

BILDUNG

THE HUMANITIES, ARTS, AND SCIENCES



BILDUNG: THE HUMANITIES, ARTS, AND SCIENCES - BEGINNING LECTURES –

This is a series of lectures in the arts, humanities, and sciences. They are all *beginning* lectures. Beginnings in different ways: introductory lectures to the craft of science; to the beginnings of philosophy; on what art can teach democracy; on the relationship between neurons and evolution; on the sociological imagination; to Bildung and the liberal arts; on the afterlife of extinct species and dance; on Anthropocene and capitalism; on discriminatory knowledge and affective learning; on film, personal narratives and history; on the relation between fiction and science, ecology, and poetry. In both form and content, all these lectures are concerned with the beginning of a journey of learning and unlearning. The lectures are delivered by practitioners in the humanities, sciences, and arts.

This series of lecturers is designed to facilitate conversations – not only between the lecturer and the audience but between the invited speakers – in two ways, primarily. Since they are beginning lectures, the meeting takes place before the subdivisions of specialization might otherwise have inhibited cross-communication and understanding. These lecturers thus invite us to conversations across fields of expertise in regard to the lectures' *content*. Lines of connection can be drawn and possibly new constellations formed. The second conversation is concerned with the lecture as a *form*. The lecture form raises questions about how we narrate for learning. What does the lecture form share with fiction? What is it that we do when we lecture? And what can we learn from each other in respect to this technique?

The word "lecture" comes from Medieval Latin *lectura* "a reading," from Latin *lectus*, past participle of *legere* "to read" (OED). Lectures bring together not only the oral with the written but often include illustrations and demonstrations of various kinds. There are different ways that a lecture engages the audience. A lecture is a type of performance. It is a report on new findings to the general public or an audience of peers. Keynote addresses often frame academic conferences. There are also prestigious lecture series to commemorate one thing or another. The lecture as a pedagogical teaching form in the university has of late been questioned, however, in favor of other forms of active learning.

The proposition behind this meeting is that the essence of lecture is to animate curiosity, to introduce an audience to something they hadn't thought of before, or to thinking and acting as such. With their (inter)disciplinary tools the speakers will look to the skies, the cosmic calendar and Kepler, geological time, Plato's *Protagoras*, the brain and its faculties, archives and history, the stage, behind the camera, at words and the fauna, to animate such imagination, and possibly new ways of seeing. These lectures will invite the listener on a journey so that even when these lectures look back, all of them point forwards – toward new horizons – and as such, potentially inspire how we think of ourselves and the universe – both individually and collectively – in line with how the Bildung tradition has evolved.

PROGRAM

Location: University West, Gustava Melins Gata 2
461 32 Trollhättan, Sweden. Zoom link: <https://hv-se.zoom.us/j/4054598150>
Date. Tuesday 4/10 - Friday 7/10, 2022.

Tuesday 4/10

Science, Philosophy, and Religion

Live workshop in English

Room: Albertsalen F104. Zoom link: <https://hv-se.zoom.us/j/4054598150>

12:45-13:00: Introduction

13.00-14.30

Klas Modin – Professor of Mathematics, Chalmers and Gothenburg University.
"To Craft Knowledge – a Beginning Lecture for Engineering Students"

14.45-16.15

Stefanos Kourkoulakos – Independent scholar, translator, and teacher of Ancient Greek thought, art, and history
"Beginning as Enduring and Fleeting Deed, or the How and Why of Philosophy in Plato's Protagoras"

16.30-18.00

Sven Tengstam – Senior Lecturer in Economics, University West.
"Money, Christianity, and Economics: Relationships and Tensions"

Wednesday 5/10

Literature and Art

Hybrid workshop in English

Room: F131. Zoom: <https://hv-se.zoom.us/j/4054598150>

13.00-14.30

Catherine Toal – Professor of Literature, Dean of Bard College, Berlin.
"The Novel at the End of the World"

14.45-16.15

Adania Shibli – Writer and scholar
"Literary Cracks"

16.30-18.00

Salad Hilowle – Artist and filmmaker
"To Make the Archive Visible - A Lecture about Research, Art- and Image Making"

Thursday 6/10

Lecture, Performance, and Moving Image

Live workshop in English

Room: Albertsalen F104. Zoom link <https://hv-se.zoom.us/j/4054598150>

13.00-14.30

Karl Dahlquist – Senior lecturer in the Social Sciences, University West

"**Framing Aby Warburg: A Beginning Lecture in the Anthropocene**"

14.45-16.15

Lindsay Goss – Assistant Professor in Theater Studies and practicing theater artist, Temple University.

