

ENG 614: Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory Tentative Schedule of Readings

1. The Linguistic Paradigm

- 29 Mar: Introduction. **Emile Benveniste**, "A Look at the Development of Linguistics," "Saussure After Half a Century," "The Nature of Pronouns," "Subjectivity in Language." **Jan Mukarovsky**, "Art as Semiotic Fact," "Poetic Reference." **Roman Jakobson**, "Linguistics and Poetics," "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances."
- 5 Apr: **Roland Barthes**, "To Write: An Intransitive Verb?" "From Work to Text," "The Death of the Author," "The Reality Effect." **Jacques Lacan**, "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious," "Of Structure as an Inmixing of an Otherness Prerequisite to Any Subject Whatever." **Peter Brooks**, "Narrative Desire."

2. The Event of Deconstruction

- 12 Apr: **Jacques Derrida**, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," "Difference," "Signature Event Context." **Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak**, "The Setting to Work of Deconstruction." **Paul de Man**, from "The Rhetoric of Blindness." **Rei Terada**, "'Psyche, Inc.: Derridean Emotion After de Man."
- 19 Apr: **Paul de Man**, "Semiology and Rhetoric," "The Resistance to Theory," "The Return to Philology," "Autobiography as De-Facement." **Barbara Johnson**, "Rigorous Unreliability." **Fredric Jameson**, "Deconstruction as Nominalism."

3. Marxism, Culture, and the Question of Ideology

- 26 Apr: **Karl Marx**, "Preface" to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. **Raymond Williams**, "Base and Superstructure," "Dominant, Residual, and Emergent." **Louis Althusser**, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," "Letter on Art." **Theodor Adorno**, "On Lyric Poetry and Society," "Commitment."
- 3 May: **Walter Benjamin**, "Theses on the Concept of History," "The Work of Art in the Era of Its Technological Reproducibility," "What is Epic Theatre?" **Giorgio Agamben**, "The Melancholy Angel." **Ian Balfour**, "Reading History: de Man with Benjamin." **Michael Taussig**, "Tactility and Distraction."

4. Ethical Provocations, Bio-Politicizations

- 10 May: **Emmanuel Levinas**, "Reality and Its Shadow," "Ethics as First Philosophy," "Is Ontology Fundamental?" **Judith Butler**, "Precarious Life." **Jill Robbins**, "Facing Figures," "Poetry and the Ethical." **Cathy Caruth**, "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History." **Alain Badiou**, "Does the Other Exist?" "Philosophy and Art"

17 May: **Michel Foucault**, "A Preface to Transgression," "What is Enlightenment?" "On the Genealogy of Ethics," "The Birth of Biopolitics," "Subjectivity and Truth." **Georges Bataille**, "The Notion of Expenditure," "Sacrifices," "The Sacred." **Giorgio Agamben**, "Introduction" to *Homo Sacer*, "The Politicization of Life," **Judith Butler**, "An Account of Oneself."

5. Two Strains of the Affective Turn: Late Barthes, Late Deleuze

24 May: **Roland Barthes**, "The Rustle of Language," "The Third Meaning," "Leaving the Movie Theatre," from *Camera Lucida*, "The Grain of the Voice," "The Image," from *A Lover's Discourse*. **Rosalind Coward & John Ellis**, "Semiology as a Science of Signs." **Mary Bittner Wiseman**, "Make-up, Masks, Cameras, and Chromosomes." **Steven Ungar**, "The Professor of Desire."

31 May: **Gilles Deleuze**, from *What is Philosophy?*, "To Have Done With Judgment," from *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. **Brian Massumi**, "The Autonomy of Affect." **John Rajchman**, from *The Deleuze Connections*: "Life," "Sensations." **Steve Shaviro**, from *The Cinematic Body*: "Deleuze's Theory of Sexuality."

ENG 614
ANS 191
T, 2-5

Prof. Pyle
PLC 270
Hours W 12-3

Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory

This seminar is a concentrated introduction to some of the most important methodological developments in the professional study of literature and culture over the past half-century or so. I have divided the term into five units -- roughly speaking, structuralism, deconstruction, history and ideology, ethics, affect -- and I have selected what I believe to be the most significant and illuminating texts by the principal theorists from each of these rubrics. We will read and discuss essays by Benveniste, Jakobson, Barthes, Lacan, Derrida, de Man, Althusser, Adorno, R. Williams, Benjamin, Levinas, Foucault, and Deleuze. And we will also read essays by a diverse collection of some of our most important contemporary critics -- often very much alive and kicking -- who have commented or elaborated on the work of these theorists in order to see where these theoretical paradigms take us. It's my hope that the seminar will not only be an introduction to the "origins" of "literary and cultural theory" but a map of at least one version of its present and some of its futures.

Assignments Students will write three two-page "close readings" of passages from the assigned texts (10% each). And students will write a critical paper (approximately 10 pages) which deploys one or more of these theoretical positions in the analysis of an agreed upon literary or cultural document (60%). And, finally, because the quality of discussion is so crucial to the success of the seminar, 10% of the course grade will be based on the quality of contributions to the discussions. The two-page papers are due on the Monday before the seminar. A complete draft of the critical paper is due May 27th. Final versions are due June 10th.

Texts All assigned texts will be made available on the ENG 614 Blackboard site.