



Guest Lecture

**Prof. Jennifer Ashton
(University of Illinois, Chicago)**

I ♥ Apocalypse

**The Posthuman and Postracial Imagination
in 21st-Century American Poetics**

**Wednesday, Oct. 30, 2013
4-6 pm Senatssaal (Nat. Fak.)**

This lecture takes as its subject two very recent installations in the history of lyric poetry: the post-“post-racial” imaginary that has anchored identity-driven poetry in the U.S. since Barack Obama’s first presidential election in 2008, and the “post-human” imaginary that has anchored poetic responses to climatological and financial crisis in the U.S. during the same period. These two apparently unrelated strands in recent poetic discourse arguably represent two versions of an identical logic. In the first poetry maintains the fantasy of the self in the absence of any recognizable expression, while the second offers the fantasy of self-expression in the absence of a self. In short, we find ourselves with a poetics that mirrors the fantasy of unregulated markets – in which what it means to express something is to mean nothing at all, and where meaning nothing at all presents the appearance of a politics.

Jennifer Ashton is Associate Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), where her research centers on 20th- and 21st-century poetry and poetics. She is the author of *From Modernism to Postmodernism: American Poetry and Theory in the Twentieth Century* (2005), and she edited *The Cambridge Companion to American Poetry Since 1945* (2012).