State University of New York at Stony Brook  
Department of Philosophy  
2014 Lecture Series  

You are cordially invited to a lecture by  

Michael Naas  
DePaul University  

Lecture:  
Violence and Hyperbole:  
From “Cogito and the History of Madness” to the Death Penalty Seminar  

Michael Naas is Professor of Philosophy at DePaul University. He works in the areas of Ancient Greek Philosophy and Contemporary French Philosophy. His most recent books include Miracle and Machine: Jacques Derrida and the Two Sources of Religion, Science, and the Media (Fordham University Press, 2012) and The End of the World and Other Teachable Moments: Jacques Derrida’s Final Seminar (Fordham University Press, 2014). He is also the co-translator of several works by Jacques Derrida, including The Other Heading, Memoirs of the Blind, Rogues, The Work of Mourning, and Athens, Still Remains. He also co-edits the Oxford Literary Review.  

Though they are separated by nearly four decades, “Cogito and the History of Madness,” of 1963, and the second year of The Death Penalty Seminar, of 2000-1, both treat as central the question of the relationship between reason and what exceeds reason, that is, the relationship between reason, language, and history, on the one hand, and violence or madness, on the other. Because of this congruence of themes, reading the “Cogito” essay in light of the Death Penalty Seminar can help explain why Derrida went so far as to suggest some forty years earlier that Foucault’s History of Madness risked being a “totalitarian text,” while reading the Death Penalty Seminar in light of the “Cogito” essay can help explain why the questions of reason, language, history, and violence that are at the center of Derrida’s essay of 1963 will return many years later in Derrida’s attempt to develop a more principled or philosophical abolitionism.  

December 11th, 2014  
4:15 pm  
Harriman Hall 214  
Reception to Follow  

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