This seminar asks the following question: What are the tenets of radical empiricism and how do these inform political theories of pluralism? We will explore possible answers by investigating into the nature of relational thinking, what it is, and what it offers political theory.

Some themes for our collaborative explorations of relational thinking include the following:

- ontology of relations
- ontological pluralism
- pluralist aesthetics
- atomism & stoicheia
- associationism & corpuscular theory (i.e., assemblages)
- pluralism and solidarity
- mimesis/anti-mimesis

Grades:
30% = Weekly Writing Assignment
50% = Final Writing Assignment
20% = weekly, in class, participation

**Weekly Writing:** Each week you are responsible for keeping a journal entry of your curiosities that will take the following form:

1. Identify 3 passages in the readings that raise the issues of radical empiricism and/or radical pluralism.
2. Do a close reading of these passages that articulates a political theory of relational thinking and establishes your contributions to our explorations of theories of radical empiricism and radical pluralism.

In other words, for each of the weekly assignments you are expected to reflect on and attempt an answer to our seminar question: *What are the tenets of radical empiricism and how do these inform political theories of pluralism?*

**Final Writing Assignment:**

Below is a list of works that address contemporary issues of populism, pluralism, and power. Now that you have spent a Quarter reading and exploring theories of radical
empiricism and radical pluralism produce an essay (of no more than 9000 words) that 
assesses 3 of these works and how/if they may or may not be related to this newly 
articulated genre of political theory? This will count towards 60% of your final grade.

Some questions that may help your critical exploration include the following:

- What are the strengths of the works for political theory research?
- What are the implicit or explicit theories of associationism therein?
- Do they offer an account of relational thinking? If so, how does it work?
- What account of power (if any) is at the basis of their analyses?
- Is there a relational ontology at work?
- What is the status of the relationship between causality and power in these 
  accounts?

Please make sure that you rely on, and refer to, the readings done in class and your 
own notes and assignments to help you navigate your responses to the works you are 
handling.

Select three of these works:

- Jan-Werner Müller: What is Populism?
- William E. Connolly: Aspirational Fascism
- Jeffrey Isaac: #AgainstTrump: Notes from Year One
- Jeremiah Morelock (ed.): Critical Theory and Authoritarian Populism
  (open access available here: https://www.uwestminsterpress.co.uk/site/books/10.16997/book30/)
- Jacques Rancière: The Hatred of Democracy
- Jacob Levy: Rationalism, Pluralism, Freedom
- Chantal Mouffe: On the Political
- James Tully: Strange Multiplicity
- A. Escobar: Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and 
  the Making of Worlds
- Donna Haraway: Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Cthulucene

Some Recommended readings that might help as well:

- Jason Frank: Populism Isn’t the Problem (Boston Review, 8/15/18 
- Jacques Rancière: “The People Are Not a Brutal and Ignorant Mass” from 
  Libération, via Verso web page: https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/1226-the-
  people-are-not-a-brutal-and-ignorant-mass-jacques-ranciere-on-populism
- William Connolly: Pluralism
- Alex Livingston: Damn Great Empires
- Kennan Ferguson: William James: Politics in the Pluriverse
... This is not an exhaustive list. I can recommend others if you wish.
Weekly Reading Assignments

Week 1:
- C.C.W. Taylor: “The Atomists” (in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy*).
- Gilles Deleuze: *Simulacra and Ancient Philosophy* from *The Logic of Sense*.

Week 2:
- Hume: *A Treatise of Human Nature*: Book 1

Week 3: NO CLASS, MLK

Week 4:
- Hume: *A Treatise of Human Nature*: Book 3

Week 5:
- William James: *Radical Empiricism*

Week 6:
- Bergson: *An Introduction to Metaphysics*

Week 7: NO CLASS, President’s Day ... but read:
- G. Deleuze: *On the Superiority of Anglo-American Literature*, Part II (pages 36-59 of *Dialogues II*).
- Marc Rölli: *Deleuze’s Transcendental Empiricism*, Ch. 1

Week 8:
- G. Deleuze: *Empiricism & Subjectivity*, pages 1-72; 85-104.

Week 9:
- G. Deleuze: *Difference and Repetition*, Ch. 2 “Repetition for Itself” (pages 70-128)

Week 10:
- Review Session and class discussion of Final Assignment