The early years of the twenty-first century have seen an overwhelming cultural interest in people who accumulate things. Hoarding is the subject of medical research, as well as documentary and narrative films, novels and memoirs, theater, painting, photography, and television episodes and series—including A&E’s “megahit,” Hoarders. These texts, along with related newspaper and magazine articles, are characterized by two contradictory yet often overlapping analytic frameworks: hoarding is understood both as a result of the excesses of consumer culture and as a response to material deprivation. Though the behaviors that define hoarding today have existed at least since the development of a market economy and probably much longer than that, the contemporary obsession with hoarding is both staggering and suggestive. This seminar is guided by the questions “Why hoarding?” and “Why now?” We will ask whether the emergence of contemporary hoarding discourse reflects anxieties about the immateriality of digital culture? Or about the scarcity of the earth’s resources? Or about what it means to be human? We will address these questions by studying the contemporary hoarder within a broader literary and cultural context that encompasses fetishists, collectors, misers, rag-pickers, gleaners, and other figures defined (and pathologized) by their attachments to things.