

Spring 2024, Colloquium

March 18, Noon

UH 432

Creative Criticism

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Autotheory, the blending of theory with autobiography, is a creative critical practice emerging from feminist critique. If the term is new to this millennium, the heart of the practice is not. Blending of this sort exists not only in the work of Maggie Nelson today, but in Du Bois and Woolf, Emerson and Thoreau, to name just a few. These writers saw the material of their lives as a valid source of evidence to draw on when proposing hypotheses about the intersections among the self, language, and culture.

Because autotheory blurs the lines between life and text, musing and philosophy, it invites all of us to lay claim to theory as a source of wisdom—and to generate it in kind. In this talk, Kathryn will describe how the fruitful feedback loop of the classroom prompted her to try her own hand at autotheory, an experiment in creative criticism that reinvigorated her writing life by suggesting new avenues for writing about literature.