

Recent decades have witnessed a rise in the political-historical significance of bodies and remains of the dead, with corpses unearched and reburied, with graves desecrated and restored. Among many different and important examples of this phenomenon can be mentioned reopened graves in the former Eastern Europe and the struggle among formerly colonized indigenous populations around the world to recover the remains of their dead. This has led to a deepened interest, especially among anthropologists and historians, to understand the underlying logic of the role of the dead in the constitution and transformation of societies. The lecture recalls some examples of this phenomenon and of the recent literature and places them in a broader context of what it means to be-with-the-dead as a phenomenological-existential category. 'Necropolitics' is presented as a way to think the constitution of the political as such, encompassing both the living and the dead, as figures, also, for the present and the past. Pointing beyond Weber's canonical distinction between enchanted and disenchanting times, it shows how it is only within the framework of an expanded ethical-practical understanding of what it means to exist historically that we can begin to understand the political function and significance of the dead.

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**ICI Lecture Series ERRANS, in Time**  
Conceptions of time and temporal experience seem more at odds now than ever. Hamlet's hunch that 'the time is out of joint' has turned into an evergreen of critical discourse. Admittedly, ideas of physical, social, revolutionary time, internal time consciousness, or historical experience are far from settled in their respective discourses and practices. Yet attempts to harmonize or correlate the understanding of time and temporal phenomena generated in different disciplines all-too quickly – and largely with violent effect – resort to normative, if not teleological ideas of progress, efficiency, narrative sense-making, or experiential plenitude. The ICI's current Lecture Series **ERRANS, in Time** asks whether the heterogeneous relations between discordant conceptions of time and temporality can be understood as being 'erratically' structured, that is, as marked by inherent misapprehensions, a dissonance that defies regulation, and an unexpected variability.

# Hans Ruin

# Necropolitics:

On the Constitution of  
Community Through Caring for  
the Dead

