

Imaginations of the Womb - Uterine Imaginaries

Thursday, November 20, 2025
Rocky/Mathew Theater, Rockefeller College

9:00 - 9:15 | Opening Remarks by the Workshop Organizers
Marie-Louise James & Erica Passoni (Princeton University, German)

9:15 - 10:45 | Research Presentations Panel I: Medical Practices & Archival Thresholds
Panel chair: Nora Stumpfögger (Princeton University, German)

Helen Ruger (Princeton University, Classics):
“An Unrelated Body: Representations of the Uterus in Ancient Greek Healing Practices”
Disha Ray (Princeton University, History):
“Treating the Womb: Abortion in Hindi Medical Texts in Colonial India”
Niara Foster (Yale University, American Studies & African and American Studies):
“On Account of Their Ignorance: Race, Reproduction, and the Unknown”

11:00 - 12:30 | Research Presentations Panel II: (Para)psychoanalytic Recursions
Panel chair: Fabia Weisser (Princeton University, German)

Beatrice Fiducia (University of Iceland, English):
“Julian of Norwich’s Matrixial Borderspaces: The Image of the Womb in A Book of Showings”
Abigail Kromminga (Yale University, History):
“Holding Eros and Thanatos in the Womb: Early Psychoanalytic Approaches to the Death Drive”
Orestis Tzirtzilakis (Oxford University, Medieval & Modern Languages):
“The Womb as a Symptom: Hysteria in Hélène Cixous and Gilles Deleuze”

13:30 - 15:00 | Research Presentations Panel III: Political Reproductions & Sites of Power
Panel chair: Xiaoyao Guo (Princeton University, German)

Udeeptha Chakravarty (New School for Social Research, Sociology):
“The Revolutionary Womb”
Sneha Chakraborty (Idaho State University, English):
“Wombs of Resistance: Transcultural Narratives of Sexuality, Trauma, and Reproductive Control”
Makayla Meyers (American Public University, History):
“Wars and Wombs: Motherhood, Propaganda, and Biopolitical Control in Nazi Germany”

15:15 - 16:15 | Research Presentations Panel IV: Poetics & Translation: Invocations of the Sacred
Panel chair: Zeytun West (Princeton University, German)

Desiree McCray (Pittsburgh Theological Seminary/Prairie State College, Creative Writing & Public Theology/English):
“We Need A God Who Bleeds: Menstrual Divinity and the Black Womb as Holy Disruption”
Mollika Jai Singh (Indiana University Bloomington, Creative Writing/English):
“‘This Womb of Every Being’: The Womb in Recent English Bhagavad Gita Translations as Universe and Location of Rebirth”

16:30 - 18:00 | Keynote Lecture:
McCosh Lecture Hall 46

Terri Kapsalis
(School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Visual and Critical Studies)
“Hysteria, Witches, and the Wandering Uterus, Revisited”
Moderator: Erica Passoni (Princeton University, German)

Friday, November 21, 2025
Chancellor Green 103

9:00 - 10:15 | Roundtable I: The Uterus in Motion: Premodern Perspectives
Panel chair: Friederike Ach (Princeton University, Comparative Literature)

Emma McCabe (University of Stirling & University of Glasgow, Philosophy, Religion, & Literature):
“Between Scylla and Charybdis: Aqueous and Uterine Imaginaries of the Early Modern Theatre in the Writings of Stephen Gosson”
Tom Francis (University of California, Classics):
“The Wandering Whom? Medical and Mystical Displacement of the Womb in Apuleius’ Galli Account”
Lydia Shahan (Harvard University, Religion):
“‘In her interior ground:’ Reconceiving Spiritual Birth in Sixteenth-Century Middle Dutch Mystical Literature”

11:00 - 12:30 | Roundtable II: Reproductive Modernities: Somatic Memories & Politics
Panel chair: Marie-Louise James (Princeton University, German)

Adam Koehler Brown (New School for Social Research, Sociology):
“The Temporal Politics of Birth in Arendt, Badiou, and Nelson”
Amber Anseeuw (Ghent University, English):
“‘A Wild, Ear-Piercing Scream:’ Monstrous Motherhood and Uterine Imaginaries in Bram Stoker’s Dracula”
Lea Eisenstein (Princeton University, History):
“The Birth of Hysterectomy and the Rise of the Removable Uterus”
Emily Wood (University of Waterloo, History):
“Embodied Memories: Post-War Pregnancy and Childbirth in Holocaust Survivors’ Testimonies”

Our roundtable format is based on pre-circulated papers. Please email workshop organizers for further information (Marie-Louise James (mljames@princeton.edu) or Erica Passoni (epassoni@princeton.edu))

This workshop is open to the public and to all Princeton graduate and undergraduate students regardless of identity. Contributions to and/or sponsorship of any event does not constitute departmental or institutional endorsement of the specific program, speakers or views presented.

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