

# ATTR Spring Seminar 2018

## Power and Authority

---

### Speakers, Abstracts, and Reading



**Monday, March 12**

**Prof. CHRISTOPH MARKSCHIES, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin: “Authorization of Texts by Means of Commentary in Antiquity – A Comparative Approach”**

**Abstract:**

The lecture will explore how texts in Antiquity were authorized by writing commentaries. In the focus are especially literary strategies and techniques to structure knowledge. The problems will be comparatively discussed on commentaries of Proclus (Commentaries on Plato and Euclides), Galen and Origen. By this approach commonalities and differences between commentaries on philosophical, mathematical, medical and theological problems and texts can be focussed far more precisely than before.

**Required reading:**

Asper, Markus. “Explanation between Nature and Text: Ancient Greek Commentators On Science,” in *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 44 (2013): 43–50.

**Suggested reading:**

Origen, Commentary on Genesis, Fragments of the Prologue B 1, C 1, D ½, 5/6 and 11 (ed. Metzler, Origenes Werke Deutsch).

Proclus, Commentary on Plato’s Parmenides, Preface p. 617–30 (English translation by Morrow/Dillon, 19–28).

Proclus, Commentary on the first book of Euclid’s Elements pt. 1/2 (English translation by Morrow, 1–69).

**Prof. TORHEL BREKKE, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO): “Religious authority, modernity and fundamentalism”**

**Abstract:**

Taking inspiration from the historical sociology of Max Weber this lecture explores modern challenges to traditional religious authority and some of their most important consequences. The historical focus is the zenith of the colonial period when Western institutions and ideologies were grafted onto societies and their cultures throughout Asia and Africa. What happened to traditional religious authority in different parts of the colonized world in the wake of these transformations? What were the reactions to the undermining of religious tradition among local political and religious leaders and among lay people?

**Required Reading:**

Brekke, Torkel. *Fundamentalism: Prophecy and Protest in an Age of Globalization*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. (pp. 1–98 is required reading, the rest of the book is suggested reading).

**Tuesday, March 13****Assoc. Prof. SISSEL UNDHEIM, University of Bergen: “Never set in stone. Power and texts on public display”****Abstract:**

Painted, inscribed and placed in the public eye for everyone to see, the impact of ancient epigraphy has nevertheless been a debated issue. Relying on a population’s literacy, as well as cultural codes, texts displayed in public always evokes the questions of “by whom” and “for whom.” The ancient world has left us with an abundance of texts meant for such public display. In the city of Rome alone, almost 100 000 Latin inscriptions have been found (Bodel 2001:8). By looking at this specific genre of texts, particularly honorary inscriptions and epitaphs, the aim of this session is to discuss issues of gender, status and power display, as well as erasure, *damnatio memoriae* and historiography.

**Required reading:**

Hedrick, Charles W. Jr. *“Public writing” In Ancient History: Monuments and Documents*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006. (Pp. 108–25)

Trout, Dennis E. “Inscribing identity: The Latin Epigraphic Habit in Late Antiquity.” Pages 170–86 in *A Companion to Late Antiquity*. Edited by Philippe Rousseau. Chichester/Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

**Suggested reading:**

Carroll, Maureen. “Memoria and Damnatio Memoriae: Preserving and Erasing Identities in Roman Funerary Commemoration.” Pages 66–90 in *Living Through the Dead: Burial and Commemoration in the Classical World*. Edited by Maureen Carroll and Jane Rempel. Oxford: Oxbow, 2011.

Bodel, John. “Inscriptions and Literacy.” Pages 743–63 in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Epigraphy*. Edited by Christer Bruun and Jonathan Edmondson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Bodel, John, ed. *Epigraphic Evidence: Ancient History From Inscriptions*. London: Routledge, 2001.

Hedrick, Charles W. *History and Silence: Purge and Rehabilitation of Memory in Late Antiquity*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000.

**Prof. HANS PETTER GRAVER, University of Oslo: "The Authority of Law - When Must the Judge Deviate From it"?****Abstract:**

The Lecture will address the situation when the law demands the judge to perform evil acts. Must the judge follow the law or are evil acts simply non-law? I will present the case of a brave judge during the German occupation of Norway during the second world war, and

discuss his judgement in the light of legal theorists such as H.L.A. Hart, Lon Fuller and Ronald Dworkin.

**Required reading:**

Graver, Hans Petter, *Judges Against Justice: On Judges When the Rule of Law is Under Attack*. Berlin: Springer, 2015. (Ch. 17–18 required reading, the rest of the book is suggested reading)

**Suggested reading:**

The "Hart-Fuller debate", HLA Hart (1957) «Positivism and the separation of law and morals», *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 71, s. 593–629 og LL Fuller (1957) «Positivism and fidelity to law – a reply to Professor Hart», *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 71 s. 630–672.

