

Pol 475/2075 POSTMODERN AND CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT

David Cook

Birge Carnegie, room 24

416 585-4418 david.cook@utoronto.ca.

Office Hour:

Wednesday 2:15-4:00 / Birge Carnegie #24 though as my office is small we will meet in the common room on the second floor of the Birge on the west side of the library by appointment or by Zoom.

Office hours are an opportunity for you to ask questions, discuss interesting course concepts, or to ask for academic advice.

Accessibility Needs (www.accessibility.utoronto.ca)

If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact [Accessibility Services](#) as soon as possible.

It is not uncommon for university students to experience a range of health and mental health issues that may result in barriers to achieving their academic goals. The University of Toronto offers a wide range of services that may be of assistance. You are encouraged to seek out these resources early and often.

On Campus: Your college Registrar's Office, and / or Dean of Students' Office
Student Life - <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca>
Health and Wellness Centre - <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc>

Off-Campus: Good2Talk - a post-secondary (24/7) helpline (1-866-925-5454).

Course Modality

This is an "in-person" class with the exception of the first two weeks of term when it will be via Zoom..

What to do if you're feeling unwell

1. Report your sickness to your course instructor.
2. Go home
3. Email U of T's Occupational Health Nurse (ehs.occhealth@utoronto.ca) who will conduct assessment and contact tracing, and will provide further direction

Course Description

This course concerns the development of postmodern thought and its passage into the posthuman.

The course will take the format of a weekly seminar discussion. Readings have been kept short being mainly essays or chapters from a work and will serve as an introduction to the theorists. Please come prepared to discuss the concepts raised in the texts.

Course Objectives

The study of social and political ideas express is the academic goal of the course. The course is also intended to satisfy partially the following competencies: in Critical and Creative Thinking by reflective examination of ideas and judgments, Communication skills in presenting written and oral arguments, Information Literacy by effective use of the library and other sources of information and Social and Ethical Responsibility by engaging in a critical reflection on your views and the views of others.

Evaluation

The evaluation will consist of:

1. A review of 1,500 words on a text from the list below or one of your choosing if discussed with me. The review is due October 4. You may also be asked to present, briefly in 10 minutes, your review to the class. The presentation will not form part of the mark. The review amounts to 30% of the course mark.
2. A term research paper of approximately 3,500 words if you are a graduate student or 2,500 words if you are an undergraduate student. The paper is due Monday, November 22 amounting to 50% of your final mark. You will be asked to present your paper to the seminar on either November 29 or December 6. It will form 10% of the mark. The presentation of your essay topic should be a maximum 15 minutes in length including a question and answer period that you will be responsible for conducting. The seminar presentations schedule will be set after the fall break.
3. Class participation 10%.

Late penalties are 5% per school day. Submission of work by e mail only.

Note: In the event of a disruption to the class or to any member of the class owing to a health or other disruption where we cannot meet the marking scheme will be adjusted to 30% for the first paper and 70% for the second. In this case as well, work is to be submitted by e mail.

Term Essay Topics

1. The self is no longer that of enlightenment thought. It is now become a cyborg. Comment.
2. Political economy has gone from production to consumption, from the real to the hyper real and the virtual. Comment.
3. Speed has altered our conception of vision. What is its effect on the political?
4. Democracy cannot work if all do not have a voice. Comment.
5. No longer a question of being but of becoming. Comment
6. What can art teach us about the social?
7. Or a topic of your choosing. Please discuss it first with me.

Readings

The Readings

The number of writers concerned with postmodernism is large. The readings highlighted here may be replaced or supplemented by others by agreement with the class. The selections may also be found on the internet.

Baudrillard, Jean, "The Precession of Simulacra", in Simulacra and Simulation, Ann Arbor: U of Michigan Press 2016.

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix, "Introduction : Rhizome" or "The Treatise on Nomadology" in A Thousand Plateaus, Minneapolis: Minnesota, 1987. The selections are also found in the out of print Nomadology and On the Line, New York: Semiotext(e).

Derrida, Jacques, "Counterfeit Money" in Given Time, Chicago, 1992.

