

POSTMODERNISMS

FALL SEMESTER 2009

CLT 602 / EGL 603.02 / FRN 571 / ITL 571



Haas Haus – Vienna City Centre

Mondays 6:50-9:50 p.m.

Humanities Building 2052

Hugh J. Silverman (Professor of Philosophy and Comparative Literary & Cultural Studies)
Peter Carravetta (Alfonse D'Amato Chair and Professor of Italian and European Languages, Literatures, and Cultures)

What is the postmodern—culturally, aesthetically, politically, philosophically? What are the differences between the postmodern and the modern? What is the relation between a postmodernism and post-modernity? How have those differences been articulated by various contemporary philosophical, cultural, and art theorists—particularly in European thought of the late 20th and early 21st centuries? In what sense, is the postmodern plural--as postmodernisms? In the post-Sept 11 world, how does postmodern thinking help us to understand significant events in contemporary thought and cultures?

This time, we will focus on theories of painting and the visual and on their sociological implications. The avant-gardes (Marinetti, Tzara, Duchamp, Breton) mark a new way for the visual arts to undermine traditional expectations; phenomenology (Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Dufrenne) offer a method for rethinking the perceptual and the visible; semiologists and poststructuralists (Barthes, Foucault, Deleuze, Kristeva) look for sign systems and structures of thought and cultural practices; postmodern architectural theorists (Venturi, Philip Johnson, F. Jameson, C. Jencks) juxtapose and shape differing styles, deconstruction (Derrida, Lyotard, Nancy) provides an alternative way to read margins, edges, frames in terms of textualities, visibilities, and immaterialities; postmodern hermeneutics and cultural critique (Vattimo, Perniola) look for weak moments in thought and practice, cultural enigmas, and dimensions of ritual thinking; feminist psychoanalytic theories (Irigaray, Kristeva) open up alternative choric spaces, regions, and intervals for thought and semiosis. Out of these different postmodernisms, we shall ask how paintings, installations,

architecture, visual and digital practices open up spaces for thinking differently for the contemporary world?

Lectures, readings, visuals, and discussions will retrace these postmodern itineraries and landmarks of contemporary – particularly European – thought and cultures.

This course serves as a joint seminar for the Art and Philosophy Advanced Graduate Certificate and can also count as an Interface course for the Philosophy doctoral program requirement. It can also serve as an elective for the Cultural Studies Advanced Graduate Certificate.

Texts and reading packets will include selections from

Avant-Garde (Futurist) Manifestos	(sel)	
Maurice Merleau-Ponty (ed. Galen Johnson) (sel)	<i>The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader</i> (1947-61)	Northwestern University Press
*Michel Foucault	<i>This is Not a Pipe</i> (1968)	University of California Press
*Jacques Derrida (sel)	<i>The Truth in Painting</i> (1978)	University of Chicago Press
*Gilles Deleuze	<i>Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation</i> (1981)	Continuum Books
*Jean-Francois Lyotard	<i>Postmodern Condition</i> (1984)	University of Minnesota Press
*Jean-Francois Lyotard (sel)	<i>The Inhuman</i> (1980-89)	Stanford University Press
Gianni Vattimo (sel)	<i>The End of Modernity:</i> (1985)	The Johns Hopkins University Press
*Charles Jencks	<i>What is Post-Modernism?</i> (1986)	St. Martin's Press / Academy Editions
Julia Kristeva (sel)	<i>Black Sun</i> (1987)	Columbia University Press
*Mario Perniola	<i>Art and its Shadow</i> (2000)	Continuum Books
*Jean-Luc Nancy	<i>The Ground of the Image</i> (2003)	Stanford University Press

*Books ordered at StonyBooks (across from Stony Brook Train Station)

Books for consultation

- Bertens and Natoli, *The Postmodern: The Key Figures* [2002], Blackwell
Bertens *The Idea of the Postmodern: A History* [1995]
Carravetta *Prefaces to the Diaphora. Rhetorics, Allegory, and the Interpretation of Postmodernity* [1991].
Purdue Univ. Press
Carravetta *Del postmoderno. Critica e cultura in America all'alba del Duemila* [2009] Bompiani
Silverman, *Textualities: Between Hermeneutics and Deconstruction*, [1994], Routledge
Silverman, *Inscriptions: After Phenomenology and Structuralism*, 2nd ed, Northwestern U Press, 1997
- Silverman (ed), *Postmodernism – Philosophy and the Arts* [1990], Routledge
Silverman (ed), *Cultural Semiosis: Tracing the Signifier* [1997], Routledge
Silverman (ed), *Questioning Foundations: Truth/Subjectivity/Culture* [1993], Routledge
Silverman (ed), *Philosophy and Desire* [2001], Routledge
- Tanke *Foucault's Philosophy of Art: A Genealogy of Modernity* [2009], Continuum
Silverman (ed), *Derrida and Deconstruction* [1989], Routledge
Silverman (ed), *Lyotard: Philosophy, Politics, and the Sublime* [2002], Routledge

