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