

**GRADUATE SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS
2021-2022**

AUTUMN QUARTER

**PHL 577: Derrida I [CE]
Derrida and the Question of Hospitality**

**Michael Naas
Mondays, 3:00-6:15**

This course will focus on Derrida's work in the mid to late 1990s on the "question of hospitality" in order to consider, first, the philosophical, political, and ethical dimensions of this question, but then also the ways in which this question illuminates Derrida's work more generally. We will spend most of our time working through large parts of the first year of Derrida's 1995-1996 seminar on hospitality, along with several related works from around the same period, including *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* and "The Principle of Hospitality." But because of the close connection between Derrida's thinking of hospitality and his work as a whole, we will constantly be sent both backwards and forwards into Derrida's corpus to see how Derrida approaches elsewhere questions of language and translation, technology and spectrality, immunity and autoimmunity, cosmopolitanism and the democracy to come, law and justice, to name just a few. We will also inevitably be driven throughout the seminar to consider some of our own attitudes and policies with regard to "hospitality" in all its guises, at once private and public, everything from immigration and refugee policies in the US to controversies surrounding the building of walls and the establishing of sanctuary cities. Finally, we will try to show throughout the course that hospitality is not just one question among others for deconstruction but, perhaps, the very work and promise of deconstruction.

**PHL 660: Seminar in Feminist Ethics [NP]
French Feminism I: Luce Irigaray**

**Fanny Söderbäck
Wednesdays, 3:00-6:15**

In *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, Luce Irigaray famously stated that, "sexual difference is one of the major philosophical issues, if not the issue, of our age. According to Heidegger, each age has one issue to think through, and one only. Sexual difference is probably the issue in our time which could be our 'salvation' if we thought it through." In this course, we will try to make sense of and provide a context for this radical and perplexing claim. Starting with early works such as *Speculum of the Other Woman*, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, and *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, we will examine Irigaray's philosophy of sexual difference as primarily a critical project meant to *deconstruct* and turn on its head a philosophical canon arguably blind to the issue of sexual difference. Continuing on to later works such as *To Be Two* and *The Way of Love*, we will scrutinize her attempt to *construct* a culture of (at least) two sexes and look at some critical questions and concerns that have been raised by contemporary feminist theorists in response to this project. The course is meant to provide a foundation for students interested in feminist ethics and thought in general and French feminism in particular. It is part of a two-course stream on French Feminism (the second course on the work of Julia Kristeva will be offered in WQ 2022). The question of sexual difference will be examined as an ethical issue, as well as in relation to language, subjectivity, time and space, love and desire, birth, embodiment, racial and other differences, and culture. We will examine Irigaray's engagement with thinkers such as Beauvoir, Freud, Plato, and Hegel.

PHL 510: Kant I [H-II]
Critique of Pure Reason

Avery Goldman
Tuesdays, 3:00-6:15

In this class, we will undertake a close reading of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. I will begin by contextualizing the book within the debates between empiricism and rationalism to which Kant was responding. I will then lay out a number of influential interpretive approaches, beginning with that of Hegel. We will then plunge into the text. Emphasis throughout will be on the methodological innovation of the Kantian approach and its importance both for Kant's later writings on ethics, aesthetics, biology, and politics, and for the tradition of Continental philosophy. This is a difficult undertaking for one quarter.

We will be working with the Cambridge edition (Guyer/Wood translation). For those with facility in German the Meiner edition of this work, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, is a good choice.

PHL 522: Social and Political Philosophy [H-II]
Adorno

Rick Lee
Thursdays, 3:00-6:15

This class will be a close reading of several sections of Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*. The hope is that we can make it through the Introduction, Concepts and Categories, and Meditations on Metaphysics. We will supplement our reading of this text with readings from portions of some of his lecture courses that are relevant, particularly *Metaphysics: Concept and Problems* and *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*.

If Adorno has something like a method, it is outlined in this major text. The "argument," a term that certainly does not apply to the text, is that philosophy from Plato through Hegel has striven for an identity between thinking and that which is thought. This identity is structurally similar to the identity Marx uncovers that makes the exchange of commodities possible. This identity, much like that of commodities, entails or at least produces the absolute fungibility of all individuals. The philosophical task left to us is to think without identity.