"**How to Begin Again: The Actor's Political Pedagogy**"

16.30-18.00

David Wingate – Dramaturg, script writer, researcher

"**A Film and TV Dramaturg at Work - A Six Hour Educational Film Series and the History of the Modern Individual**"

Friday 7/10

Theme: Society, Politics, and the Future

Hybrid workshop in English

Room: F131. <https://hv-se.zoom.us/j/4054598150>

13.00-14.30

Tuba Inal – Associate Professor of Political Science, University West.

"**International Law and Politics – a Beginning Lecture about Norms and Change**"

14.45-16.15

Ingmar Solty – Senior Fellow for Peace and Security Policy, Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung

"**From the Pandemic and Russia's War in Ukraine to a New Bloc Confrontation? Futuring in the World-Historical Post-Interregnum**"

16.30-18.00

Concluding conversation and what to do next

ABSTRACTS

To craft knowledge - an opening lecture for engineering students Klas Modin

Our species' hallmark is a vast body of extrasomatic knowledge accumulated down generations. Primordially, the knowledge is transferred verbally; via stories, instructions, or, more recently, lectures. Here I present an opening lecture intended for newly admitted engineering students. The purpose is to evoke their inspiration for the coming years of studies. The aim is to compel them to reflect on facts inferred in childhood; there is so much knowledge around us that we seldom or never contemplate. The premise is that engineering and science, from prehistorical to modern, stem from a craftsmanship of knowledge. Since the dawn of humanity, we have learned how to craft knowledge. And how to entangle it in myths and legends, for better or worse.

Beginning as enduring and fleeting deed, or the how and why of philosophy in Plato's *Protagoras* Stefanos Kourkoulakos

A silent author, Plato, conceived of, and practiced, philosophy as pedagogy in a way that remains as distinct, interesting, fruitful, and radical today as it was in his time and place. In a fundamental sense, he began philosophy by crafting it in dialogue-form with subtly radicalized content and did so in each and every one of his works that I have read.

It may strike one as odd and obviously false to speak of a Platonic dialogue, the *Protagoras* in this case, in conjunction with the beginning of philosophy, that is, something taken as straightforward and settled long before Plato wrote anything. Didn't philosophy (in the West, at least) begin with Thales and the Ionians in the 6th C BCE? However, to accept this as the beginning of philosophy is to assume that philosophy has a fixed beginning, one beginning (in the singular), a beginning in time. It is also to assume that a beginning is necessarily that which comes chronologically prior or first and having come first it is already consummated, a thing of the past destined to remain past and incapable of occurring again.

This paper will problematize the common-sense notion of beginning, as well as the relation of philosophy to it and will do so through the prism of Plato's *Protagoras* which uniquely offers itself to the task, as it is meticulously constructed to re-create a complex and multifaceted environment which is hostile to, and ignorant of, philosophy, an environment in which power, competition for power, and service to power dominate, an environment in which philosophy speaks socially otherwise in ways which fail to register most of the time, acts without speaking of its acts, and claims nothing for itself.

Philosophy, as it emerges and stands its ground in Plato's *Protagoras*, is unlike other things that have begun, such as sciences, crafts, or social and historical formations and processes. Thus, its beginning, or rather, its relation to beginning cannot be expected to be like others.

It will be shown that the beginning of philosophy, i) can never be one, ii) can never be merely in the past, iii) can never not be conscious of itself as a beginning, iv) can never fall short of exemplifying the specificity of philosophy in all its essential aspects, v) can never conform to antecedent or subsequent norms of intellectual propriety, and vi) can never be just the beginning of philosophy, but at the same time must also be a personal, as well as a social and political beginning.

