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Gauss Seminars in Criticism Records, 1949-1981: Finding Aid

Summary Information

Call number:	AC178
Location:	Princeton University Library. Department of Rare Books and Special Collections. Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library. Princeton University Archives. 65 Olden Street Princeton, New Jersey 08540 USA
Size:	2.1 linear feet (5 archival boxes).
Language(s) of material:	English.
Abstract:	Named in honor of Christian Gauss (1878-1951), one of Woodrow Wilson's original preceptors and dean of the college from 1925 to 1946, the Gauss Seminars in Criticism were conceived in 1949 by Richard P. Blackmur (1904-1965). One of America's foremost literary critics—and one of Princeton's most distinguished professors of English—Blackmur sought to stimulate discussion and the exchange of ideas in the humanities through presentations from scholars, artists, critics, and writers. The collection is composed of correspondence with guest speakers.

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History of the Gauss Seminars in Criticism

In 1949 Princeton University instituted a series of seminars in criticism and named them in memory of Christian Gauss, who was for many years chairman of the Department of Modern Languages and dean of the college. The aim of these seminars is to explore the theory and practice of criticism in the humanities and sciences, and, indeed, in any area where critical thought seems appropriate or necessary. The seminars consist of a series of lectures ordinarily given at weekly intervals, each followed by an informal but often challenging discussion. The audience is drawn from the Princeton faculty, the Institute for Advanced Study, the Princeton-Rutgers community, and the wider community of New York and Philadelphia. Interested students are also invited to participate. There are customarily three such series each year. Each seminar series is conducted by a distinguished artist, critic, or scholar who is invited to present material that he or she takes to be of interest to specialists and non-specialists alike, and which seems likely to lead to the exchange of ideas and to possibilities for further study. Seminar topics characteristically represent work-in-progress, although reconsiderations of previous work have proven fruitful.

Description

The collection is composed of correspondence with the guest speakers. Most folders contain a letter of invitation to speak at the Gauss Seminars, correspondence concerning presentation dates, lodging, and material for distribution during the presentation. Other items include payment for lectures and correspondence requesting additional lecture dates at other institutions during the speaker's stay in the United States.

The final folder contains material from a symposium on the subject of Thomas Mann's *Dr. Faustus*. Symposium speakers, all of whom taught at Princeton at various times, were E.B.O. Borgerhoff (Romance Languages and Literatures); Francis Fergusson, (Comparative Literature); Erich Kahler (Germanic Languages and Literatures); Edmund King (Romance Languages and Literatures); David Sachs (Philosophy); and Joseph Kerman (Music).

Arrangement

Organized into the following series:

The collection is arranged in alphabetical order by the last name of the lecturer. Box 1, Folder 1 contains an index with each lecturer's name and topic of discussion. Topics are varied and cover many different subjects in the humanities such as metaphysics, political thought, and existential theme. Other topics examine a specific genre such as poetry, romanticism, and science fiction.

Access and Use

Access

Collection is open for research use.

Restrictions on Use and Copyright Information

Single photocopies may be made for research purposes. Permission to publish material from the collection must be requested from the University Archivist. Copyright is held by the Trustees of Princeton University.

Related Materials

Related Archival Material

More information on the activities of the Gauss Seminars in Criticism can be found in the Historical Subject Files and Presidents' Records: Robert F. Goheen, 1957-1972. [Note: President Goheen's records are restricted until 2012.]

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Gauss Seminars in Criticism Records, Box and Folder Number; University Archives, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

Processing Information

This collection was processed by Carol Burke in January 2003. Finding aid written by Carol Burke in January 2003.

Encoding

Machine-readable finding aid encoded in EAD 2002 by Techbooks and Cristela García-Spitz on October 20, 2006.

Descriptive Rules Used

Finding aid content adheres to that prescribed by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

Subject Headings

These materials have been indexed in the [Princeton University Library online catalog](#) using the following terms. Those seeking related materials should search under these terms.

- Amis, Kingsley.
- Arendt, Hannah, 1906-1975.
- Auden, W. H. (Wystan Hugh), 1907-1973.
- Chomsky, Noam.
- Eco, Umberto.
- Said, Edward W.

- Morgenthau, Hans Joachim, 1904- -- Correspondence.
- Historical criticism (Literature)
- Literature -- 1258-1800 -- History and criticism.
- Literature -- 16th century -- History and criticism.
- Literature -- 17th century -- History and criticism.
- Literature -- 18th century -- History and criticism.
- Literature -- 19th century -- History and criticism.
- Literature -- 20th century -- History and criticism.
- Seminars -- New Jersey -- Princeton.
- Princeton University

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