Each student is to write two papers (about 8-10 pages in length). The first paper should relate to the writings of Merleau-Ponty, Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze / Guattari indicating the relationship of their views to a theory of contemporary postmodern culture and society and assessing their account of a painter, artist, or work of art; the second should deal substantially with the writings of Lyotard, Vattimo, Jencks, Kristeva, Perniola, and Nancy. The two papers may be interrelated. For instance, they could both treat a similar topic or theme such as the meaning of the postmodern for contemporary culture, politics, art, or society, the differences between a discursive theory and an interpersonal/political one, the status of networks, webs, rhizomes, the differences between nomads, strangers, friends, subjects, singularities, the application of specific postmodern theories to specific texts, paintings, or cultures. Or the two papers could be independent of each other.

Papers are due on **Oct 26th** and **Dec. 7th** respectively.

In addition, each member of the seminar will prepare a protocol for one or two of the seminar sessions (depending on the number of seminar participants). The person responsible for a particular week will write up an account of what transpired in class the previous week and will make a copy available to each of the members of the seminar prior to the beginning of class. The protocol for a particular week will be discussed at the outset of the seminar. This will give everyone an opportunity to review what transpired in the previous session and to raise any lingering issues or topics that were not sufficiently treated when first presented. It will also be a lasting document for the seminar participants.

Americans with Disabilities Act:

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, room 128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Academic Integrity:

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at <http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/>

Critical Incident Management:

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures.

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Office Hours: Hugh J. Silverman – Harriman Hall 203 – Tues 3-5 and by appointment.

Office phone: 632-7592.

E-mail: hugh.silverman@stonybrook.edu

Peter Carravetta – Melville Library N4045 Mon 2-4 p.m. and by appointment

Office phone: 632-7440 (dept)

E-mail: peter.carravetta@stonybrook.edu

SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	READING	PROTOCOL
Aug 31	Introduction: Postmodern Theory What is it and why is it relevant for the cultures and politics of the post-Sept 11, 2001 world? The Avant-Garde vs The Postmodern		
Sept 7	No Class (Labor Day)		
Sept 14	The Question of Visibility: Cezanne	Maurice Merleau-Ponty (ed. Galen Johnson) <i>The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader (1947-61)</i>	
Sept 21	Postmodern Epistemes Magritte	Michel Foucault <i>This is Not a Pipe (1968)</i>	
Sept 28	No Classes Sept. 28 Yom Kippur (Observed) – NO CLASSES		
Oct. 5	The Postmodern Condition: Epistemologies	Jean-Francois Lyotard <i>Postmodern Condition (1984)</i>	
Oct. 12*	Deconstructing Frames: Adami	Jacques Derrida <i>The Truth in Painting (1978)</i>	
Oct 19	Deconstructing Frames: Schapiro / Heidegger/ Van Gogh	Jacques Derrida <i>The Truth in Painting (1978)</i>	

Oct 26	The Flesh of Bodies without Organs Francis Bacon	Gilles Deleuze <i>Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation</i> (1981)
	{first paper due}	
Nov 2	The Flesh of Bodies without Organs Francis Bacon	Gilles Deleuze <i>Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation</i> (1981)
Nov 9	The Postmodern Sublime Barnett Newman	Jean-Francois Lyotard <i>The Inhuman</i> (1980-89)
Nov 16	Postmodern Hermeneutics	Gianni Vattimo <i>"Weak Thought"</i> (1983) <i>The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture</i> (1985) [selections]
Nov 23	The Architextual Postmodern	Charles Jencks <i>What is Post-modernism?</i> (1986)
Nov 30	Postmodern Semiosis Holbein's Bodies	Kristeva <i>Black Sun</i> (1987), ch. 5 , 105-138 ("Holbein's Dead Christ")
Dec 7	Postmodern Aesthetics	Mario Perniola <i>Art and its Shadow</i> (2000)
	{second paper due}	
Dec 14	Postmodern Muses & Review and Conclusions Wrap-Up Session {during final exam week}	Jean-Luc Nancy <i>The Ground of the Image</i> (2003) &