Money, Christianity, and Economics: Relationship and Tension Sven Tengstam

"... For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Tim. 6:10). Many have thought of the tension between the religious life and the economic life. In this beginning lecture, I will present a personal reflection on this. I will first rise the question, "Does money actually matter as much as you think?". What wiggle room do I have inside the current economic system? In East German in the 1980s there was a discussion in some circles called "*Kirche im Sozialismus*", what can the church do (and what can it be) in a socialistic society. To day in most countries in the world the relevant question is "*Kirche im Kapitalismus*". Or, on a personal level, "*Sven im Kapitalismus*". But does it really matter whether I live in a socialistic society or in a capitalistic society? Or how much does it matter? Does it matter as much as you think? And no matter if the system is socialist or capitalist, money is still there. The economy is there. But, once again, "Does money actually matter as much as you think?". What wiggle room do I have?

After discussing how much money matters, I would like to discuss a certain aspect of the Invisible Hand. Adam Smith's idea is that if everybody acts in their own interest this will benefit society in total. In the subdiscipline of Environmental Economics a concept called "external effects" is used. In the presence of external effects, we need to help the invisible

hand. If a good has negative external effects (i.e., gasoline) the government should impose a tax on this good, and if a good has positive external effects (i.e., vaccine) the government should subsidize this good. The tax per liter gasoline shall be exactly as high as the environmental damage caused by this liter gasoline. It might be very difficult to find out the value/cost of the environmental damage, but let's leave that for now.

Now, if I learn that the government has imposed a CO₂ tax that is of the well-balanced correct size, and that this CO₂ tax covers all sectors, what does that mean for me?

One possible answer is that I don't have to think about CO₂ anymore, it is all taken care of by the tax. I can buy as much gasoline as I wish. If there had not been any tax helping the invisible hand with this negative external effect, I had had to try to 'do all the math in my own head'. I had had to try to figure out myself how to balance my need to use my car versus the damage my ride does by adding to global warming. Now this is all taken care of. The negative external effect is included in the price. The tax saves time for me, and I can focus my energy on something else.

But another possible answer is that there is something problematic here. It looks at first sight very efficient that the government do the thinking for me. I don't have to care for the environment, the government does it for me. But what does that do to my mind in the long run? If my empathy and my ethics is not needed, if I am encouraged to act as if the invisible hand (with the help of the government) solves everything, then..., yes, then what?

If my empathy and my ethics is not needed, then I can not live a Christian life. When Cain asks God "... am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9) the answer is Yes. And as I understand it, I cannot pass on this task to the invisible hand together with the government. I, myself, am supposed to be my brother's keeper. And the following lines have a clear message: "... you shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Lev. 19:18). "... Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." (Matt. 25:40)

The Novel at the End of the World

Catherine Toal

In his 1983 book *Critique of Cynical Reason*, Peter Sloterdijk describes the condition of the relatively affluent, mildly disaffected but not discontented subject of Western society: as someone who works in a job they tolerate, who pursues various leisure activities, samples (at least in culinary form) a diversity of cultures, takes holidays, wonders if they should be more politically engaged, travel more etc. In his 2015 novel, *Submission*, Michel Houellebecq refers (in the voice of the literary researcher who is the main protagonist) to literature as a form that is "dying before our very eyes." Rather than "dying" however, the novel seems to have found a way to evoke the condition Sloterdijk outlined. This state is a result of a sense of *Alternativlosigkeit*, further intensified by the collapse of Soviet Communism and by the almost carceral quality of relative Western privilege, as a fortress-protected insulation from a world filled with what Étienne Balibar has called "death zones." My paper looks at the way in which contemporary European novels portray this quintessential middle-class Western European position. Whereas in the nineteenth-century novel of education, as Franco Moretti has argued, the narrative form of the genre staged the struggle for legitimacy that the rising protagonist of capitalism had to pursue, the contemporary equivalent shows a 'flat' surface, focused on observing 'types' and standard dilemmas, and suggesting the impossibility of learning and development. In compensation for this undramatic trajectory, and in order to justify their often epigrammatic quality, the novels in question culminate in sensational violence, which seems to serve as a stand-in for the social and global inequalities that they do not explore. My focus will be on two novels that have achieved the status of popular works of 'high literature' in their respective contexts: Leïla Slimani's *Chanson Douce* (2016), and Juli Zeh's *Unterleuten* (2016).

