



# The Department of English

Presents

Target of Excellence Candidate

## Richard T. Rodriguez

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

*Oedipal Wrecks: Kin and Kind in Justin Torres's We the Animals*

**Abstract:** This talk critically assesses Justin Torres's *We the Animals* by drawing from the insights of recent work in queer and animal studies. Ascertaining the function of "non-Oedipal animals," the talk illustrates the two-pronged function of the novel for disrupting both conventional kinship narratives and hetero- and homonormative appraisals of sexuality. For despite the mainstream embrace of Torres's debut book that predictably reads the family from a common frame and the easy tendency to comprehend the text's sense of "animality" from a surface level metaphorical trajectory, the talk argues that the multitude of species in Torres's human-animal kingdom signify an array of queer sexual practices and subjectivities that take seriously the risk of desire, exclusion and belonging.

**Monday, May 4th**

**3:15pm-4:30pm**

**English Conference Room: HMNSS 2212**

*Reception and light refreshments at conclusion of talk*

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