

Keynote I

*Disposable Futures: Neoliberalism's Assault on Higher Education, Henry Giroux, McMaster University
Chair in Scholarship for the Public Interest, McMaster University.*

In spite of its broad-based, even global, recognition, higher education in North America is currently being targeted by a number of diverse right-wing forces. No longer viewed as a source of enlightenment or valued as a source of critical literacy and engaged in a search for the truth, higher education is now under attack by a form of market fundamentalism that is intent at turning it into an adjunct of business culture while simultaneously waging a campaign to undermine the principles of academic freedom, sacrifice critical pedagogical practice in the name of economic growth, and dismantle the university as a bastion of autonomy, independent thought, and uncorrupted inquiry. At stake in this struggle is a concerted attempt by right-wing extremists and corporate interests to strip the professoriate of any authority, render critical pedagogy as merely an instrumental task, eliminate tenure as a protection for teacher authority, define students as consumers, produce a form of indebted citizenship, and remove critical reason from any vestige of civic courage, engaged citizenship, and social responsibility. The talk offers both a critique and some suggestions about how such an attack can be collectively resisted, especially by those of us working in various parts of the university.