

## Research Seminar

# 'Political Experience in the Twentieth Century': Reading Modern Literature with Hannah Arendt



**26/04/2024 (Fri)**



**11:30am-12:30pm**



**LBYG06**



### **Dr. Peter Conroy**

Postdoctoral fellow

Tsinghua Institute for Advanced Study in Humanities and Social Sciences

Peter Conroy is a postdoctoral fellow at the Tsinghua Institute for Advanced Study in Humanities and Social Sciences. He received his PhD in English from Yale University with a dissertation on the concept of 'the end of history.' His research interests include US literature since 1945, critical theory, and the philosophy of history. His scholarly writing has recently appeared in *Amerikastudien / American Studies*.

#### **Abstract:**

In the 1960s, Hannah Arendt taught a seminar on 'Political Experience in the Twentieth Century' in which she used a constellation of literary texts to explore the defining crises and events of her lifetime. In this lecture, I will introduce some of her ideas and concerns, and then I will suggest that her seminar can serve as a model for rethinking the relationship between literature and political philosophy. In doing so, I will focus on three basic questions. What did Arendt mean by 'political experience'? In what ways did she think political experience had changed in the twentieth century? And how did she understand the relationship between political experience and literature? In passing, I will address her relation to political theorists like Walter Benjamin and Rosa Luxemburg and to contemporary writers like William Faulkner, Bertolt Brecht, and W.H. Auden.

**Enquiry: [engdept@ln.edu.hk](mailto:engdept@ln.edu.hk)**