

**MANHATTAN MA IN PHILOSOPHY AND THE ARTS**  
**FALL 2008 COURSES**

**PHI 505.60 Levinas's Aesthetics: Untie, Erode, Obliterate- Megan Craig**  
**Thursday 6-9 p.m. (Manhattan)**

Emmanuel Levinas's relationship with art is fraught with tension. Many of his texts are considered overtly hostile to art and aesthetics. It therefore remains a question whether Levinas is compatible with any aesthetics. This is a question we will consider through the examination of the role, place, and meaning of art in Levinas's ethics. This will include investigating the structure of his prose, the relationship between philosophy, poetry, and literature, the challenges to expression after the Second World War, the influence of Modernism, and the relationship or non-relationship between ethics and aesthetics. We will pay special attention to Levinas's lifelong friendship with Maurice Blanchot and the artistic influences dominating Levinas's work, including Dostoyevsky, Rodin, C elan, Shakespeare, and Kandinsky.

**Required Texts:**

Levinas, *Existence and Existents* (Duchesne University Press, 1991).

Levinas, *Entre-Nous: Thinking-of-the-Other* (Columbia University Press, 1998).

Levinas, *Proper Names* (Stanford University Press, 1996).

Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster* (University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

**Recommended:**

Jill Robbins, *Altered Reading* (University of Chicago Press, 1999).

**PHI 505.01 Derrida on the Politics of Relationship - Hugh J. Silverman**  
**Monday 6-9 p.m. (Stony Brook Campus)**

Jacques Derrida, in the later years, turned his attention to ethical, social and political considerations -- taking up themes such as the force of "law," the politics of "friendship," and the indecidability of "hospitality," "cosmopolitanism," and "forgiveness." In order to set the frame for our study of Derrida's later writings, we shall begin with *Margins of Philosophy* (1972) and some of its formative essays demonstrating how deconstructive strategies work and how to think deconstructively. We shall then shift to the 1990 essay "Force of Law" as it leads into *Politics of Friendship* (1994), *Adieu* (1997) and *Of Hospitality* (1997). We will conclude with *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (2001). Our task will be to understand how deconstructive strategies highlight critical, ethical, social, and political considerations by exploring and unraveling the key concepts that mark their articulation and deployment.

**PHI 506.60 The Voice of Reason: Philosophy and Language - David M. Kleinberg Levin**  
**Wednesday 6-9 p.m. (Manhattan)**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course will examine texts by some of the most important continental European philosophers with regard to questions and problems in the philosophy of language, especially: the origin of language, the acquisition of language; the socializing dimension of language; the relation between language and truth; the difference between writing and speaking; the human voice in relation to the voices of nature; the ethical and ecological vocation of the human voice; the universality of the lyric poet's voice; and the involvement of the human voice in mimesis, onomatopoeia, and prosopopeia. Special attention will be given to aesthetic considerations in relation to a phenomenology of sound and voice.

**TEACHING METHOD:** Seminar discussion.

**EVALUATION METHOD:** Term paper [20-25 pages double-spaced]

**TEXTS:**

Franz Kafka, "Josephine the Singer, Or the Mouse Folk" [photocopy]  
Plato, Phaedrus  
Novalis, "Monologue", Philosophical Fragments [photocopy booklet]  
J. G. Hamann, "Aesthetica in Nuce", "A Flying Letter" [photocopy booklet]  
Johann Gottfried Herder, The Origin of Language  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Origin of Language  
Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception (Part I, ch. 6, Part III, ch. 1)  
Merleau-Ponty, "The Child's Relations with Others", The Primacy of Perception  
Merleau-Ponty, "The Psychological Development of Language in the Child"  
Theodor Adorno, "Odysseus, or Myth and Enlightenment", Dialectic of Enlightenment  
Walter Benjamin, "On the Mimetic Faculty", Reflections  
Benjamin, "On Language as Such and the Language of Man", Reflections  
Theodor Adorno, "Lyric Poetry and Society," Notes to Literature, vol. I [photocopy]  
Martin Heidegger, "The Nature of Language", "Words", "On the Way to Language",  
On the Way to Language  
Jacques Derrida, Speech and Phenomenon [chapters 3 and 6]  
Derrida, "Force and Signification", Writing and Difference  
David Kleinberg-Levin, Before the Voice of Reason: Echoes of Responsibility in Merleau-Ponty's Ecology and Levinas's Ethics  
Kleinberg-Levin, "Abyssal Tonalities: Heidegger's Language of Harkening"

