

New York City October 8th - 10th 2026

ERICH FROMM
AND THE CRISIS
OF DEMOCRACY
EDUCATIONAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL,
AND SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

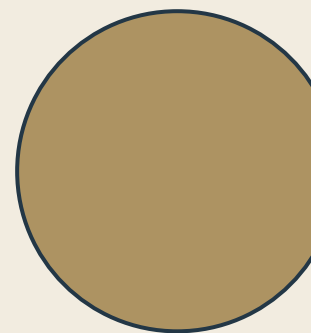
EFSNA



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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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Program in Philosophy and Education

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Erich Fromm Society of North America

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**ERICH FROMM
STUDY CENTER
BERLIN**

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Funding for the Second Biennial Conference of the Erich Fromm Society of North America has been provided by the Fund for Psychoanalytic Research through the American Psychoanalytic Association

Funding for the panel presentations by the Erich Fromm Study Center at the Psychoanalytic University Berlin - marked below as "EFSC @ IPU" - has been provided by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation.

INTRODUCTION



ERICH FROMM AND THE CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY

Educational, Psychological, and Sociological Perspectives

Welcome to the Second Biennial Conference of the Erich Fromm Society of North America! Whether in person or online, we appreciate your joining us for this important and timely conversation about how Frommian scholarship and clinical practice can help us to understand and combat the crisis of democracy that now imperils human and nonhuman life everywhere on Earth.

Indeed, over the past several years there has been a growing revival of interest in the works of Erich Fromm. Contemporary scholars and clinicians from a variety of disciplines and orientations are increasingly finding that Fromm—as a sociologist, psychoanalyst, political activist, public intellectual, and first-generation Frankfurt School critical theorist—speaks to our present global situation in a uniquely powerful way.

Thus, we hope that EFSNA's Second Biennial Conference can serve to bolster this Frommian renaissance. We look forward to meeting with our colleagues from Canada, Mexico, and around the world. We are grateful to the many groups and individuals who have supported our work in organizing this conference. And we are excited about what the future holds for our burgeoning Society!

Finally, as you wander around the Columbia University campus—a place that Fromm himself walked when he taught here nearly a century ago—we invite you to wonder deeply about what it means to be a Frommian scholar and/or clinician in 2026 and beyond. How can Fromm, as both a survivor of twentieth-century fascism and its premier theorist, guide us in our efforts to overcome the crisis of democracy that we now face in the twenty-first century? In what ways can Fromm's life and work inspire our educational, psychological, and sociological perspectives on the world today?

Is there a Frommian hopefulness to be found amidst it all?

Sincerely,

Rory Varrato, PhD
President and Executive Director of EFSNA

Chiara Ginevra Berra, MPhil
EFSNA Executive Committee Member

DAY 1

THURSDAY

OCTOBER 8, 2026



FULL - DAY SCHEDULE

9:00 AM

EXECUTIVE SESSION

9:00 - 11:00 AM Closed Meeting

11:00 AM

BAGELS, COFFEE & WELCOME REMARKS

Food provided · 11:00 AM–12:30 PM *Zankel 118*

12:45 PM

PARALLEL SESSION 1

Tracks A · B · C — 12:45–2:45 PM · full listing on page 5

A

B

C

2:45 PM

BREAK

2:45–3:00 PM

3:00 PM

PARALLEL SESSION 2

Tracks A · B · C — 3:00–5:00 PM · full listing on page 6

A

B

C

5:00 PM

BREAK

5:00–5:30 PM

5:30 PM

KEYNOTE ADDRESS — GLENN ALBRECHT

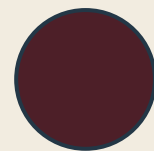
5:30–7:00 PM · Part of the Philosophy and Education Program's Colloquium Series

Milbank Chapel

7:00 PM

RECEPTION

Dinner provided · 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM *Zankel 118*



PARALLEL SESSION 1

TRACK A

Horace Mann - 138

The Authoritarian Character Revisited

Robert M. Cutler

Disindividuation and the Authoritarian Character: Fromm, Klein and Simondon

Naomi Janowitz

Is the Revolutionary Character a Match for the Authoritarian Personality

KC Boismier

Symbolic Interaction in Authoritarian Times: A Frommadian Synthesis

TRACK B

Horace Mann - 144

Authoritarianism in Practice: Comparative Case Studies

Amihan April C. Mella-Alcazar

Duterte's "War on Drugs" in the Philippines as an Expression of Nazism from the Frommian Perspective

