

Ewa DOMANSKA  
Spring 2003  
Research Seminar (graduate, 3-5 units)  
Thursday, 2:15-5:05, room 120-314

CASA 311B  
Comparative Literature 311B  
French and Italian 311E  
History 406

## APPROACHES TO THE PAST: THEORY AND PRACTICE IN THE HUMAN SCIENCES

### Course description

This course is a research seminar designed to help students work on papers for classes, theses and individual projects. It introduces texts that have inspired theoretically oriented scholars, and show students how their research can incorporate techniques and categories from various disciplines. The course suggests that theory is fundamental to humanistic studies. It will focus on cross-disciplinary themes and explore them through seminars. It encourages an understanding of theory, promotes interdisciplinary approaches to research, teaches critical thinking, introduces various strategies of interpretation, and devotes special attention to the development of students' original approaches.

Topics of seminars include such issues as: the "metanarrative" of postcolonial theory (Dipesh Chakrabarty); ideology in Lacanian terms (Slavoj Žižek, Renata Salecl); the genre of the feminist manifesto (Hélène Cixous; Luce Irigaray); chosen topics from contemporary art criticism and aesthetics (Hal Foster; Wolfgang Iser); the problem of forgiveness and politics (Paul Ricoeur, Jacques Derrida); pragmatism, literary culture and truth (Richard Rorty); notions of the human and non-human (Giorgio Agamben); anthropological concepts of liminality and community (Victor Turner).

### Course requirements

Attendance is mandatory. Students who miss more than three meetings (except illness or others serious matters) will not be graded. Students are expected to read assigned readings carefully and participate in discussions. A 15-20 pages final paper is required. Its topic will be chosen by the student himself/herself and it is supposed to draw upon the projects undertaken in other courses the student is taking and draws on course materials.

### Course schedule

#### 1. Introduction: overview of the course.

#### 2. Lacanian critique of ideology - Slavoj Žižek

Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. New York: Verso, 1989 [chapter 1: "How did Marx Invent the Symptom"; chapter 2: "From Symptom to *Sinthome*"; chapter 4: "You Only Die Twice" plus the following subchapters: "Rigid Designator and *object a*"; "Image and Gaze"; "From *i(o)* to *I(O)*"; "*Che vuoi?*"; "The Jew and Antigone"; "Fantasy as a Screen for the Desire of the Other"; "Going Through the Social Fantasy"; "Antagonism as Real"; "The Forced Choice of Freedom"; "Positing the Presuppositions"]  
Evans Dylan, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*. London; New York: Routledge, 1996.

#### 3. Pragmatism, Literary Culture and Truth – Richard Rorty (April 17)

##### (special guest: Richard Rorty)

Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope*. Penguin Books, 1999 [(2) Truth without Correspondence to Reality; (3) A World without Substances or Essences; (4) Ethics Without Principles; (8) The Humanistic intellectual: Eleven Theses; (10) Religious Faith, Intellectual Responsibility and Romance; (14) Failed Prophecies, Glorious Hopes; (15) A Spectre is Hounding the Intellectuals: Derrida on Marx; (16) Love and Money; (17) Globalization, the Politics of Identity and Social Hope]

Richard Rorty, "The Decline of Redemptive Truth and the Rise of a Literary Culture"

<http://www.stanford.edu/~rrorty/decline.htm>

#### **4. Oblivion, guilt and forgiveness –Paul Ricoeur and Jacques Derrida**

Friedrich Nietzsche, "Guilt, Bad Conscience and Related Matters, in his, *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Vintage Books, 1967.

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958, chapter V, & 33 and 34.

Paul Ricoeur "Memory and Forgetting" in *Questioning Ethics. Debates in Contemporary Philosophy*, Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley (eds). London: Routledge, 1999.

Jacques Derrida, "On Forgiveness" (1999) in his, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*. London and New York: Routledge, 2001.

#### **5. Human/non-human – Giorgio Agamben on Auschwitz**

Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*. New York: Zone Books, 1999.

Handouts from writings by Primo Levi (*Survival in Auschwitz*) and Tadeusz Borowski (*This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*)

#### **6. The rhetoric of the feminist manifesto – Hélène Cixous; Luce Irigaray; Renata Salecl**

Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa"; Luce Irigaray "The Sex Which is Not One"; Anna Rosalind Jones, "Writing the Body. Toward an Understanding of *l'écriture féminine*", in: *Feminism: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1997, pp. 331-370.

Renata Salecl, *(Per)versions of Love and Hate*. London and New York: Verso, 1998 (chapters: 1, 3, 6, 7)

#### **7. Contemporary art criticism and aesthetics – Hal Foster; Wolfgang Iser**

Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real. The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century*. Cambridge, Mass., London: The MIT Press, 1996 (Chapters: 5 - "The Return of the Real" and 6 - "The Artist as Ethnographer")

Wolfgang Iser, *Undoing Aesthetics*, transl. Andrew Inkpin. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1997 (selected fragments).

Daniel Libeskind, "Trauma" and James Young "Memory, Counter-memory, and the End of the Monument", in *Image and Remembrance. Representation of the Holocaust*, ed. by Shelley Hornstein and Florence Jacobowitz. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003.

#### **8. History and counter-history; history as the discourse of power - Michel Foucault**

##### **(additional seminar May 21)**

Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History", in his: *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice. Selected Essays and Interviews*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977.

Michel Foucault, "Seminar: 28 January 1976", in Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*, transl. by David Macey. New York: Picador, 2003, pp. 65-85.

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, transl. by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1995 (fragments)

#### **9. Community, anti-community, liminality – Victor Turner**

Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*," in his, *The Forest of Symbols. Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1967.

Victor Turner, "Social Dramas and Ritual Metaphors", "Passages, Margins, and Poverty: Religious Symbols of Communitas," "Metaphors of Anti-structure in Religious Culture," in his, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors. Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1974.

Victor Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," "Communitas: Model and Process," "Humility and Hierarchy: The Liminality of Status Elevation and Reversal," in his: *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969.

#### **10. The problem of metanarrative (the case of postcolonial theory) – Dipesh Chakrabarty (May 29)**

##### **(special guest: Akhil Gupta)**

Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Theory and Historical Difference*. Princeton and Oxford. Princeton University Press, 2000 (fragments)

Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial theory: a critical introduction*. New York : Columbia University Press, 1998.

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