**Prof. ASBJØRN DYRENDAL, Norwegian University of Science and Technology:  
“Prophets, tricksters, and tyrants. Authority, subversion, and power in conspiracy culture”**

**Abstract:**

Conspiracy culture is an arena where entrepreneurs may gain authority through interpretations of current and past events. One of the strategies for gaining such authority is through a flexible practice one may call “rolling prophecy” (Robertson 2016). Rolling prophecy establishes a few, successful entrepreneurs in precarious roles as “prophets” who reveals secret knowledge, often through esoteric interpretive techniques. These emic epistemologies are shaped by strategies that are easily recognized, adapted, and subverted for use in parody. Arising partially from within, some of these parodies are re-absorbed by conspiracy culture, where conspiracy “play” is taken to an extreme form of doubt that annihilates any claim to knowledge, as “nothing is what it seems” (Barkun 2003). The same practices may also be used by established sources of power to mobilize allies, display power, discredit and demobilize opponents, and sow doubt about any form of knowledge.

**Required reading:**

Barkun, Michael. *A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. (Chapters 1–2, pp.1–38)  
Robertson, David G. “‘(Always) Living in the End Times’: the ‘Rolling Prophecy’ of the Conspiracy Milieu.” Pages 207–19 in *Prophecy in the New Millennium: When Prophecies Persist*. Edited by S. Harvey and S. Newcombe. Farnham: Ashgate, 2016.

**Suggested reading (for a variety of tastes and interests):**

Boltanski, Luc. *Mysteries and Conspiracies: Detective Stories, Spy Novels and the Making of Modern Societies*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014.  
Butter, Michael. *Plots, Designs, and Schemes: American Conspiracy Theories from the Puritans to the Present*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014.  
Fenster, Mark. *Conspiracy Theories: Secrecy and Power in American Culture*. (rev.ed.) Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.  
Van Prooijen, Jan-Willem, and Paul A. M. van Lange. *Power, Politics, and Paranoia. Why People Are Suspicious of Their Leaders*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

## Wednesday, March 14

### **Prof. SVEIN AAGE CHRISTOFFERSEN, University of Oslo: “The Power of Visual Rhetoric in the Baroque Era”**

#### **Required reading:**

David Carrier: “Baroque Rhetoric: The Methodology”. In Peter Gillgren and Mårten Snickare, *Performativity and Performance in Baroque Rome* (Ashgate 2012), pp. 219-230.

## Thursday, March 15

### **Prof. GEIR ULFSTEIN, University of Oslo: “Interpretation of international treaties: law, policy and legitimacy”**

#### **Abstract:**

We have seen an increasing number of specialized international courts in recent decades – such as in the law of the sea, international trade, human rights, criminal law and investment. We have also seen a decline in multilateral treaty-making. This means that interpretation of existing treaties by international courts becomes essential. There has also been a development in the methods of interpretation in international law. Traditionally, international courts often protected state sovereignty through so-called restrictive interpretation. Today, these courts are more inclined to use effective and dynamic (evolutive) interpretation of the international obligations. The result is that the judgments increasingly restrict domestic sovereign freedom. All of this should generally be applauded, since it promotes the international rule of law. But international courts are claimed to unduly restrict the sovereign ‘regulatory space’ and democratic freedom, taking too little account of political and cultural differences between different states. ICs have also been criticized for too much interference in traditionally domestic issues. Such interference clearly occurs in international human rights and international criminal law. But it also concerns aspects of international trade law and investment law – and may also occur in general international law. Such criticism should be seen in the light of the current political climate with increasing skepticism to international institutions and may – and to a certain extent already have – lead to a backlash against international courts. This presentation will discuss the methods of interpretation contained in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969) in light of policy and legitimacy challenges facing international Courts.

#### **Required reading:**

Gardiner, R. “The Vienna Convention Rules on Treaty Interpretation.” Pages 474–505 in *The Oxford Guide to Treaties*. Edited by D. B. Hollis. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Madsen, M. R. “The Challenging Authority of the European Court of Human Rights; From Cold War Legal Diplomacy to the Brighton Declaration and Backlash.” *Law and Contemporary Problems* 79:1 (2016): 141–79.

#### **Suggested reading:**

Hartmann, J. “A Danish Crusade for the Reform of the European Court of Human Rights.” EJIL Talk, 2017. <https://www.ejiltalk.org/a-danish-crusade-for-the-reform-of-the-european-court-of-human-rights/>

**Prof. INGVILD S. GILHUS, University of Bergen: “Writing a Doctoral Thesis and Getting It Published”**

**Required reading:**

Dunleavy, Patrick. “Publishing your research.” Pages 227–63 in *Authoring a PhD: How to plan, draft, write and finish a doctoral thesis or dissertation*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. (the rest of the book is optional reading)