Matheus Romanetto

One of a Kind: Familial Character and Political Conflict in Brazil

Daniel F. Davis

Social Character, the Crises of Democracy, and the Rise of Right-Wing Populism

TRACK C

Horace Mann - 150

Frommian Approaches to Clinical Practice Today

Sean G. Meggeson

Contemporary Psychoanalysis as an Escape from Freedom: Empathy, Risk and Social Comfomity in Clinical Practice

Jeffrey Sacks

Ricoeur and Fromm: A Hopeful Platform for Repair of the Traumatized Global Social Imaginary

Plamen Minchev

Am I Normal, or How Society Shapes Our Understanding of Normalcy



DAY 1 · THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8 · 3:00–5:00 PM

PARALLEL SESSION 2

TRACK A

Horace Mann-138

Narcissism, Othering, and the Social Unconscious

Sandra Buechler

Fromm's Views on Group and Individual Narcissism

Michael Korson, LMFT, CGP

The Other Kind of Othering: A Response to Living with War

Or Netanely

Social Psychosis: When the Sane Go Mad

TRACK B

Horace Mann-144

Political Economy: Liberalism, Socialism, and Their Discontents

Michael J. Thompson

Erich Fromm and the Crisis of Liberalism

Axel Fair-Schulz

Erich Fromm and the Lost World of "Real-Existing Socialism": Lessons for Democratic Socialism Today

Sally Ly

Love as Labor: Fromm, Social Reproduction, and the Limits of Love under Capitalism

TRACK C

Horace Mann-150

Biophilia, Ecology, and Resistance

Luca Mandara

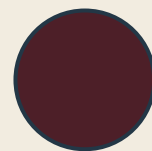
For a Critical Eco-Psychology: Revisiting the Fromm-Marcuse Debate

Nils Bischof

Resisting War: Biophilia from the Perspectives of Erich Fromm and Bertrand Russell

Jeffrey Nall-Bradford

Biophilous Martyrdom: Erich Fromm, Aaron Bushnell, and the Sanity of Radical Protest



FULL-DAY SCHEDULE

9:00 AM

EFSNA MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The Future of EFSNA - Conflict Resolution and Growth 9:00–11:00 AM

Horace Mann 140

11:00 AM

BREAK

11:15 AM

PARALLEL SESSION 3

Tracks A · B · C · D — 11:15 AM–1:15 PM · full listing on page 8

A

B

C

D

1:15 PM

LUNCH

1:15–3:00 PM — Provided

Zankel 118

3:00 PM

PARALLEL SESSION 4

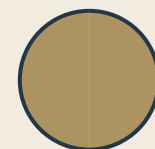
Track A 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM · full listing on page 9

A

B

C

D



PARALLEL SESSION 3

TRACK A Horace Mann- 138

EFSC @ IPU Organizations, Leadership, and Collective Dynamics

Katrin Voigt

*Collective Narcissism as a Social Megatrend
and Its Implications for a Critical Organizational
Psychology*

Severin Hornung

Thomas Höge

Christine Unterrainer

*The Anatomy of Neoliberal Destructiveness:
Anti-Humanist Political-Economic Ideology
and Socio-Ecological Polycrisis*

Thomas Kühn

*Any Revolution of Hope?
Transformative Leadership as Normative Identity
Work in Democratic Crisis*

TRACK B Horace Mann - 144

EFSC @ IPU Social Character, Socialization, and Political-Emotional Mobilization

Niclas O'Donnokoe

*The Agency of Society: Familial Negotiations
and Relational Forms as Sites of Psychic
Socialization in Crisis-Stricken Democracies*

Michael Kubsda

*The Emotional World of Modern Humans
and the Propaganda Strategies of
Authoritarian Agitators*

Gavin Sullivan

*Grievances, Resentment and Ressentiment
in Fromm's 1929 to 1933 Weimar Germany
'Workers and employees on the eve of the
Third Reich' study*

TRACK C Horace Mann-150

Fromm in Dialogue: Intellectual Histories

Nick Braune

*Why Was Philosopher Ruth Nanda Anshen
so Attracted to Fromm's Humanism and Hope?*

