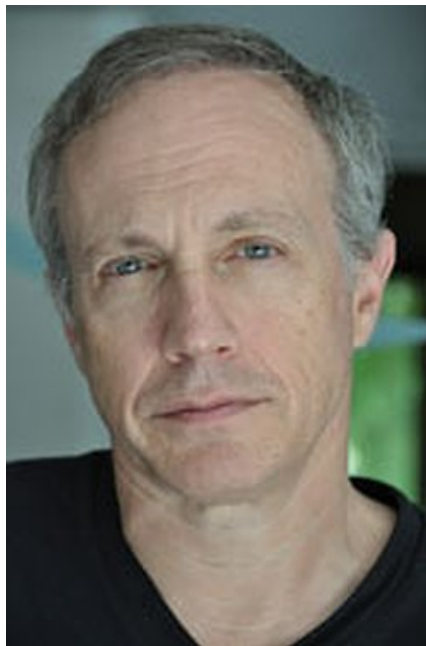


Philosophy research seminar

Philosophy as a Performative Way of Life: Writing and Beyond

Richard Shusterman, Florida Atlantic University

Friday 11th March, 3-5pm in Arts 2, Pat Hanan Room 501



Abstract

Philosophy is typically identified with textual practices of reading and writing and oral dialog that have long dominated the genre. But it has also, especially in ancient times, fiercely asserted itself as something other and more than textual exercises. Philosophy claimed to be a comprehensive way of life, an art of living dedicated to the pursuit of wisdom (as the word “philosophia” implies), and therefore likewise dedicated to the practices that such pursuit of living wisely should entail. The recovery of this image of philosophy at the end of the twentieth century has been largely due to the path-breaking efforts of Pierre Hadot and Michel Foucault. But almost a century earlier we find the same aim of recovering philosophy as an art of living in pragmatists like William James and John Dewey, who (like Nietzsche) found inspiration in Emerson’s idea of perfectionist self-cultivation and self-stylization, an idea that Montaigne most powerfully expressed in Renaissance thought. “To compose our character is our duty, not to compose books.” This talk explores the idea and limits of philosophy without writing but also the idea of philosophical work beyond the realm of words, and the relation of language and the non-linguistic in the philosophically inspired discipline of somaesthetics.