

**Thursday, April 29, 2010**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**Location:**  
**19 University Place**  
**Great Room**  
**(ground floor)**

**Lecture:**

## **Critique and the Thing: Benjamin and Heidegger**

“Critique and the Thing: Benjamin and Heidegger”  
This talk suggests that in spite of all their undeniable, and often unbridgeable, differences in relation to philosophical, political, historical, and personal concerns, the projects of both Benjamin and Heidegger can be read as sustained engagements with the Kantian inheritance of critique as a mode of the radical self-questioning of reason in a manner that deviates decidedly from the neo-Kantianisms that were prevalent in the German-speaking countries during Benjamin’s and Heidegger’s years of intellectual formation. The lecture interrogates the ways in which the relationship that both writers surprisingly establish between critique and the question of the thing (“das Ding”)—both as cultural object and as formal mode of intellectual inquiry—gives rise to a new and deeper understanding of the striking similarities and differences between textually mediated forms of dialectical materialism and fundamental ontology.



**Gerhard Richter**  
**(UC, Davis)**

Gerhard Richter is Professor of German and Director of the Graduate Program in Critical Theory at the University of California, Davis. He is the author of *Thought-Images: Frankfurt School Writers' Reflections from Damaged Life* (2007); *Ästhetik des Ereignisses. Sprache—Geschichte—Medium* (2005); and *Walter Benjamin and the Corpus of Autobiography* (2000; 2nd. ed. 2002). His edited books include *Jacques Derrida's Copy, Archive, Signature: A Conversation on Photography* (2010); *Language without Soil: Adorno and Late Philosophical Modernity* (2010); *Sound Figures of Modernity: German Music and Philosophy* (2006); *Literary Paternity, Literary Friendship* (2002); and *Benjamin's Ghosts: Interventions in Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory* (2002). His new book, *Afterness: Figures of Following in Modern Thought and Aesthetics*, is forthcoming.



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