Literary crack

Adania Shibli

A literary crack is treated as a rupture in an orderly language, an opening that frees language from pure expression. A literary crack may subsequently usher a new position from where to relate to language. It is a gap that allows the imaginative, the hallucinatory, the illicit, the silent and the silenced to seep in.

Approaching language and literature as a fragile terrain--including the silences and inhibitions that a reality dominated by colonial violence may besiege them with--generates a certain sensibility. Sensibility to literary cracks and linguistic brokenness may allow considering beginnings that are not in response to the present, rather treating the present as a moving circle that carries within it the potential for infinite diametrical lines to emerge, and which are unrelated to any center.

To Make the Archive Visible - A Lecture about Research, Art- and Image Making"

Salad Hilowle

TBA

Framing Aby Warburg: A Beginning Lecture in the Anthropocene

Karl Dahlquist

This beginning lecture introduces the audience to the art and cultural historian, Aby Warburg, as well as to the role of art in an era of rapid species extinction. To that end, we will take a closer look at the 1923 slide lecture, “Pictures from the area of the Pueblo Indians in North America,” that Warburg gave at the Binswangers Klinik Bellevue in Kreuzlingen, when he still was a patient there. One of the conditions agreed upon for Warburg’s release from the clinic was to give a coherent lecture on a scholarly topic of his own choice. As will be addressed, the slide lecture served a therapeutic role in his mental health recovery.

But more than serving a medical purpose (Warburg left the clinic the following year, albeit in his own words, as a “ghost”), I will build on Phillippe-Alain Michaud’s (2002) suggestion that the slide lecture was “a likely origin of the atlas Warburg undertook right after leaving the clinic.” The atlas project was composed of visual material assembled on large black clothed boards, called *Mnemosyne* (ancient Greek for memory). The aim was to map out the “afterlife” of images from antiquity that returns and “reappear and are reanimated in the art and cosmology of later times” (Christopher Johnson, 2015). I will suggest that the slide lecture is a *passage à l’acte* into what Michaud calls the *Mnemosyne Atlas*’s “non-discursive form”. And that if we are to study the slide lecture as a likely origin of the choreographed memory atlases and get closer to the core of the late Warburg’s iconography, we must look at the photos, and the sequence in which they were shown, and ask, what kind of thinking was enacted, and moved that day?

The slide lecture centered on three Hopi dances and is comprised of photos from Warburg’s trip to the Southwest of the United States in 1895-1896. It is the first and largely overlooked dance at San Ildefonso that this lecture concentrates on. Warburg introduced this dance as “antelope” or “pure animal dance”. The dancers are said to *mimic* the antelope’s movement and expressions. If there is mimicry of animal expression and movement in the motion schema of the dance, the question presents itself: who or what dances? Is the antelope dancing the dancers? Further complexity is added to these questions by Warburg’s additional observation that captures one of the central predicaments of living in an era of rapid mass extinction. Primarily due to market hunting, the American antelope (pronghorn) population fell from an estimated thirty-five million at the beginning of the century to a little over ten thousand at the time of Warburg’s visit to New Mexico. Besides the remaining traces of the antelope in the ecosystem, the regionally extinct pronghorn antelope was *remembered* in the dance – dancing ghosts – and was perhaps, moving the dancers still. I will propose that the slide lecture help us to begin sketching an atlas over the afterlife of extinct animals or ecosystems.

Looking for the traces of the extinct antelope in the dance also allows for the investigation of whether the *memory* captured in the Atlas shared something with the remnants of the antelope in the dance captured by the slides. The hypothesis advanced here is that the Atlas can be understood as a choreographed dance, expressing a moving memory or being in time similar to that of the antelope dancing in the Pueblo.