Fanon, Frantz, "The Negro and Language", Black Skin, White Masks, N.Y.: Grove Press, 2008.

Michel Foucault, "Las Meninas" in The Order of Things, N. Y. Vintage, 1970.

Haraway, D, "Cyborg Manifesto" in Simians, Cyborgs and Women, Routledge:1996.

Spivak, Gayatri, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in C> Nelson & L. Grosberg (eds), Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, Macmillan, 1988 or Spivak's work by this title.

Serres, Michel, "Turner translates Carnot" in Hermes, Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1982.

Virilio, Paul, "The Vision Machine" in The Vision Machine, New York: Semiotext(e), 1994.

Dockerty, Thomas, A Postmodern Reader, Columbia University Press :N.Y., 1993 is a useful work for those who would like a selection of postmodern authors in a one volume format. Dockerty's bibliography is also useful. Similarly, Nicholson, L. ed., Feminism/Postmodernism, Ldn., Routledge, 1990 provides an interesting selection of articles.

Schedule of the Seminars

The week of:

SEPTEMBER 13

TOPIC; Introduction and Sources

The standard view of the 'origins' of postmodernism is located in the enlightenment and the re-reading of the logo-centric basis of the Western philosophical tradition. This involves the transformation of a number of paradigms: the political economy of the Smithian model, the Kantian critical philosophy, the Sade/Rousseau 'social contract', Hegel's master/slave relation, the primacy of science to knowledge and myth, the significance of the text and author.

SEPTEMBER 20

TOPIC; Simulated and Virtual Systems: The Transparency of the Social in Baudrillard

The social has existed as a concept usually constructed in representational terms connected with other concepts such as class, people, group or mass. Baudrillard attacked the social as an object in particular through the reworking of the basis of exchange from its understanding in political economy of the object to its reformulation in the symbolic simulated redefining of what we mean by the social and political, especially in a democracy. Baudrillard's later work traced the 'fatal strategies' underlying the transparency of the political and the moral critique of the transparency of 'evil' in virtual systems.

SEPTEMBER 27 TOPIC; Speed and Politics

Virilio analyzes the relations amongst technology, ethics and the social and shows how conceptions of time and space are altered in the postmodern world. Beginning with a classic study of the fortifications of the Atlantic during the Second World War Virilio argues the transformation of the control of space from the view of the velocity of the image. Virilio shows how the surveillance of modern technology affects behavior altering the political and the locus of power in a society captured in the speed of light and the nostalgia for the lost dimensions. The vision machine creates the increasing blindness of the social.

OCTOBER 4 TOPIC Foucault and Painting

We will discuss the opening chapter of Michel Foucault's The Order of Things devoted to Velasquez's the Las Meninas both as an interpretation of the famous painting and of Foucault's epistemology.

OCTOBER 11 Thanksgiving

& OCTOBER 18

TOPIC; Haraway from Cyborgs to the Dogs!

Haraway in a famous essay introduces the world of the cyborg tied as it is to an analysis of the gender relations of world that turns women into creatures. From this Haraway extends her analysis to include how in the posthuman world we enter into relations with fellow creatures as our 'humanity' becomes a species humanity.

OCTOBER 25

TOPIC; Science, Reason & Art

Serres looks at the postmodern world through the modern premodern. In the essay we will look at, he shows the relation of art, technology and science in the revolution of thermal dynamics.

NOVEMBER 1

TOPIC: Virtual Machines

Deleuze with Guattari conceptualize a different way of viewing social relations not in the traditional hierarchy of power but in 'rhizomes' drawn by a genealogy of desire. This concept will be applied to politics and the field of relations produced by various 'machines'. At the center of a non-transcendental philosophy is the real as a virtual and as a possible mode of the actual -- thus a philosophy of the network of machinic relations.

NOVEMBER 8 Reading Break

NOVEMBER 15

Topic: Colonialism and Racism

Fanon explores the colonial relation which led him to support liberation movements aimed at independence. Trained as a psychiatrist, he set out in his analysis of Black skins and White masks both the political and psychological aspects of racism and of colonialism in The Wretched of the Earth. We will look at the first essay on language and race in Black Skins.

