWGS 501, may not count toward the total of four courses. Elective courses used to fulfill requirements for other graduate degree or certificate programs at Rice may count toward the total of four courses. Transfer credit from other programs will not be accepted. Courses that have been submitted and approved to date are listed in Attachment A at the end of this memo; steering committee members and participating faculty are listed in Attachment B at the end of this memo.

4) Colloquium: Students must also participate in an annual colloquium, which consists of a lecture and seminar given by visiting scholars, typically by a different scholar in the Spring and Fall semesters of each year (that is, two lectures and two seminars per year, total). To accommodate a broad range of student interests, the colloquium will not be dedicated to a particular theme or approach each year, and the
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requirement need not be completed in one academic year. It must, however, be completed within three years from the date of acceptance into the program.

5) Certificate: After students have completed all of these requirements within three years from the date of acceptance into the program, they will be awarded the certificate as long as they remain in good academic standing in their home department.

6) Competitive Stipend: Students who have earned the Certificate may compete for the Center’s annual one-time stipends of $5000. The Center may make up to ten awards each academic year. The Center will award competitive stipends at the end of each academic year on the basis of the quality of certificate awardees’ applications, their academic performance in the four required seminars, the quality of their participation in the annual Colloquium, and other evidence of scholarly distinction in activities related to the Center’s mission (such as the presentation of conference papers and the like).

7) Specific Language for General Announcements
Program Learning Outcomes for the Graduate Certificate in Critical and Cultural Theory:

Upon completion of the Graduate Certificate, students will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of a range of approaches in contemporary critical and cultural theory
2. Articulate the relationship between concepts and methodologies drawn from critical and cultural theory and the current state of the specific discipline(s) in which they work
3. Incorporate concepts and methodologies from critical and cultural theory into their own intellectual and academic practice in forms such as oral and written exchange, conference papers, academic publications, and dissertation research and writing.

Requirements for the Graduate Certificate in Critical and Cultural Theory:

The Center for Critical and Cultural Theory promotes intellectual synergy and community among Rice faculty and graduate students whose work is informed by a deep and sustained engagement with critical and cultural theory and their ongoing development and permutations. The Certificate in Critical and Cultural Theory welcomes and encourages students in any field whose work is framed by an intensive engagement with critical and cultural theory and its methodological innovations. The Certificate Program is committed to the view that rigorous theoretical training enables empowering reflection upon the dominant forms of disciplinary norms, practices, and protocols and their historically and socially constituted nature. The Certificate thus aims to strengthen and enrich how its participants understand and relate to their own “home” disciplines. The Graduate Certificate in Critical and Cultural Theory is not a free-standing program; in addition to fulfilling the requirements outlined below, candidates are required to be in good academic standing in the graduate program to which they have been admitted. Further information is available from the office of the Center for Critical and Cultural Theory. For graduate program requirements, see the relevant Department or School listings. For general university requirements, see “Graduate Degrees” in this publications.

Application Procedures and Requirements:
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ATTACHMENT A