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Books to acquire from a Bookstore or from a Library: [1] Plato, Phaedrus (Hackett), [2] Herder and Rousseau, Two Essays on the Origin of Language (University of Chicago Press), [3] Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, [4] Merleau-Ponty, The Primacy of Perception, [5] Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment, [6] Benjamin, Reflections, [7] Heidegger, On the Way to Language, [8] Derrida, Writing and Difference, [9] Derrida, Speech and Phenomenon, [10] Kleinberg-Levin, Before the Voice of Reason.

The 4 other texts will be in a booklet of photocopied material.

**PHI 507.60 Eastern Aesthetics: Explorations in Art, Performatives, and Archi-texture – India to Japan- Purushottama Bilimora**  
**Time: Wednesday 2-5 p.m. (Manhattan)**

Eastern Aesthetics: Explorations in Art, Performatives, and Archi-texture – India to Japan.

The course combines textual, visual and performative explorations of the formative inspirations in the development of Eastern (Asian) Aesthetics, beginning with classical Indian formative theories, criticism, cultural practices and their influence across Asia, up to Japan. Examples of aesthetics are derived from iconic and architectural representations, sacred homologies, elaborate evocation of sentiments (*rasa*) and emotions (*bhava*) in dance and drama, and the Buddhist refinements of sublime visualization in tantra (meditational) practices. Central texts will be the 12th century Indian metaphysician, Abhinavagupta's works and writings of Coomaraswamy and Sheldon Pollock. Thinking on passions and 'hard emotions', such as grief and mourning, and their public expressions in funerary practices and social imagery will also be looked at. Temple architecture and the Garden as Pure Land imaginary will form part of the study. The study will be embellished with regular visits to Asian art galleries and performances around New York metropolis.

**PHI 508.60 Kant on the Beautiful and Sublime – Ed Casey**  
**Tuesday 6-9 p.m. (Manhattan)**

Since its publication in 1790, Kant's Critique of Judgment has inspired successive waves of philosophers and artists from the Romantics to the present day, with virtually every successive generation being deeply influenced by it. Today, this challenging book is undergoing a special revival in the wake of deconstruction. Our task will be the dual one of doing justice to this ever-amazing text while also considering contemporary readings of it. We shall read large parts of the original book in the Pluhar translation, paying special attention to determinant vs. reflective judgement, beauty as a matter of form, the judgment of taste, the two kinds of sublimity (mathematical and dynamic), and the communicability of feeling. At appropriate places, we shall advert to the challenging readings of Jacques Derrida in his "Parergon" (in *The Truth in Painting*) and of Jean-Francois Lyotard in his *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*. Partly through their contributions, but also through our own efforts to re-interpret this remarkable text in the light of contemporary developments in the art world, we shall attempt to make this elusive but inspiring book our own at this historical moment.

**PHI 510.60 Ancient Philosophy: Mind and Soul – Allegra de Laurentiis**  
**Thursday 2-5 p.m. (Manhattan)**

An in-depth reading of few but fundamental texts of classical Western antiquity that conceptualize mind/soul as object of rational investigation. These ancient theories

contain within themselves all the principal elements of later 'philosophies of mind.' This course aims at making these elements explicit through the study of the following; Anaxagoras, selected fragments on 'mind'. Plato, Republic, selection of relevant chapters and passages (TBA) and Phaedo. Aristotle, De Anima (Peri Psyche), as well as selections from Latin stoics (Marcus Aurelius, Cicero).