Eric Oberle

*The Knowledge-Love Problem and the Idea of Modern
Interdisciplinarity in Fromm's Works*

Sam Boyles

The Other Psychoanalysts

TRACK D Horace Mann- 148

Education, Embodiment, and Liberation

Samuel Mendonça

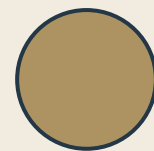
*Convictions, Lies, and the Desire for Submission:
Nietzsche, Fromm, and the Crisis of Democracy in Brazil*

Shapel Monique LaBorde

*Biophilia as Black Feminist Pedagogy: Fromm, Ancestral
Education, and the Practice of Becoming*

Uzma Chowdhury

*To Have or To Be a Child: Fromm Contra Colonized
Childhood*



PARALLEL SESSION 4

TRACK A Horace Mann- 138

EFSC @ IPU Humanistic Foundation and Critical Theory of Democracy

Rainer Funk

*Fromm's Concept of Social Character
and the Question of Normality*

Jonathan Keir

*Democracy is Dead! Long Live Democracy!
The Socialist Humanism of Erich Fromm
and Oscar Wilde in an AI-Driven Future*

Jurgen Hardeck

*A Renaissance of Humanism Rather Than
Vengeance for a Life Unlived – Erich Fromm's
Alternative Critical Theory*

TRACK B Horace Mann - 144

Critical Pedagogy and Democratic Education

Neil McLaughlin & Lisa Taylor

*Erich Fromm and Educational Reform:
Riesman, Freire, Illich and hooks.*

Kenneth Rösen

*Manufacturing Consent: Extending
the New Sociology of Education
with Erich Fromm*

Bryant William Sculos

*Erich Fromm on the Pedagogy of Politics & the
Politics of Pedagogy*

TRACK C Horace Mann-150

Erich Fromm and Marx's Concept of Man (1962) for Today

Joan Braune

*"AI is African Intelligence":
Recovering Workers' Agency Against AI Idolatry*

Kieran Durkin

The Need Relation Of Bourgeois Society.

Alexander Rene Marek Stoa

*Recovering Factories, Proletarianizing the
Neighbourhoods: Restoring Communal Life
& Reducing Alienation during Crises*

TRACK D Horace Mann- 148

The Way We Dream Today and the Tyranny of Technology

Daniel Burston

*Irrational Doubt and Conspiracy Theories in Fromm and
the Frankfurt School*

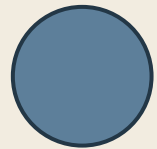
Grace Katzmar

*Taking the Leap: Transformative Resistance Against
Authoritarian Structures*

Lauren Langman

Tova Benski

Toward A Sane Society in the 21st Century



FULL - DAY SCHEDULE

9:00 AM

PARALLEL SESSION 5

Tracks A · B · C — 9:00–11:00 AM · full listing on page 11

A

B

C

11:00 AM

BRUNCH

Brunch on your own 11:00 AM–1:00 PM

1:00 PM

PARALLEL SESSION 6

Tracks A · B · C — 1:00–3:00 PM · full listing on page 12

A

B

C

3:00 PM

BREAK

3:00–3:30 PM

3:30 PM

PLENARY ADDRESS — RAINER FUNK

3:30–4:30 PM

See closing plenary flyer, page 15

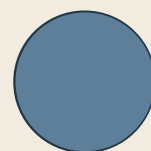
Milbank Chapel

4:30 PM

CLOSING REMARKS & FAREWELL

4:30–5:00 PM

Milbank Chapel



PARALLEL SESSION 5

TRACK A

Horace Mann-138

Democratic Selfhood, Legitimacy, and Leadership

James E. Block

Fashioning a Democratic Individual

Stephen Onley

The Self-Concealing Crisis: Automaton Conformity and Democratic Legitimacy

Dustin J. Byrd

Beyond the Chains of Delusion: Erich Fromm and the False Consciousness of the Americal Precariat

TRACK B

Horace Mann-144

Alienation, Suffering, and the Search for a Sane Society

Lynn S. Chancer

Psychosocial Criminology and Erich Fromm: Drawing on Fromm to Illuminate the Study of Crime and Violence

Andrew J. Shapiro

Complicity of the Oppressed: A Socially Patterned Defect that Reproduces Inequality

Brooke A. Finley

Escape from Caring: Capitalist Degradation of the Nursing Profession and the Struggle for a Sane System of Care