How to begin again: the actor’s political pedagogy

Lindsay Goss

The actor is always beginning again. With each performance, a world that perpetually exists is made anew. The actor pretends not to know how it will all end—indeed, she pretends not to know it will end at all. Typically, if we are the audience to this pretense, we are meant to ignore its repetitive recreation. But the fact of the actor complicates this project. The set, the lights, the sound, the costumes—all these elements can simply reappear, can index and signify without needing to account for also being otherwise, but the actor knowingly reoccupies a fiction. The actor speaks words that are not her own, and in doing so claims, paradoxically, that they might be. She takes action to prevent the inevitable (as prescribed by the script). She proceeds as if her time in this world will extend beyond the acts and scenes written. She refuses to accept reality as it is given.

If we take the actor at her word—that she *is* her character, that this time and place exist—we commit an act that is at once absurd and exceedingly familiar. It is the foundational contract of the theater, that, as spectators, we will suspend our disbelief: the obviously false we will accept, for a time, as true; we will pretend the fake is real. Because of this, the theatrical condition reveals our capacity to see and hear differently, which we do by refusing the terms that typically govern our perception of the relationship between bodies, words, and actions. This person in front of us can be someone else entirely, and she can come into legitimate possession of words that are not her own.

By demanding, over and over, and from within a state of crisis, that we contemplate a reality other than our own, the actor looks a great deal like the activist who must seek recognition and redress on terms other than those set by the state. Like the actor, this activist—whose lived reality is denied or invalid in some critical way, whether Black, queer, indigenous, poor, non-male, or so on—knows that the success of her cause lies in persuading an audience to see and

hear *differently* than the state. She calls on the spectator to reject the state's right to grant or refuse the legibility of grievance and injury based on the "proper" appearance of the injured or aggrieved.

In this beginning lecture, I will use the figure of the actor to propose theatricality as a way of understanding the function of the state's power, and as the site of its potential weakness. Placing anti-theatrical literature in conversation with Adam Smith's theory of moral sentiments, Hannah Arendt's uneasy distinction between the liar and the political actor, and Ranciere's discussion of equality and emancipated spectatorship, I offer "acting lessons" for those of us who feel the need to *begin again*.

A Film and television dramaturg at work, a 6 hour educational film series and the history of the modern individual

David Wingate

This is a beginning lecture on how a dramaturg work in film and television. The case in point is a series developed about the history of individualism. The dramaturg is a sort of consultant, but can be a full member of a film development and production team. For me a film director is a film-maker who is good at the directing bit. A film script-writer is a film-maker who is good at the writing bit. A film producer a film maker good at the producing bit. And so on. Then dramaturg is a film-maker who is good at the dramaturgy bit.

I supposed this means the dramaturg is an expert in film tellings, how the film is told. Tellings is deliberately vague, very much plural, suggesting there are countless ways to tell films. It also assumes that there are theatre tellings, radio tellings, lecture tellings, poetry reading tellings, dance tellings, music tellings and so one. Each of these distinct performative media have their own ways of telling.

Let me also introduce the subject of this lecture around which the dramaturgic telling is discussed and performed: a film series about individualism. The way we are taught to think of ourselves as individuals seems natural and normal, the only proper way to do it. But it is not. Across the vast diversity of human cultures, past and present, believing yourself to be an individual, is historically very recent and very unusual. There is no evidence that we "are" individuals – it just a way of thinking and surely just one way among many. If you believe it, then it seems true. But, surely this is a fair definition of a superstition – believing something with no evidence to back it up. So is our belief that we are individuals a superstition?

Researchers studying individuality assume that a good deal less than half of the people living in the world today believe themselves to be individuals. All the others think differently. But how? Some of you are probably familiar with the criticism and re-evaluation of individualism, but for me it is quite new and I am enthusiastic about these new insights. A sexologist wrote: Human beings have always had sex, so, in a sense, human sex has no history. But thinking about - and performing sex is and has been different in different human cultures and changes over time. So that does have a history. We could say: Human personhood has no history. All human languages, past and present, as far as we know, have had and have words for "I" and "Me". But thinking about and performing personhood is different in different cultures, different social classes and changes over time. So that does have a history. In that history, where, when, why and how was the individual concept of personhood invented will be explored in this lecture through the workings of a dramaturg on the topic for a tv-series.