TOPIC; Derrida on Time and Exchange

We will examine one aspect of Derrida's thought where he takes a notion of Bataille's general and restricted economy to a new reading on 'exchange', 'value' and life and death. The example we will look at is of an analysis of Baudelaire's 'Counterfeit Money' that he ends Given Time. This view of time as outside of the calculus of reason leads to Derrida's thought around politics and friendship.

NOVEMBER 22

Topic: Spivak's critique of colonialism and the racism that is ubiquitous in our history and society is accompanied by a powerful plea to allow and empower the voices of people who have been suppressed.

NOVEMBER 29 and December 6

Presentations of Essays

DECEMBER 6 Last Class

Extended Reading List

Adorno, Theodore, Aesthetic Theory, Ldn: Routledge, 1984.

----, Negative Dialectics, Seabury Press, 1973.

Adorno, T. and Horkheimer, M., The Dialectic of Enlightenment, Continuum Press, 1986.

Agamben, Giorgio, The Man Without Content, Stanford: Stanford University Press., 1999.

----, The End of the Poem, Stanford: Stanford University Press., 1999.

----, Homo Sacer, Stanford: Stanford University Press., 1998.

----, State of Exception, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

----, The Open, Stanford: Stanford University Press., 2004.

----, Potentialities, Stanford: Stanford University Press., 1999.

----, The Kingdom and the Glory, Stanford University Press, 2011.

----, The Highest Poverty, Stanford University Press, 2013.

Arac, J. Postmodernism and Politics, Minnesota: University Press, 1986.

Aronson, Ronald, Sartre's Second Critique, Chicago, 1987.

Bachelard, Gaston, The Psychoanalysis of Fire, Beacon, 1964.

Barthes, Roland, The Pleasure of the Text, Hill and Wang, 1975.

----, New Critical Essays, Hill and Wang, 1980.

----, Elements of Semiology, Hill and Wang, 1967.

----, Empire of Signs, Hill and Wang, 1982.

----, The Responsibility of Forms, Hill and Wang, 1985.

----, The Fashion System, Hill and Wang, 1983.

----, A Lover's Discourse, Hill and Wang, 1978.

----, Camera Lucida, Hill and Wang, 1981.

----, Image, Music, Text, Hill and Wang, 1977.

----, The Eiffel Tower, Hill and Wang, 1979.

----, Sade, Fourier, Loyola, Hill and Wang, 1976.

----, Mythologies, Paladin, 1973.

----, Writing Degree Zero, Cape Editions, 1967.

----, Critical Essays, Northwestern, 1972.

Baidou, Alain, Deleuze, Paris: Hachette, 1997. (This work is now in English).

----, L'être et l'événement, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1988. Translated by Oliver Feltham as Being and Event, N.Y.: Continuum, 2005.

----, Peut-on penser la politique?, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1985.

----, Theoretical Writings, N.Y.: Continuum, 2004.