TRACK C

Horace Mann-150

The Frommian Mind – Book Launch

Rory Varrato

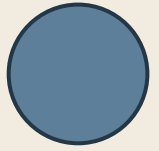
A Multidimensional View of Fromm as Philosopher

Jeremiah Morelock

Masculinity Problems and Authoritarian Escape Attempts

Chiara Ginevra Berra

Necrophilous Aesthetics: Erich Fromm and the Ethics of Artistic Production



PARALLEL SESSION 6

TRACK A

Horace Mann-138

Psyche, Culture and Ritual Across Traditions

Ayesha Hussain

The Political Unconscious and Psychotherapy: Being a Muslim Psychotherapist in India

Shir Shanun

Frommian Transformation in Ritual

Ewelina Topolska

"I Want My Personal Suffering to Cause Widespread Suffering": The Inseparability of Psyche and Politics in Angélica Liddell and Erich Fromm

TRACK B

Horace Mann-144

The Erosion and Renewal of Democracy: Global Perspectives

Pablo Javier Varela Fregoso

Is It Possible to Move Towards a Humanist Democracy?

Jacob Cherry

Freedom Without Meaning: Erich Fromm, Youth Alienation, and the Crisis of Democracy

Víctor Lazcano

Reclaiming Our Freedom: The Potential of Frommian Thought in the Latin American Struggle for a Post-Neoliberal Future

TRACK C

Horace Mann-150

What Made Us Human? Cooperation, Evolution, and Fromm

Mauricio Cortina

Revising Fromm's Views on Development and Human Nature

Robert A. Paul

Dual Inheritance and its Implications

Christian Herreman

The Extended Mimetic Gesture



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KEYNOTE ADDRESS

SOCIAL SYMBIOSIS AND CULTURE IN THE SYMBIOCENE

A Post-Frommian Analysis

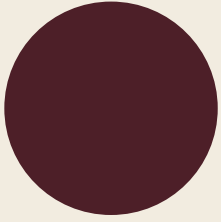
GLENN ALBRECHT

MILBANK CHAPEL

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2026

5:30 – 7:00 PM

Philosophy and Education Colloquium Series



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

GLENN ALBRECHT

ABOUT

Glenn Albrecht is an Australian environmental philosopher whose work explores the emotional and psychological dimensions of environmental change. He is best known for coining the concept of solastalgia — the distress produced by negative environmental change close to home — a term now used across psychology, medicine, and the environmental humanities, and one that resonates deeply with Fromm's notion of biophilia.

He served as Professor of Sustainability at Murdoch University and as Associate Professor of Environmental Studies at the University of Newcastle, and has held an honorary appointment at the University of Sydney. His recent work proposes the Symbiocene — a future era defined by mutually beneficial relationships between humans and the rest of the living world — as a hopeful successor to the Anthropocene.

SELECTED WORKS

- *The Symbiocene: Our Only Future*
Cornell University Press, forthcoming
- *"Solastalgia: A New Concept in Health and Identity"*
PAN: Philosophy Activism Nature, 2005
- *"Solastalgia: The Distress Caused by Environmental Change"*
Australasian Psychiatry, 2007 (with co-authors)
- *Earth Emotions: New Words for a New World*
Cornell University Press, 2019



PLENARY ADDRESS - MILBANK CHAPEL

THE HAVING MODE OF EXISTENCE *and Artificial Intelligence*

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON DEMOCRACY

RAINER FUNK



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10TH 2026, 3:30 PM



PLENARY SPEAKER

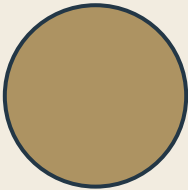
RAINER FUNK

ABOUT

Rainer Funk (b.1943) is a practicing psychoanalyst in Tübingen, Germany and is Erich Fromm's Literary Executor. He wrote his dissertation on Erich Fromm and became in 1974 Erich Fromm's last assistant in Locarno, Switzerland. Funk is the director of the Erich Fromm Institute in Tübingen and co-director of the Erich Fromm Study Center at the International Psychoanalytic University in Berlin. His own publications mostly refer to social psychological topics. For more information see his website: rainerfunk.com.

