

Benjamin and Judaism Conference

Thursday, March 5 • 4:10 p.m. • Linderman Library, 200

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Michael Jennings

Princeton University



“Toward the Apokatastatic Will: Patristics and Esoteric Judaism in Walter Benjamin’s Late Theological Politics”

The lecture examines the eschatology that is implicit in Walter Benjamin’s late work: the writings that grew from the *Arcades Project* and the book on Baudelaire. The theory of modernity developed there is not merely analytical: it subtends an understanding that the proper use of technologized media *accelerates* the erasure of the conditions that currently obtain. It is, in short, an apocalyptic eschatology. This line in Benjamin’s late thought is organized not by the concept of messianism, but by the theological concept of *apokatastasis*. Benjamin’s use of theological material is always local and always specific to a particular problem. His work deploys a “situational” theological politics oriented to the task at hand, a recombinatory logic that draws freely on elements of the Christian and Jewish traditions alike.

Michael Jennings is the Class of 1900 Professor of Modern Languages in the Department of German at Princeton University. He is the author of two books on Walter Benjamin: *Dialectical Images: Walter Benjamin's Theory of Literary Criticism* (Cornell, 1987), and with Howard Eiland, *Walter Benjamin: A Critical Life* (Harvard, 2013). He also serves as the general editor of the standard English-language edition of Benjamin's works, *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings* (Harvard, 1996ff.), and the editor of a series of collections of Benjamin's essays.

Jennings sits on the executive committees of the Program in European Cultural Studies and the interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Humanistic Studies. He is an associated faculty member in the Department of Art and Archaeology and the School of Architecture.



Friday, March 6 • 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. • Linderman Library, 200
Paper Presentations and Discussions

Dr. Brian Britt, *Virginia Tech*

Dr. Christopher Driscoll, *Lehigh University*

Dr. Udi Greenberg, *Dartmouth College*

Dr. Eric Jacobson, *University of Roehampton*

Dr. Nitzan Lebovic, *Lehigh University*

Dr. Michael Jennings, *Princeton University*

Dr. Annika Thiem, *Villanova University*

