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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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

11:00 AM

BRUNCH & WELCOME REMARKS

Brunch 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*

DAY 1 · THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8 · 12:45–2:45 PM

PARALLEL SESSION 1

TRACK A — Horace Mann- 138

The Authoritarian Character Revisited

Robert M. Cutler
Disindividuation and the Authoritarian Character: Fromm, Klein and Sismondon

Naomi Janowitz
Is the Revolutionary Character a Match for the Authoritarian Personality

KC Boismier
Symbolic Interaction in Authoritarian Times: A Frommeadian Synthesis

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

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

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

DAY 2

FRIDAY

OCTOBER 9, 2026

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 — on your own, see Other Useful Information

3:00 PM

PARALLEL SESSION 4

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

A B C D

DAY 2 · FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9 · 11:15 AM–1:15 PM

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

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 toFromm's Humanism and Hope?

Eric Oberle
The Other Psychoanalysts

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

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

DAY 2 · FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9 · 3:00–5:00 PM

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, Friere, 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 Stoan
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

DAY 3

SATURDAY

OCTOBER 10, 2026

FULL- DAY SCHEDULE

9:15 AM

PARALLEL SESSION 5

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

A B C

11:15 AM

BRUNCH

Brunch provided 11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Thompson 229

12:45 PM

PARALLEL SESSION 6

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

A B C

2:45 PM

BREAK

2:45–3:00 PM

3:00 PM

PLENARY ADDRESS — RAINER FUNK

3:00–4:00 PM

See closing plenary flyer, page 15

Horace Mann 147

4:00 PM

CLOSING REMARKS & FAREWELL

4:00–5:00 PM

Horace Mann 147

DAY 3 · SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10 · 9:00–11:00 AM

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 od 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

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KEYNOTE ADDEESS

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

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PLENARY ADDRESS - AUDITORIUM HM-147

THE HAVING MODE OF EXISTENCE *and Artificial Intelligence* PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON DEMOCRACY

RAINER FUNK

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10TH 2026, 3:00 PM

PLENARY SPEAKER

RAINER FUNK

ABOUT

Rainer Funk (*1943) lives a psychoanalyst in Tübingen, Germany and is Erich Fromm's Literary Executor. He wrote his dissertation on Erich Fromm and became 1974 Erich Fromm's last assistant in Locarno, Switzerland. Funk is 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