SELECTED WORKS

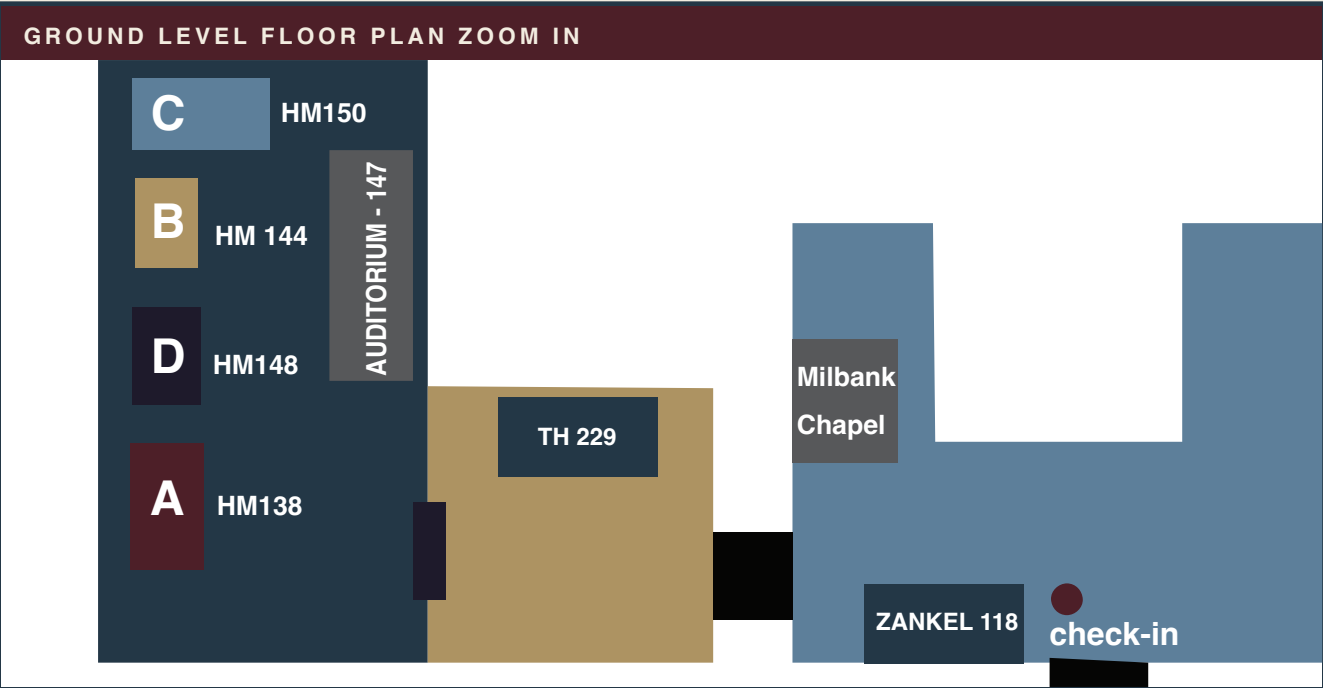
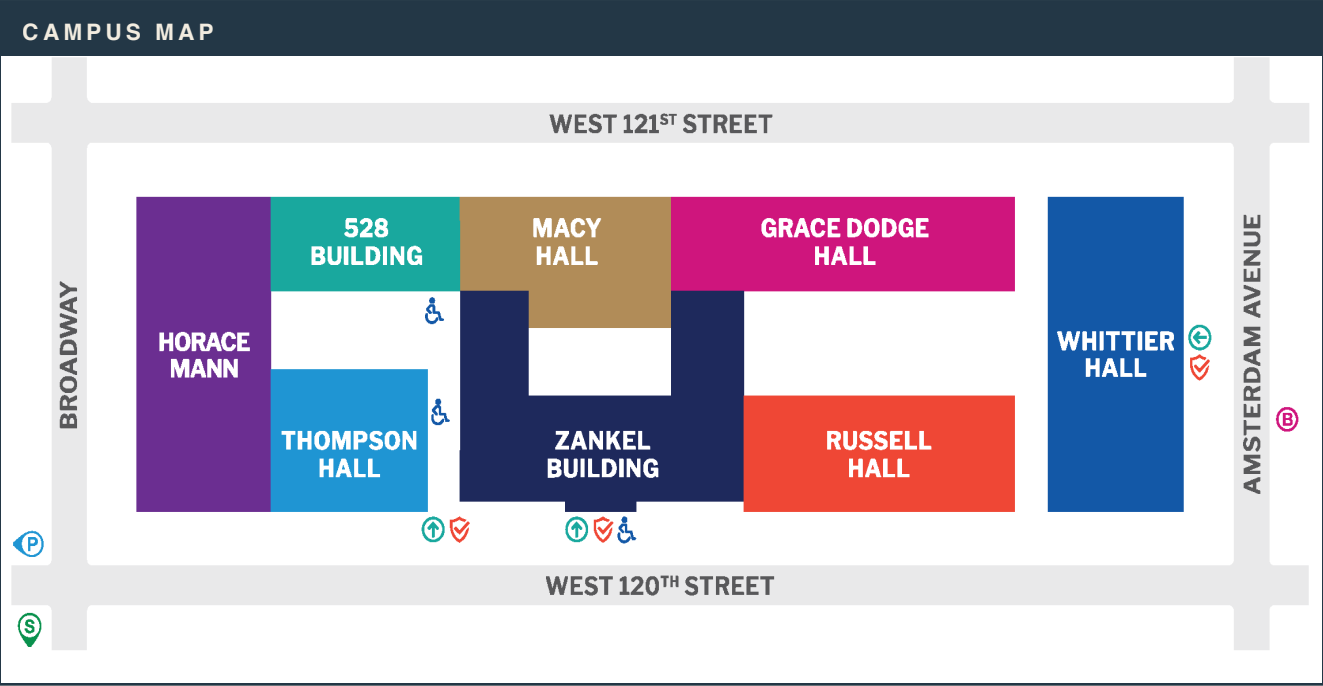
- *Life Itself Is an Art: The Life and Work of Erich Fromm*
Bloomsbury, 2019
- *Erich Fromm: His Life and Ideas — An Illustrated Biography*
Continuum, 2000
- *The Clinical Erich Fromm: Personal Accounts and Papers on Therapeutic Technique*
Editor — Rodopi, 2009
- *Erich Fromm: Gesamtausgabe (Collected Works, 12 volumes)*
Editor — Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt / dtv