WINTER QUARTER

PHL 441: Rousseau [H-II]

Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Subject of Democracy I

Peg Birmingham
Thursdays, 3:00-6:15

“Rousseau...was perhaps the first thinker of community, or more exactly, the first to experience the question of society as an uneasiness directed toward the community, and as the consciousness of a (perhaps irreparable) rupture in this community.” (Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperable Community*)

This two quarter graduate courses (winter and spring 2022) will examine several works of Rousseau’s, including *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts*, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, *On the Origin of Languages*, *Emile*, and *The Social Contract* in an attempt to grasp Rousseau’s theory of democracy in the dual sense of the democratic public space and the democratic political subject. We will explore several themes: 1) the status of “origin” which he claims “has never existed and may never exist” and yet serves as the basis for his methodological “conjectural history” and, in turn, for the foundation of natural rights; 2) the central role of desire, including sexual desire, in the constitution of the Rousseauian democratic subject; 3) the role of natural law vs. artifice and deception in the shaping of the democratic subject (and here the status of language will be important); 5) the difference between democratic sovereignty and Hobbes’s legal sovereignty; 6) the status of the lawgiver and the presence of political theology in his thinking of democracy; 7) the relation between the economic and the political in his theory of democracy (here the question of property as it first appears in the *Second Discourse* and then again in the *Social Contract* is central).

PHL 661: Topics in Feminist Theory [NP]

French Feminism II: Julia Kristeva

Fanny Söderbäck
Wednesdays, 3:00-6:15

In this second course of two on French Feminism (the first of which is on the work of Luce Irigaray, to be offered in AQ 2021), we will pursue a close reading of some of Julia Kristeva’s books and essays, focusing in particular on the role that revolution and revolt have played in her oeuvre. Starting with passages from her early work on language and literature (including parts of her dissertation *Revolution in Poetic Language*), we will move on to explore some of her later discussions of revolt in relation to psychoanalysis, politics, art and aesthetics, time and space, love and desire, women and motherhood, disability, and singularity. The course will serve both as an introduction to Kristeva’s project as a whole, and as a more careful study specifically of revolt culture and a tracing of how the concepts of revolution and revolt have been elaborated throughout her corpus.

PHL 557: Topics in Continental Philosophy [CE]

Psychoanalysis and Politics

Elizabeth Rottenberg
Mondays, 3:00-6:15

“If one took psychoanalysis into account, seriously, effectively, practically, this would be a nearly unimaginable earthquake. Indescribable. Even for psychoanalysts.” (Jacques Derrida, *For What Tomorrow...*)

All of us, even those of us who are convinced of the revolutionary force of psychoanalysis, live as if we believed in the sovereignty of the conscious ego. That is, we proceed as if the revolution had never taken place. And yet the “logic of the unconscious,” as it has been called, throws a wrench into everything that has traditionally defined our discourses on right, morality, and politics (e.g., autonomy, a transparent and fully responsible intentionality, a sovereign subject answering for itself before the law, etc.). How, then, are we to articulate psychoanalysis with a thinking of the political? How are we to integrate something that remains, as it were, a seismic threat?

This class will be interested in the political and juridical dimensions of psychoanalysis both from within and without psychoanalysis. We will begin by reading several of Freud's late and more overtly political writings (revolving around questions of mass psychology, hatred, war, the formation of the superego, guilt, etc.) before turning to the writings of a number of political thinkers who engage seriously with psychoanalysis (here readings will be determined by student interest and may include texts by Adorno, Althusser, Balibar, Butler, Derrida, Fanon, Gherovici, Lacan). We may also, if we have time, look at what has recently been called "psychoanalytic political theory."

For those of you interested in specific questions or themes (e.g., psychoanalysis and fascism, psychoanalysis and race), please contact me directly during the course of the AQ.

SPRING QUARTER

**PHL 656: Seminar on Social and Political Thought [NP]
Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Subject of Democracy II**

**Peg Birmingham
Thursdays, 3:00-6:15**

See WQ description.

**PHL 629: Seminar on Contemporary Problems [NP]
Decolonial Thought**

**Rafael Vizcaino
Tuesdays, 3:00-6:15**

This course offers an introduction into the decolonial turn across the humanities and social sciences, with a focus on the decolonization of philosophy. The seminar will question the methods and functions of knowledge production in the modern university, paying attention to how the legacies of colonialism are entangled in the creation of knowledge in the university. Alternative ways of producing knowledge are studied with the intent of transforming academic practice. We will conclude the seminar by examining several ongoing proposals to decolonize philosophy as a discipline and a practice.