

## THE SPEAKER

**STATHIS GOURGOURIS** was born in Hollywood and grew up in Athens, Greece. He received his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from UCLA in 1990 and is currently Professor of Classics, English, and Comparative Literature and Director of the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society at Columbia University. He has also taught comparative literature at Princeton and UCLA, and has been Visiting Professor at Yale, University of Michigan, and the National Polytechnic in Athens.

Professor Gourgouris writes and teaches on a variety of subjects, ultimately entwined around questions of the poetics and politics of modernity. He is the author of *Dream Nation* (Stanford, 1996) and *Does Literature Think?* (Stanford, 2003), and editor of *Freud and Fundamentalism* (Fordham, 2010). In addition to these book projects he has also published numerous articles on ancient Greek philosophy, modern poetics, film and theater studies, contemporary music, law and democracy, psychoanalysis. In May 2012, he gave the *State Library Lectures in Philosophy and Society* in Sydney, Australia, which were broadcast on Australian National Radio and published as *Lessons in Secular Criticism* in the “Thinking Out Loud” series of Fordham University Press in 2013. He is currently completing work on two other book projects of secular criticism and radical democracy—*The Perils of the One* and *Nothing Sacred*—while continuing to work on a long term project on music and the problem of listening.

He is also an internationally awarded poet, with four volumes of poetry published in Greek, most recent being *Introduction to Physics* (Athens, 2005). He has translated the work of various Greek poets into English—notably Yiannis Patillis’ *Camel of Darkness* (QRL Book Series, Vol. 36, 1997)—as well as the poetry of Heiner Müller and Carolyn Forché into Greek. He writes regularly in internet media (*Al Jazeera*, *The Immanent Frame*, *Greek Left Review*) and in major Greek newspapers and journals on contemporary political issues and problems in the politics of culture.

Professor Gourgouris served on the Board of Supervisors of the English Institute at Harvard (2006–2009) and also as President of the Modern Greek Studies Association (2006–2012). More recently, as Director of ICLS at Columbia, he has spearheaded initiatives, supported by the Mellon Foundation, to develop a new curriculum in Medical Humanities and a research project on “Rethinking the Human Sciences” which is meant to bring together humanists and scientists in collaborative inquiry and research on the question of “what is human?”



## THE LECTURE

An examination of poetic indebtedness in a context that defies calculation. What do societies owe to their poets? What does it mean for societies to lay claim to poets? What do poets owe to their language? What does it mean for poetry to exist beyond its language? Why is Greek indebted to Cavafy? What does Cavafy owe to James Merrill?

## THE LECTURE SERIES

A gift agreement, negotiated between the Foundation for Modern Greek Studies and the Regents of the University of Michigan for the benefit of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, established the Dr. Dimitri and Irmgard Pallas Annual Lecture in Modern Greek Studies. Its purpose is to provide an annual lecture “to promote greater awareness of modern Greek history and its artistic, scientific, philosophical, ethical, political, and other contributions to civilization. Drawing on its ancient (classical) and Renaissance (Byzantine) traditions, Greek culture has continued to explore and disseminate the values of logos, cosmos, polis, episteme, techne, philia, phronesis, metron, and above all anthropos. These values are of central importance to the contemporary quest for a shared, meaningful world.” The lecture will bring annually to Michigan an eminent speaker of international reputation who offers new views on significant phenomena by drawing on the Greek experience since the end of the Byzantine era.

## THE DONORS

Dr. Dimitri Pallas, a native of Greece, studied at the University of Athens and did graduate work in the United States. He was Senior Staff Cardiologist at the Division of Cardiology in the Henry Ford Health System at Fairlane. He is a Founding Member of the American Hellenic Congress and Founder and President of the Foundation for Modern Greek Studies. Irmgard Baier Pallas is a native of Germany and fluent speaker of Greek. She has taught German Language and Literature at the Goethe Institute in Athens and at Wayne State University.

James Merrill, *Writer*, Stonington, Connecticut, 1956  
Photograph by Rollie McKenna  
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C.P. Cavafy, Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive

## PREVIOUS PALLAS LECTURES

### 2012 — Alexander Kitroeff

(Haverford College) Ethnicity Beyond the Ethnic Enclave: Greek Americans in Brooklyn

### 2011 — Gregory Jusdanis

(Ohio State University)  
On Greek Friendship

### 2010 — Karen Van Dyck

(Columbia University) Translations, Anthologies, and their Critical Excess

### 2009 — Fani-Maria Tsigakou

(Benaki Museum, Athens)  
Reconstructing History: Images of Romantic Hellenism

### 2008 — Andre Gerolymatos

(Simon Fraser University) The Struggle for Greek Independence and the International Diplomatic War in the 1820s

### 2007 — Maestro Constantine Kitsopoulos

(Queens Symphony Orchestra, Director/  
Chatham Opera, Founder and Director)  
Toward a Greek National Music

### 2006 — Helen C. Evans

(The Metropolitan Museum of Art)  
Byzantium Revisited: The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia in the Twentieth Century

### 2005 — Kevin Featherstone

(London School of Economics and Political Science) Why is Greece Becoming So Hard to Govern?