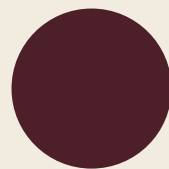
FINDING YOUR WAY

CAMPUS MAPS

Teachers College, Columbia University · 525 West 120th Street, New York, NY 10027



OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION



GETTING THERE

Subway: 1 train to 116th Street–Columbia University, then a short walk north to 120th Street.

Bus: M4, M60-SBS, and M104 stop nearby. Limited street parking — public transit recommended.

REGISTRATION & CHECK-IN

A valid government-issued photo ID is required for entrance. Guests must enter through the main entrance at Zankel Hall, where they will be issued a visitor pass. Guests must keep their visitor passes and name tags with them at all times while on campus.

WI-FI

Network: TC Guest · Password: Name and Email required

ACCESSIBILITY

Wheelchair-accessible entrances and facilities are marked on the ground-level map (page 17).

RESTROOMS

HM 136 – Women's Restroom
HM 137 – Lactation Room
HM 151 – All-Gender Restroom
HM 152B – Men's Restroom

MEALS & COFFEE

Breakfast will be provided on the 8th and brunch on the 10th. Reception follows the first keynote address.

Within the University you can dine at Grace Dodge Dining Hall or Everett Café.

Many other dining options are located on Broadway between 116th St and 110th St.

CONTACT

Conference questions: cb3882@tc.columbia.edu & rv2373@tc.columbia.edu



FULL PROGRAM & UPDATES ONLINE EFSNA.ORG

NOTES



THANK YOU FOR JOINING US

ERICH FROMM

and the

CRISIS

OF DEMOCRACY

OCTOBER 8–10, 2026 · NEW YORK CITY

*“Love is the only sane and satisfactory answer
to the problem of human existence.”*

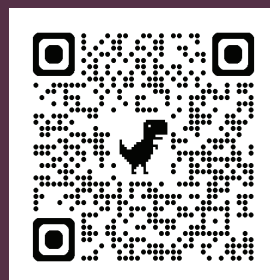
— ERICH FROMM, THE ART OF LOVING (1956)

ERICH FROMM SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

Second Biennial Conference · Teachers College, Columbia University

STAY IN TOUCH

Membership, updates, and the full program online



EFSSNA.ORG