Against Educational Apartheids: The Other Global University
Forum on the Past, Present, and Future of Higher Education

This forum brings together educators to rethink relationships between institutions of higher education, their local communities, and their global milieu. In response to current, hegemonic trends of globalizing higher education, we will explore alternative histories and theories of education, asking how local and global concerns in fact pertain to all educational institutions, and how educational inequalities pertaining to class, race, gender, and geography might be either exacerbated or redressed through new institutional, interdisciplinary, and pedagogic strategies. Rather than reject outright a concept of global education, this forum instead asks participants to consider what it would mean to truly make higher education globally accessible and what aims such an education would need to address. What hypothetical curricula, exchanges, funding structures, and institutional relations would respect societies’ and individuals’ rights to intellectual self-determination without, however, positing a priori assumptions of differing educational needs based on cultural or class distinctions?

Keeping in mind that free, compulsory, “universal” education (i.e., for children within a state’s boundaries) was inaugurated just over a century ago, we might take as a starting point the conundrum faced at the onset of universal primary education: How to impart both practical and theoretical knowledge? Or, put another way, how to establish fundament of knowledge that somehow lend themselves to the pursuit of diverse vocations and professions, ranging from the agrarian to the academic, and can certain disciplines and forms of knowledge be justified as essential whether or not they prepare students for future occupations? Presentations will offer alternative visions of higher education, touching on issues of disciplinarity, class, geography, institutional structures, and new educational media.

Forum Structure
The presentation of papers, followed by Q & A, will be open to the public. Subsequent workshop discussions will be closed-door to encourage group discussions in greater depth. The workshop is divided into two main themes, that of “epistemic apartheids” and “disciplining universalisms”.

Goals
The intention of the workshops is to produce alternative visions of higher education, drawing both from historical examples and speculations on the future. Presentations and discussions are meant to engage theoretical issues of epistemology, democracy, and globality, while nonetheless addressing practical, ongoing concerns. We hope to transmit some of the ideas generated here via a web publication.

Forum Organizers
Jamyung Choi, INTERACT post-doctoral fellow, Weatherhead Institute, Columbia University
Ginger Nolan, INTERACT post-doctoral fellow, Institute of Comparative Literature & Society at Columbia University

Sponsors
Heyman Center for the Humanities, Columbia University
Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation, Columbia University
Institute of Comparative Literature & Society, Columbia University
Day 1. **Epistemic Apartheids**

Friday, November 6 / Heyman Center / Columbia University

This day’s sessions will explore the relationship between educational structures and epistemic apartheids by examining the hierarchical distinctions that segregate humanities and professional or vocational training as well as inequality of access to education, whether due to conditions of geography, class, race, or incarceration. We will also discuss alternative experiments that aim to redress these inequalities.

**9:30-10:00: Coffee and Introductory Remarks**

**10:00–12:00: Liberal Arts / Vocational Arts**

This panel explores historical and present-day efforts to undermine epistemic apartheids through educational programs aimed either at erasing hierarchical distinctions between different fields of study (i.e., between the liberal versus vocational arts) or by rendering higher education more universally accessible. Drawing from historic examples of efforts to integrate vocational and liberal arts and from present-day examples such as experimental university farms, panelists will interrogate how a distinction between intellectual versus non-intellectual labor has been historically conceived, and how this relates to a conception of liberal arts education. We will discuss to whom such an education is deemed appropriate and why, what such an education produces and by virtue of what correlative institutions. We will also ask what it might mean—and what it would take—to erode mutually exclusionary barriers often existing between liberal and vocational arts.

Mark Taylor, Columbia University, Religion  
Jamyung Choi, Columbia University, Weatherhead Institute  
Saskia Cornes, Duke University, Experimental farm  
Respondent: Ginger Nolan, Columbia University, Institute of Comparative Literature & Society

**12:00: Lunch at Heyman Center**

**1:00-3:00: Cities and Non-Cities**

In light of the fact that the city has long been conceived as didactic and civilizing in nature, this session examines the relationships between cities, “non-cities” (i.e. rural or otherwise ex-urban spaces), and forms of higher education. Panelists are asked to consider the formative geographic conditions of education, interrogating, for example, how distinctions between the urban and rural or between growing and shrinking cities are reinforced through existing educational structures. We will also discuss what extramural role institutions of higher education should play in relation to their geographic and social amits, and, conversely, how cities (and non-cities) themselves might serve as sites of—and provocations to—pedagogical experimentation.

Steven Zacks, Flint Public Art Project  
Davarian Baldwin, Trinity College, American Studies  
Noliwe Rooks, Cornell University, Africana Studies and Research Center  
Respondent: Laura Kurgan, Columbia University, Architecture (to be confirmed)

**3:15-5:30: States (and Non-States)**

Given the traditional importance of the state as a provider of education, we will interrogate the nature of this relationship: how it delimits what is taught, how funds are allocated, and who is taught—i.e., how do educational institutions comprehend non-citizens, whether refugees, immigrants, or prisoners?
Key to the rise of European universities in the 12th and 13th centuries was the widespread acknowledgment that a degree conferred by a *universitas* guild was honored and transferrable across urban, provincial, and often national boundaries. While today it is true in theory that many types of degrees granted by one institution are fungible with those granted by another, in reality distinctions tied to world geography, disciplinarity, and economic class produce hierarchical gradations of difference within presumably standard categories. Interrogating how certain epistemic approaches have come to be construed as universally valid or not, this day’s sessions will explore both the limits and potentials of “universality” within higher education, touching upon distinctions made between the humanities and the sciences, the formulation of core curricula and great books programs, and the category of “the modern” as a determinant of presumed epistemic universalism.

9:00-9:30: Coffee and Breakfast

9:30-12:00: Epistemologies of the Global

This session interrogates relationships between world knowledge and politics, asking how epistemology informs conceptions of globality, and how, in turn, global relations inform epistemological approaches. From questions of gender, race, and class, we will ask how forms of inclusion and exclusion are epistemologically produced and how they can be challenged by alternative conceptualizations of global exchange.

Susan Buck-Morss, The Graduate Center, City University of New York, Political Philosophy
Denise Ferreira da Silva, University of London, Ethics
Ruth Hayhoe, University of Toronto, Higher Adult Education
Respondent: Lydia Liu, Columbia University, East Asian Languages and Culture

12:00-1:00: Lunch

1:00-3:30: The Fungibility of Knowledge

This session will explore how claims to universality have been constituted through the institutions, methods, and discourses of the human sciences. From the development of early American universities up through the present-day expansion of global satellite campuses, certain forms of knowledge have been deemed universally valid across disparate geographies, often in opposition to methods deemed theological, indigenous, or otherwise particularist.

Jacques Lezra, New York University, Comparative Literature
Reinhold Martin, Columbia University, Architecture / Committee on Global Thought
Matthew Jones, Columbia University, History of Science
Respondent: Mark Wigley, Columbia University, Architecture History & Theory

3:30-5:30: Group Discussion: Instruments of another Univers(al)ity
In this final session, audience and conferees will discuss alternative visions for higher education, touching on themes including: the relationship between extramural and intramural education, the role of the “digital humanities”, and how these relate to questions of disciplinarity and epistemology.

5:30: Concluding Remarks / Refreshments