The Department of Religious Studies
Brown Bag Lunch Colloquium Series
University of Pittsburgh

Presents

“We are the Real Indians”: Racial Identity, Religious Narrative, and the Interpretation of Ancient American Archaeological Sites

Spencer Dew
Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and Mattie Allen Broyles Inaugural Year Research Chair, Centenary College of Louisiana

March 6, 2013
12:00 Noon
2628 Cathedral of Learning

The talk will consider three examples of contemporary religious appropriation of ancient American "mound-builder" sites, pointing to a shared dynamic wherein claims to the authority of antiquity and original ownership overlap with new interpretations of racial categories. The cases of Mormons in Illinois, Neo-pagans in Wisconsin, and the Black Washitaw Nation of northern Louisiana reveal the religious seizure of archaeological expertise as part of a broader discursive pattern that enables creative interpretations of history, place, and race.

Spencer Dew is the author of Learning for Revolution (San Diego State University Press, 2011), a study of pedagogical and political aims in the novels of Kathy Acker, and is currently completing a book on the origins of the Moorish Science Temple of America religious movement. He also teaches in the BA program of the Chicago Police Department.