

PRESIDENT

Judging the past by today's standards

English Professor Jeffrey Insko looks to history for a defense of 'presentism' in this year's President's Colloquium, which takes place October 15.

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This year's President's Colloquium "The Dead Past and the Living Present" will be presented by Jeffrey Insko, Ph.D., associate professor of English. The event will take place at noon on Monday, Oct. 15, in the Founders Ball Rooms of the Oakland Center, on OU's Rochester campus. A question-and-answer session will immediately follow.



Monuments honoring confederate leaders have been the subject of debates surrounding "presentism," or judging the past based on contemporary standards.

Dr. Insko's talk will address issues surrounding "presentism," or judging the past by the standards of today. In recent years, presentism has become a common feature in debate over historical monuments and other public forms of remembrance and commemoration. In his presentation, Dr. Insko looks back to the 19th-century anti-slavery movement in order to recuperate presentism from its bad reputation in some circles.

Focusing upon the abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass, Insko asserts that presentism was a central feature of abolitionist thinking and writing. Moreo abolitionists embraced the present as a means of revivifying and revitalizing – not distorting or misjudging – the past.

A reception with hors d'oeuvres will start at 11:30 a.m. Seating is limited, and RSVP's are requested by visiting Oakland.edu/event/collrsvp. For more information, contact Patricia Gillespie at gillesp2@oakland.edu or (248) 370-2053.

Dr. Insko also serves as coordinator of OU's American Studies Concentration. Specializing in 19th-century literature and culture, his research focuses on the study of time, and the politics and literature of slavery. He is the author of *Time, History and Antebellum American Writing: The Ever-Present Now*, to be published by Oxford University Press this year, and is the recipient of the 2012 Oakland University Teaching Excellence Award.



Jeffrey Insko, associate professor of English and coordinator of the American Studies concentration will deliver this year's President's Colloquium.

The President's Colloquium Series was established in 1995 to showcase achievements of Oakland University researchers, promote communication and collaboration among scientists, and to recognize the outstanding work of "Nobel Class" scientists.