CALL FOR PAPERS:
RATIONALISM AND RATIONALITY BETWEEN TECHNOCRACY AND POETICS
FRIDAY, APRIL 4 | PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

The Dialogues on European Cultural Studies series seeks both graduate and undergraduate contributors to its second cross-disciplinary colloquium on Friday, April 4. Elizabeth Goodstein (Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts, Emory University) will deliver the keynote lecture on Thursday, April 3.

The colloquium will reconsider the trajectory of rationality from its privileged position during the Enlightenment to its tenuous status today. Competing notions of reason have punctuated the genesis and subsequent crises of European modernity, from the promises of rationalism in the 18th century to the widespread criticism of instrumental rationality and positivism at the end of the 20th century. In modern discourses and aesthetic practices, the line between the "rational" and its shifting "others" has been drawn, erased, and redrawn many times, undermining reductive dichotomies and stable definitions.

In revisiting rationalism as a historically contingent category, we hope to probe both its troubled trajectory and its cultural currency today. We seek papers that discuss texts, discourses, and practices that variously invoke and appropriate—or denounce and disfigure—rationality in its diverse forms.

Foremost among the questions we hope to discuss we would name these: Are the cultural products of rationality merely evidence of a technocratic society, or can we speak of a poetics or subversion within cultural objects associated with these methods? How can we interpret the political framework of methods that often operate under claims to neutrality or objectivity? What forms of rationality have recently emerged, or disappeared, in light of technological and cultural changes in the last two decades?

This colloquium seeks to articulate new models of interpreting an area of inquiry that remains central to our understanding of European culture.

Please send a 250-word abstract for a 20-minute paper with your department/year to ECSDialogues@princeton.edu by no later than Tuesday, February 25.

Organizers:
Daniela Fabricius (School of Architecture)
Peter Fox (Art & Archaeology)
Anna-Maria Meister (School of Architecture)