International Law and Politics – a Beginning Lecture about Norms and Change

Tuba Inal

International law, a term coined by Jeremy Bentham in the 18th century, as the law establishing an order between separate political communities, goes back to 2000BC in the form of bilateral treaties. Its current form, modern international law, however, as it originated in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries, took its basic premise from the emergence of the nation-state system as the law governing the relations among sovereigns. While lawyers or formalist international jurists took an idealist or pragmatist approach to international law assuming that law is normative, devoid of politics, and its creation and application follows facts and objective legal criteria, critical approaches developed both within and outside of legal studies. Critical legal studies and realist international relations theory are two such approaches that consider international law as inherently political, as the tool of the powerful states (or other powerful actors) both in its creation and application hence questioning its ability to function as "law."

As a constructivist international relations scholar, I took another route: Seeing law as the realm of political contestation where it can turn into a tool to fight power rather than being reduced to a tool in the hands of the powerful. The making of the law becomes an important question at that juncture since the application of the law is inherently connected to how it is made and what it says: on the basis of which norms/whose norms/whose power are the laws created and why? What is the motivation of different actors pushing for more law-making, more codification, more

concrete legalization resembling a “rule of law” in different areas? Will it be possible to use law against power (or using the power of law against structural and coercive power) if we know the history and the normative basis of the law?

This lecture will particularly focus on these questions in relation to international human rights law and humanitarian law in the context of sovereignty. Asking, how and why do states make human rights and humanitarian law constraining themselves in term of their treatment of individuals? Through which mechanisms and processes, on the basis of whose norms and ideas? What other actors are involved in these processes, in what ways and ultimately can we see the possibility of law being a progressive tool constraining the sovereign state instead of a tool to justify its exercise of power?

From the Pandemic and Russia’s War in Ukraine to a New Bloc Confrontation? Futuring in the World-Historical Post-Interregnum

Ingar Solt:

Over the past one and a half decades, the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung’s Institute for Critical Social Analysis has developed a new analytical framework called “Transformation Research.” As a methodological approach it seeks to combine theoretical analysis and political practice identifying global, European, national and local relationships of forces and historical configurations in order to outline possible scenarios of historical change. The goal of this kind of research is to enable social actors and progressive forces to develop their respective strategies and to bring forward a new and comprehensive politics of connecting, i.e., connecting social and political forces – such as the trade-union movement, the climate justice movement, the LGBTQIA movements etc. – which otherwise might pursue their struggles independent from or even against each other. The idea of “Transformation Research” is to pave the way for a new approach which we call “Futuring,” i.e. the making of the future. This kind of “Futuring” follows the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung’s democratically socialist orientation and is engrained in its work with a staff of more than 500 scholars and activists and 20 global offices operating in more than 80 countries of the world. Together the goal is to identify realpolitik scenarios and political projects for radical change in today’s capitalist societies and beyond them towards a post-capitalist society.

In 2011, the Institute for Critical Social Analysis published a widely circulated study written by more than a dozen scholars, including Michael Brie, Dieter Klein, Mario Candeias, Christina Kaindl and many others, identifying possible exit-strategies and scenarios from the global financial crisis, which was understood in Gramscian terms as an “interregnum,” i.e., a historical moment of uncertain transitions. Three possible scenarios were identified: authoritarian capitalism, green capitalism, and green socialism. In 2019, i.e., prior to the bio-economic (Coronavirus) pandemic and Russia’s war in Ukraine, this original study was revisited by myself in light of real-historical events. The result was a long paper called “The World of Tomorrow” (published in German), identifying six dimensions of a multiple crisis of the world coming out of the global financial and the Eurozone crisis and five scenarios. Based on this research, my presentation in Gothenburg is going to present my newest work on how both the pandemic as well as Russia’s war in Ukraine are impacting the potential scenarios of the future. My thesis will be that we have entered a new historic moment which could be described as a limited post-interregnum in which several trajectories of future history have been cut off, including that of a Green New Deal multilateralism. The analysis of what seems to be an emerging new world order of U.S./China bloc confrontation with military-geopolitical, high-technological, supply and value chains, financial and strong ideological dimensions – “democracy vs. authoritarianism” – etc. will be developed to identify possible scenarios in favor of peace and security, social justice and the goal to prevent the impending climate catastrophe.