

CALL FOR PAPERS

OPENING THE CANON: INTERDISCIPLINARY SOUNDINGS

Friday, October 28 (Eisenberg Reading Room, Sensenbrenner Hall)

Keynote Speaker: **Dr. Steven Crowell** (Rice University)

Keynote Lecture (Tentative): Canons, Classics, and the Vita Contemplativa

Organizers: Dr. Sebastian Luft (Philosophy) and Dr. Michael Cover (Theology)

We are very excited to invite your papers for a day-long interdisciplinary conference, in which students and faculty from across the College of Arts and Sciences will explore the concept of the “canon” in the humanities. In particular, we are interested in papers focusing on how new works may potentially “open” the canon and “become canonical” in various fields.

The question of “canon”—authoritative lists of texts and authors, or of artists and works of art—is one that looms large in numerous disciplines. Possessing varying degrees of authority, canons serve as *aides-mémoire*, normative paradigms, and practical guides for education in the arts and letters. With the weight of history behind them, canons guide syllabi, provide standards for peer-review, and articulate the questions, values, and boundaries of various textual and artistic communities, scholarly and popular. They also shape something like “Core Curricula” in Jesuit institutions of higher education across the US.

But canons are not without their complications. Each canon is a historical artifact, which stands simultaneously closed and openable, both complete and in need of updating. This raises the question of how canons can be opened, and by whom. Canons are notoriously guarded things, of necessity limited (not every text or work of art is canonical, not even within a particular author’s *œuvre*) and self-scrutinizing of candidates applying for inclusion in their ranks.

Whatever the disciplinary perspective, we invite participants to address a series of interrelated questions:

- What *is* the “canon” in your field of teaching and research?
- How does a text or author enter the canon in your discipline?
- What is a specific example of a text that has succeeded recently in opening the canon, or which, in your judgment, ought to be admitted?

By focusing on the positive rationales for inclusion, and studying the multiple pathways for opening the canon across humanistic disciplines, conference participants will explore the definition of “canon” with the aim of articulating the enduring value and limits of the concept of canonicity.

Call for Papers: Please submit an abstract with name (and department and status, e.g., faculty, graduate student) to Michael Cover (Michael.Cover@mu.edu) and Sebastian Luft (Sebastian.Luft@mu.edu) no later than **September 25**. Speakers will be notified by October 1. Lunch and refreshments will be provided for participants. Speakers will be invited to a final banquet on the evening of October 28.