

M.A. Methods and Theory: Reading Critical Theories
Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Bronfen
HS 2017, Thursdays, 14:00 – 15:45

(1) 21 Sept – Introduction. **Silvia Sasse and Sandro Zanetti**, “**Postmoderne als Pappkamerad**”^{*}
(<http://geschichtedergegenwart.ch/postmoderne-als-pappkamerad/>)

Around 1900

(2) 28 Sept – **Walter Benjamin**, “**The Task of the Translator**”^{*} and ***On the Concept of History***

(3) 05 Oct – **Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels**, two excerpts from ***The German Ideology***^{*} and a short excerpt from ***Theories of Surplus Value***^{*}

(4) 12 Oct – **Sigmund Freud**, ***Civilization and its Discontents***

Feminism

(5) 19 Oct – No class. Guest lecture by **Judith Butler** on **Friday, 20 Oct. 6p.m.**

(6) 26 Oct – **Virginia Woolf**, ***A Room of One’s Own*** (excerpt)^{*} and **Donna Haraway**, ***A Cyborg Manifesto*** (excerpt)^{*}

Poststructuralism and Postmodernism

(7) 02 Nov – **Julia Kristeva**, “**Approaching Abjection**”^{*}

(8) 09 Nov – **Michel Foucault**, ***Society Must Be Defended*** (chapter 3)^{*} and “**Different Spaces**”^{*}

(9) 16 Nov – **Jacques Derrida**, ***Rogues*** (excerpt)^{*}

(10) 23 Nov – **Roland Barthes**, ***Camera Lucida***

(11) 30 Nov – **Jean Baudrillard**, ***Precession of Simulacra*** (excerpt)^{*}

(12) 07 Dec and 14 Dec – **No class**

Race and Representation

(13) 16 Dec, Saturday, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. – Special session on blackness and race. To prepare, watch the movie ***Get Out*** (2017; dir. Jordan Peele) and read **bell hooks**, “**Postmodern Blackness**”^{*}, **Zadie Smith**, “**Getting In and Out: Who Owns Black Pain?**”^{*} as well as **James Baldwin**, “**Everybody’s Protest Novel**”^{*} and “**Stranger in the Village**”^{*}

(14) 21 Dec – Wrap up. **Stanley Cavell**, “**The Uncanniness of the Ordinary**”^{*}

Texts

All participants are expected to have read Jonathan Culler's *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford UP, 2000) as well as Terry Eagleton's *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Blackwell, 2008) by the beginning of term.

Texts marked with an asterisk* will be posted on OLAT. However, students should procure their own copy of Sigmund Freud's *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (*Civilization and its Discontents*) [preferably in its original German] and Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida*.

Course requirements

Thesis paper

All students must prepare a **preliminary discussion for each of the seminar sessions** (200 words), to be posted on OLAT by 9 a.m. on Wednesday of the respective week. This can entail a thesis, a series of questions, comments or associations; it will facilitate class discussion and allow us to see in what directions you have been thinking while preparing for the class sessions. This will also count towards your class participation and, thus, is compulsory for each session. Neglecting to hand in 11 such thesis papers will result in a fail.

Session Minutes

All students must compile written minutes (Sitzungsprotokolle) for one of the class sessions. Please send these to my assistant Morgane Ghilardi (morgane.ghilardi@es.uzh.ch) **one week** after the respective session at the latest.

Essay

All students should hand in an essay (5000 words):

- The essay should discuss at least one of the theoretical texts from the seminar programme, but could involve a comparison of several theoretical texts discussed.
- A starting point for the development of your essay topic may be a theme, a particular concern or an overarching question linking several texts.
- Your essay must include a thesis statement and develop a coherent argument like any other literary essay.
- The essay can (but does not have to) include an application to a literary text.
- You are expected to do thorough research on your theoretical texts.
- The deadline for handing in your essay is 20 February 2018.
- Please hand in a hardcopy at the department office AND send an electronic version of the paper via e-mail to my assistant Morgane Ghilardi (morgane.ghilardi@es.uzh.ch).

Oral Participation

A seminar allows you to develop and test ideas by entering into a debate with others, so we encourage you to make use of this opportunity.

Seminar grade

The final grade is based on the seminar paper. However, if you fail to hand in 11 preliminary discussion papers and the Sitzungsprotokoll you will fail the course, as they are part of the Leistungsnachweis, even if they are not part of the grade. Plagiarism is a serious offense and pertains to all assignments.

Tutorial

The tutorial is taught by Enrico Ehmman (enrico.ehmann@uzh.ch), starting in the second week of term, time and place tba.