- , Ethics, N.Y.: Verso, 2001.
- , Infinite Thought, N.Y.: Continuum, 2004.
- , Manifesto for Philosophy, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999.
- , Logiques des mondes, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2006. Logics of Worlds, Continuum, 2009.
- , Plato's Republic, N.Y.: Columbia, 2012.
- , Saint Paul, Stanford University Press, 2003.
- Bataille, Georges, The Accursed Share, (3 vol.), Zone Books, 1991.
- , Story of the Eye, Penguin, 1979.
- , Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, Minnesota: University Press, 1985.
- , Eroticism, City Lights, 1986.
- , The Theory of Religion, Zone Books, 1989.
- , On Nietzsche, Paragon, 1992.
- , The Trial of Giles de Rais, Amok, 1991.
- , My Mother, Madame Edwarda, The Dead Man, Marion Boyars, 1989.
- , Literature and Evil, Marion Boyars, 1985.
- , Blue of Noon, Marion Boyars, 1979.
- , L'Abbé C, Marion Boyars, 1988.
- , Inner Experience, Suny, 1988.
- , Guilty, Lapis, 1988.
- , The Impossible, City Lights, 1991.
- , Lascaux ou la naissance de l'art, Oeuvres complètes, IX, Gallimard, 1979.
- , Manet, Oeuvres complètes, IX, Gallimard, 1979.
- , The Tears of Eros, City Lights, 1989.
- Baudrillard, Jean, Seduction, New World Perspectives, 1990
- , In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities, Semiotext(e)
- , The Mirror of Production, Telos Press, 1973.
- , For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign, Telos: St. Louis, 1981.
- , Fatal Strategies, Semiotext(e), 1990.
- , Simulations, Semiotext(e), 1983.
- , La Guerre du Golfe n'a pas eu lieu, Paris: Galilee, 1991.
- , La Transparence du mal, Paris: Galilee, 1990.
- , Symbolic Exchange and Death, London: Sage, 1997.)
- , The Ecstasy of Communication, Semiotext(e), 1987.
- , The Illusion of the End, Stanford: Stanford U. Press, 1994.
- , The Perfect Crime, New York: Verso, 1996.
- , Le paroxysme indifférent, Paris: Grasset, 1997.
- , Impossible Exchange, N.Y.: Verso, 2001.
- , L'esprit du terrorisme, Paris: Galilee, 2002.
- , Screened Out, N.Y.: Verso, 2002.
- , Passwords, N.Y.: Verso, 2003.
- , Power Inferno, Paris, Galilé, 2002.
- , The Conspiracy of Art, Semiotext(e): N.Y., 2005.
- , The Intelligence of Evil or the Lucidity Pact, Berg: N.Y., 2005.
- Blanchot, M., The Space of Literature, London: U. of Nebraska Press, 1980.
- , Death Sentence, Station Hill, 1978.
- , The Step Not Beyond, Suny, 1992.
- Bogue, R., Deleuze and Guattari, Ldn.: Routledge, 1989.
- Borch-Jacobsen, Mikkel, Lacan: The Absolute Master, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991.
- Boundas & Olkowski, Gilles Deleuze and the Theatre of Philosophy, Ldn.: Routledge, 1994.
- Bourdieu, P. Distinction, Cambridge: Harvard, 1984.
- Braidotti, Rosi, The Posthuman, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013.
- Bressand, A. & Distler, C., La planète relationnelle, Paris: Flammarion, 1995.
- Bukatman, S., Terminal Identity, Durham: Duke, 1993.
- Butler, Judith, Gender Trouble, N.Y.: Routledge, 1990.
- Caillois, Roger, The Necessity of the Mind, Venice, Ca.: Lapis, 1990.
- Callinicos, A., Against Postmodernism: A Marxist Critique, Polity, 1989.
- Camus, Albert, The Rebel, Vintage, N.Y.
- , Caligula and Three Other Plays, Vintage Paperback