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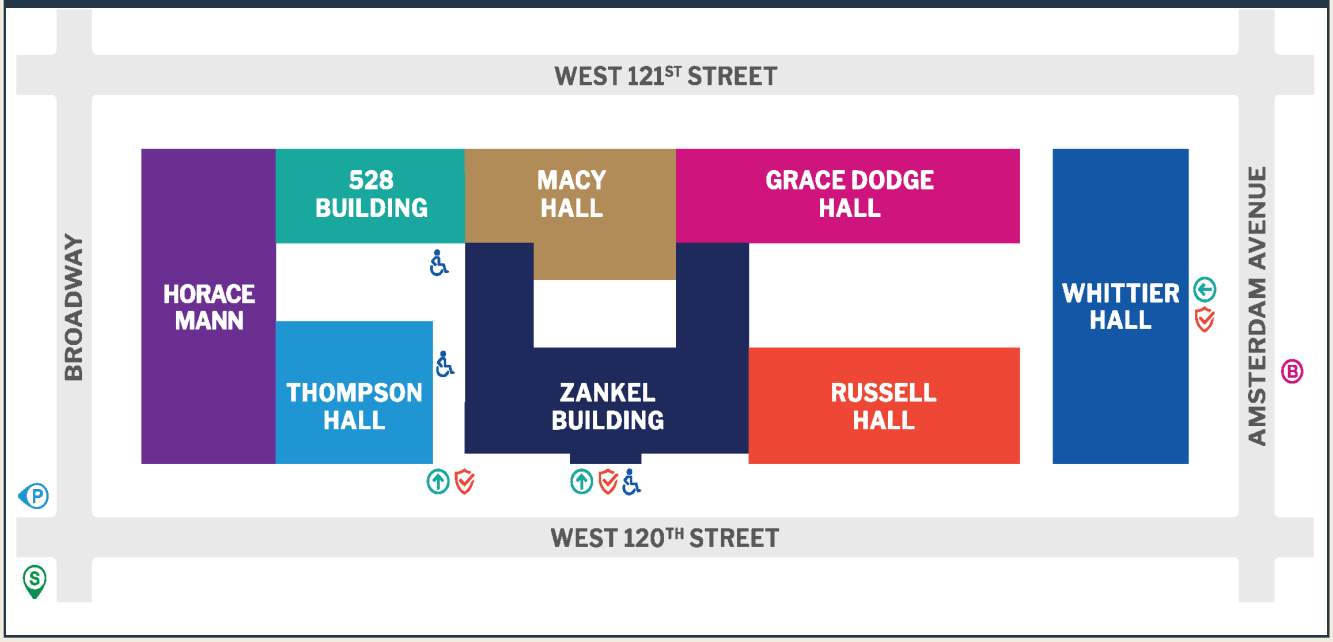
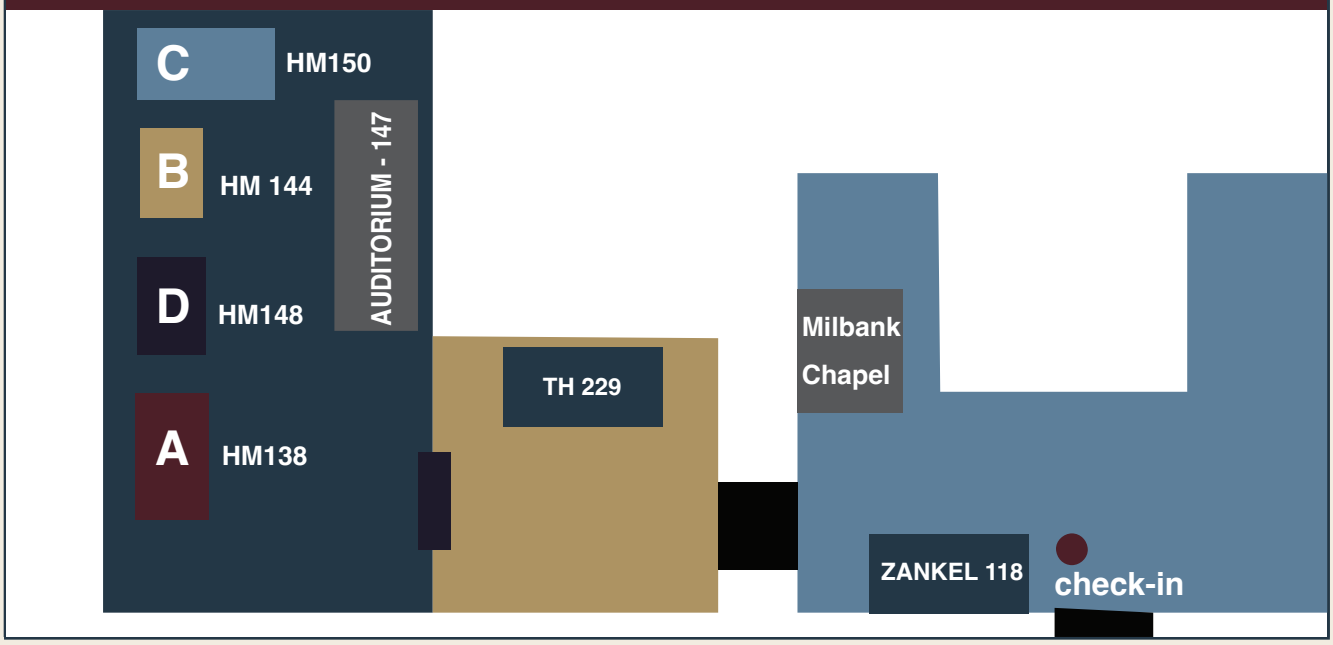
CAMPUS MAP



GROUND LEVEL FLOOR PLAN ZOOM IN



PRACTICAL DETAILS

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

Brunch will be provided on the 8th and the 10th. Reception follows the first keynote adress.
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

FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

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