### 2004 — Dan Georgakas

(CUNY) The New and Future Greek America

### 2003 — Stathis Kalyvas

(Yale) Violence and Civil War: the 1940s in Greece Seen "From Below"

## THE MODERN GREEK PROGRAM

The Modern Greek Program at the University of Michigan (established in 1990) covers language, literature, and culture, offers an introduction to the Greek world of the last ten centuries, and focuses on its contemporary social reality and intellectual achievements. The Program promotes contextual study, both local and global, of contemporary Greek culture, placing particular emphasis on literary studies, critical theory, cultural politics, ethnicity, and diaspora (especially Greek-American).

## MISSION

**Teaching** | A range of courses provides a broad, liberal arts education for undergraduates and research training for graduate students.

**Research** | Faculty and students pursue their own scholarly research, actively participate in conferences, serve as editors and on editorial boards of journals, and regularly publish their work.

**Events** | Each year the program organizes or co-sponsors lectures, conferences, performances, film screenings, concerts, art exhibits, and readings of Greek literature in a variety of venues.

**Collections** | In cooperation with the University Library, the program acquires books, archives and other materials in Greek and other languages to develop a collection of modern Greek sources and add to an already rich collection of English language books on Greek society, history, and the arts.

## MODERN GREEK PROGRAM DEPARTMENT of CLASSICAL STUDIES

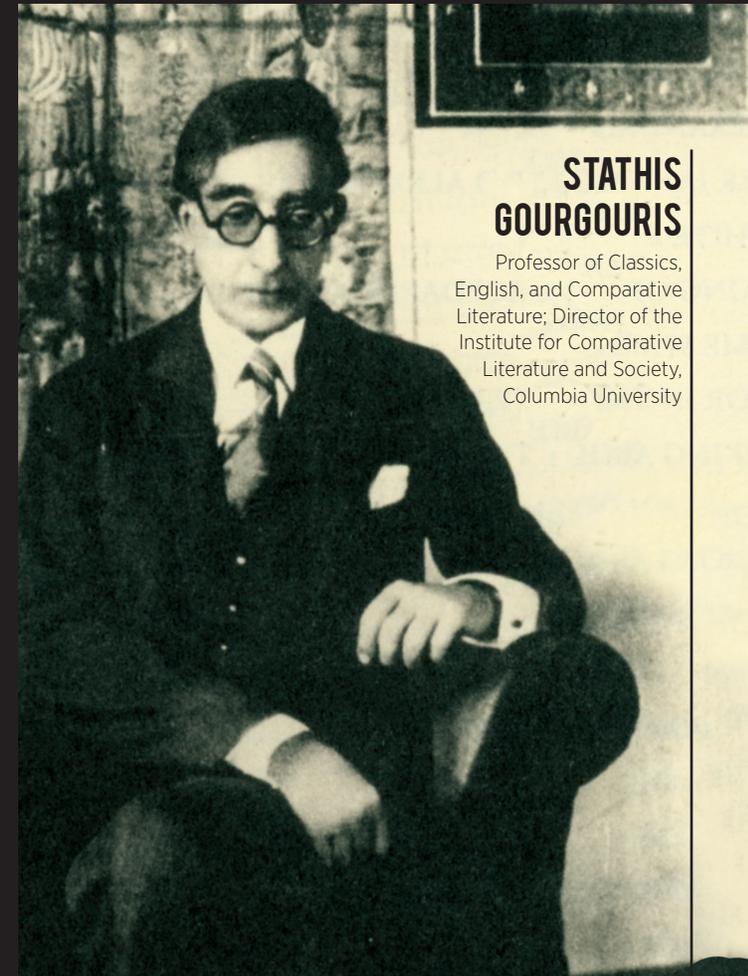
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MLSA

11<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
DIMITRIS & IRMGARD PALLAS  
MODERN GREEK LECTURE

# CAVAFY'S DEBT

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 4:00 PM  
Classics Library, 2175 Angell Hall



## STATHIS GOURGOURIS

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