- , The Fall, Vintage, N.Y.
- Canguilhem Georges, The Normal and the Pathological, Zone, 1989.
- Cixous, Hélène & Clément, C., The Newly Born Woman, Minnesota, 1986.
- Cixous, Hélène, Readings, Minnesota, 1991.
- Connolly, William, The Politics of Ambiguity, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987. (See also the exchange with Charles Taylor in *Political Theory* (May 1984) and (August 1985)).
- Crahay, Anne, Michel Serres La Mutation du Cogito, Brussels: 1988.
- Culler, J. On Deconstruction, Ldn.: Routledge, 1982.
- Cusset, François, French Theory, Paris: La Découverte, 2003.
- Debord, Guy, La société du spectacle, Editions Champ Libre, 1983.
- Deleuze, Gilles, Foucault, University of Minnesota Press, 1988.
- , The Critical Philosophy of Kant, University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- , Nietzsche and Philosophy, University of Minnesota Press, 1983.
- , Coldness and Cruelty, Zone, 1991.
- , Kant's Critical Philosophy, Minnesota, 1984.
- , Bergsonism, Zone, 1988.
- , Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza, Zone, 1990.
- , Cinema 1 & 2, Minnesota, 1991.
- , The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque, Minnesota, 1993.
- , Difference and Repetition, Columbia: N,Y, 1994.
- , Critique et Clinique, Les Editions de Minuit: Paris, 1993.
- , Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation, Paris: Editions de la différence.
- , L'île deserte et autres textes, Paris: Les éditions de Minuit, 2002.
- Deleuze, Giles and Guattari, Félix, Anti-Oedipus, Viking, 1982.
- , A Thousand Plateaus, Minnesota, 1987.
- , Kafka, Minnesota, 1986.
- , Nomadology: The War Machine, Semiotext(e), 1986.
- , On the Line, Semiotext(e), 1983.
- , What is Philosophy, Columbia: N,Y, 1994.
- Derrida, Jacques, Dissemination, Chicago, 1981.
- , Margins of Philosophy, Chicago, 1982.
- , Writing and Difference, Chicago, 1978.
- , Of Grammatology, John Hopkins, 1974.
- , The Post Card, Chicago, 1987.
- , Positions, Chicago, 1981.
- , The Truth in Painting, Chicago, 1987.
- , Glas, Nebraska, 1990.
- , Spurs, Chicago, 1979.
- , Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money, Chicago, 1992.
- , Specters of Marx, Ldn.: Routledge, 1994.
- , The Gift of Death, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- , Politics of Friendship, Ldn.: Verso, 1997.
- , Of Spirit; Heidegger and the Question, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- , Voyous, Paris: Galilée, 2003. English translation,
- , Eyes of the University, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.
- , Who's Afraid of Philosophy, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002.
- , On Touching-Jean-Luc Nancy, Stanford: Stanford, 2005.
- , Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas, Stanford: Stanford, 1999.
- Dockerty, Thomas, A Postmodern Reader, Columbia University Press: N.Y., 1993.
- Descamps, Christian, Quarante ans de philosophie en France, Paris: Bordas, 2003.
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- Dumézil, Georges, Mitra-Varuna, N.Y.:Zone, 1988.
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- Eribon, Didier, Michel Foucault, Harvard, 1991.
- Europe, #901 : Jacques Derrida, May 2004.

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- , Recodings, Washington: Bay Press, 1985.
- Foucault, Michel, This is not a Pipe, L.A.: University of California, 1982.
- , The Foucault Reader, N.Y.: Pantheon, 1982.
- , Language, Counter Memory and Practice, Ithaca: Cornell, 1977.
- , Power/Knowledge, N.Y.: Pantheon, 1981.
- , Madness and Civilization, N.Y.: Vintage, 1965.
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- , The History of Sexuality, vol. 1-3, Vintage: N.Y., 1986.
- , The Order of Things, N. Y. Vintage, 1970.
- , The Archaeology of Knowledge, N. Y. Vintage, 1972
- , The Birth of the Clinic, N. Y. Vintage, 1975.
- , Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, N. Y. Vintage.
- , Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth, N. Y.: The New Press, 1997.
- , Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology, N. Y.: The New Press, 1998.
- , Power, N. Y.: The New Press, 2000.
- , "Society must be Defended", N.Y.: Picador, 2003.
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- , Inventions of Difference, On Jacques Derrida, Cambridge, Harvard, 1994.
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- , Speculum of the Other Woman, Ithaca: Cornell, 1985.
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 ----, Strangers to Ourselves, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1993.
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 ----, Digital Delirium, New York: Saint Martin's, 1997.
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 Lechte, John. Julia Kristeva, Ldn: Routledge, 1990.
 Lecourt, Dominique, The Mediocracy, N.Y.: Verso, 2001.
 Levin, David, The Opening of Vision, Routledge, 1988.
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 ----, Peregrinations: Law, Form, Event, N. Y.: Columbia University Press, 1988.
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 ----, Libidinal Economy, Bloomington: Indiana, 1993.
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- , Ontology of the Accident, Polity: Cambridge, 2012.
- , Before Tomorrow, Polity: Cambridge, 2016.
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