Courses approved to date for theory-intensive seminar requirements:
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<table>
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<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
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<tr>
<td>ANTH</td>
<td>The Anthropology of the Historical Imagination</td>
<td>J.D. Faubion</td>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
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<td>ANTH</td>
<td>Anthropologies of Nature</td>
<td>A. Ballestero S.</td>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
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<td>ANTH</td>
<td>The Anthropology of Ethics</td>
<td>J.D. Faubion</td>
<td>Spring 2013</td>
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<td>ANTH</td>
<td>Ontologies, Vitalities &amp; Things</td>
<td>C. Howe</td>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
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<td>ANTH</td>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>D. Boyer</td>
<td>Spring 2012</td>
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<td>ANTH</td>
<td>History and Imagination</td>
<td>J.D. Faubion</td>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
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<td>ANTH</td>
<td>The Anthropology of Ethics</td>
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<td>ANTH</td>
<td>Illness, Disability and the Gendered Body</td>
<td>Z.H. Wool</td>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
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<td>Theories of Modernity/Postmodernity</td>
<td>J.D. Faubion</td>
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<td>ANTH</td>
<td>Phenomenological Anthropology</td>
<td>D. Boyer</td>
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<td>ARCH</td>
<td>Designing the Social: Architecture and Collective Association</td>
<td>S. Colman</td>
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<td>Formalist Practices</td>
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<td>ARCH</td>
<td>Formalist Practices: Sloterdijk (...or, Why Foams Do Not Look Like Foams)</td>
<td>J.J. May</td>
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<td>ARCH</td>
<td>The City Theoretically Considered</td>
<td>L. Lerup</td>
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<td>ARCH</td>
<td>The Cullinan Seminar: CITIZEN</td>
<td>S. Whiting</td>
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<td>ARCH</td>
<td>Present/Future Seminar</td>
<td>A. Pope</td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
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<td>ENGL</td>
<td>Literature and Visual Arts</td>
<td>A. Regier</td>
<td>Spring 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL</td>
<td></td>
<td>J. Campana</td>
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<td>ENGL 532</td>
<td>Early Modern Materialisms</td>
<td>S. Ellenwieg</td>
<td>Spring 2013</td>
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<td>ENGL 537</td>
<td>Victorian Nonhumans</td>
<td>T. Morton</td>
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<td>ENGL 570</td>
<td>What is African-American Literature</td>
<td>N. Waligora-Davis</td>
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<td>ENGL 577</td>
<td>Emergent Media Theories</td>
<td>K. Ostherr</td>
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<td>Cultural Studies: Contemporary Literature, Culture, and Politics</td>
<td>S. Lurie</td>
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<td>ENGL 583</td>
<td>Reading Material: Affect Theory</td>
<td>R. Hennessy</td>
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<td>Studies in Literature and Other Disciplines: Ecology and Philosophy</td>
<td>T. Morton</td>
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<td>ENGL 592</td>
<td>Modernisms: Sights, Texts, Sound</td>
<td>J. Roof</td>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
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<td>ENGL 594</td>
<td>Global Fictions: What is the Contemporary</td>
<td>B. Joseph</td>
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<td>ENGL 596</td>
<td>Genealogies of American Romanticism</td>
<td>C. Wolfe</td>
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<td>ENGL 599</td>
<td>Studies in Literary Theory: (Un)Thinking the (Bio)Political</td>
<td>C. Wolfe</td>
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<td>ENGL 599</td>
<td>Studies in Literary Theory: Systems Theory</td>
<td>C. Wolfe</td>
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<td>ENGL 599</td>
<td>Studies in Literary Theory: Avant-gardes, Apparatus, and Aesthetics</td>
<td>J. Roof</td>
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<td>HART 504</td>
<td>Art, Architecture and Nature</td>
<td>F. Lopez-Duran</td>
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<td>HART 566</td>
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<td>F. Lopez-Duran</td>
<td>Spring 2013</td>
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Latin American Bodies: On Modernism

From the Sublime to the Sustainable: Art, Architecture, and Nature

F. Lopez-Duran Fall 2015

HART 568

Theory and Methods of Art History

L. Costello Fall 2012

HART 590

Before and After Queer: Sexualities in Theory, History, and Performance

Campana/ Roof FALL11/SPR12

HURC 502

Rice Seminar on New Materialism

S. Ellenzweig Fall 2013

HURC 602

Readings in Africana Thought

E. Bongmba Fall 2012

RELI 535

Bible and the Brain

A. DeConick Spring 2013

RELI 574

The Bible and the Brain Seminar

A. DeConick Fall 2013

RELI 353/574

The History of Religious Schools

J. Kripal Spring 2015

RELI 488/588

Sociology of Religion

E. Ecklund Spring 2013

SOCI 501

ATTACHMENT B

Steering Committee:

Judith Roof, William Shakespeare Chair, Department of English
James Faubion, Radoslav Tsanoff Chair, Department of Anthropology
Timothy Morton, Rita Shea Guffey Chair, Department of English

List of Participating Faculty:

Andrea Ballestero S., Anthropology
April DeConick, Religion
Albert Pope, Architecture
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Alexander Regier, English
Betty Joseph, English
Cymene Howe, Anthropology
Cary Wolfe, English
Dominic Boyer, Anthropology
Elias Bongmba, Religion
Elaine Ecklund, Sociology
Fabiola Lopez-Duran, Art History
Joseph Campana, English
James Faubion, Anthropology
John J. May, Architecture (Visiting)
Jeffrey Kripal, Religion
Judith Roof, English
Kirsten Ostherr, English
Leo Costello, Art History
Lars Lerup, Architecture
Nicole Waligora-Davis, English
Rosemary Hennessy, English
Scott Colman, Architecture
Sarah Ellenzweig, English
Susan Lurie, English
Sarah Whiting, Architecture
Timothy Morton, English
Zoe Wool, Anthropology