Second Annual Interdisciplinary Graduate Theory Workshop: State/Terror
March 13, 2015, The Graduate Center
Time and Room TBA
Hosted by SPTSA: Social and Political Theory Graduate Student Association
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About the Workshop
The Second Annual Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Workshop on ‘Theory,’ sponsored by the Social and Political Theory Student Association (SPTSA), will bring together GC students from different disciplines and perspectives to explore what it means to ‘do theory.’ Its objectives are threefold. First, we seek to provide an opportunity for students to practice presenting and receiving feedback on works in progress in a supportively critical environment. Second, we hope to generate unexpected connections between people, concepts, orientations, and modes of theorizing. Third, we seek to build community across disciplines for GC students doing theoretical work. The workshop thus serves as a space in which we can practice taking apart the boundaries that constrain and discipline different theoretical endeavors.

Submissions and Panels
Submissions of in-progress papers, presentations, or performances are due by January 5, 2015 to sptsa.cunygc@gmail.com; notifications will be sent by January 15, 2015. Please use the Submission Form.

Each panel will have a graduate student discussant. We ask that all participants read the projects of their co-panelists in order to facilitate discussion.

State/Terror
Today, “state” and “terror” appear to be relatively clear notions, which do not seem to require much critical reflection. Our milieu is constructed and reconstructed with and through official, philosophical, economic, and other sorts of discourses, which convey the meaning(s) of state/terror. Such discourses enable us to imagine, speak about, and act upon [state] [terror] in certain ways while foreclosing others. What is lost in this discursive framework is different state(s) (of) terror: varying experiences of being exposed to the state, spatially and historically changing understandings of terror–ist/-ized, differential distribution of the possibility of being terrorize-able, (mis)translations of the meanings of state/terror across borders of all sorts. As a result, state (and) terror may indeed be dangerously fluid concepts, which are justified only by each other and sufferings of different sorts.

Is there consensus on state and/or terror, in general or for particular examples? Many may seem to agree on what terror is and who the terrorists are when it comes to, for example, Israel and Palestine. Yet, the problem starts (and never ends) when we start asking questions about the state and draw attention to the resemblances between allegedly opposing practices. Is the murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri state/terror? Is thinking of it as state/terror discursively and socially available? We witness massacres in Syria, and discursive economies of state and terror proliferate. Which bodies are assigned as “terrorist” bodies? Which state(s) respond to and assemble terror? What happens when state(s) and terror(ist/ized) interact?

Not to mention, what happens when we think “state/terror” beyond and without “the state?” What other kinds of state(s) – spatial, temporal, affective, embodied, performative, literary, and more – are tethered to terror?
When do states declare a war against terror and when they let terror happen? How do they deploy a certain definition of terror to mark some populations disposable while protecting others? Do state(s) manipulate our perception of “terror-ist”? Does “terror” shape what we understand or expect from state(s)? Is it possible to imagine state (and) terror without the other signifier? Is it possible to ask questions and demand answers about state terror? Or, is it an oxymoron? Is our ideological, political, and/or linguistic capacity sufficient to think about these terms together, yet out of the conventional and/or official schemas we are provided with? Or do the ways we are educated, socialized, indoctrinated, and otherwise subjectivized enable only certain combinations of these terms? When is state terror (not) “terror”? When is “terrorism” inaccurately labeled as such? Should we (re)turn to the state in the case of terror?

Juxtaposing such strong terms demands that we ask numerous questions. We seek to pose them in an interdisciplinary workshop, which goes beyond the limits of our scholarly disciplines. We want to experiment about what happens if we imagine something different every time we read, learn, teach, see, perform, feel, and think state/terror.

We welcome submissions on these topics and more:
~ problematizations of ‘state’ and ‘terror’
~ state/terror, the sacred, and sacrifice
~ literature and state/terror
~ (state) violence and terror
~ state, terror, and embodiment
~ state/terror and affect theory
~ disposability, biopolitics, and necropolitics
~ state/terror in media, film, and visual culture(s)
~ space, architecture, and state/terror
~ vulnerability, precarity, and survivability
~ textual practices and state/terror
~ ethical responses to state/terror
~ normativity and state/terror
~ queer theory and state/terror
~ ontologies of state/terror
~ state/terror, raced bodies, and racialization
~ technics and technologies of state/terror
~ migration, forced migration and state/terror
~ secularism and state/terror
~ state/terror as gendered/gendering
~ state/terror and disability studies
~ education, ideology, and state/terror
~ state/terror and feminist theory
~ modernity, temporality, and state/terror
~ fear, anxiety, and insecurity
~ language and state/terror
~ state/terror, the non-human, the post-human
~ state/terror and psychoanalysis
~ ecologies of state/terror
~ ethnographies of state/terror
~ genocide