

**M.A. Methods and Theory: Reading Critical Theories**  
**Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Bronfen**  
**Thursday, 2 p.m. – 3.45 p.m.**

(1) 17 Sept – Introduction

**Around 1900**

(2) 24 Sept – Erich Auerbach, “The Brown Stocking”\*

(3) 01 Oct – Walter Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator”\*

(4) 08 Oct – Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny”\*. E.T.A. Hoffmann “Der Sandman”\*

(5) 15 Oct – **No session; use it to prepare Freud**

(6) 22 Oct – Sigmund Freud, “Notiz über den ‘Wunderblock’”\*, “Der Dichter und das Phantasieren”\*, “Der Familienroman der Neurotiker”\*, “Zeitgemässes über Krieg und Tod”\*

**Poststructuralism**

(7) 29 Oct – Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*

(8) 05 Nov – Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended* (Chapter 3)\*, *The Order of Things* (“Las Meninas”)\*

(9) 12 Nov – Jacques Derrida, *Différance*\*

**Psychoanalysis**

(10) 19 Nov – Julia Kristeva, “Approaching Abjection”\*

(11) 26 Nov – Stanley Cavell, “The Uncanniness of the Ordinary”\*. Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Wakefield”\*

(12) 03 Dec – Shoshana Felman, “Textuality and the Riddle of Bisexuality”\*. Balzac “The Girl with the Golden Eyes”\*

(13) 10 Dec – Mladen Dolar, “‘I Shall Be With You on Your Wedding Night’: Lacan and the Uncanny”\*. Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (optional)

(14) 17 Dec – Barbara Johnson, “Is Female to Male as Ground is to Figure?”\*, “My Monster/Myself”\*, “Apostrophe, Animation, and Abortion”\*

## **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) or Peter Barry's *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester UP, 2009) by the beginning of term.

Texts marked with an asterisk\* will be posted on OLAT. However, students should procure their own copy of Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

## **Course requirements**

### **Thesis paper**

All students must prepare a **one-page preliminary discussion for each of the seminar sessions** (300-350 words), to be posted on OLAT by 9 a.m on Tuesday 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 12 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 Sabin Jeanmaire [sabin.jeanmaire@es.uzh.ch](mailto:sabin.jeanmaire@es.uzh.ch) **one week** after the respective session at the latest.

### **Essay**

All students should hand in an essay (5000-6000 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 **Monday, 15 February 2016**.
- Please hand in a hardcopy at the department office AND send an electronic version of the paper via e-mail to my assistant Sabin Jeanmaire.

### **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.

- Active participation – making contributions, asking questions etc. – will make it easier for you to get to grips with the challenging material.
- Ideally you will use the class discussions in order to work towards the topic of your final essay by testing your ideas on the other participants.
- Participating actively requires adequate preparation for each individual session. This entails carefully reading and rereading the texts, taking systematic notes, formulating questions, writing excerpts and summaries of all the texts, including definitions of key concepts, contexts and connections to other texts on the seminar programme, throughout the semester.

**Seminar grade**

The final grade is determined based on your 12 preliminary discussion papers, the Sitzungsprotokoll and the final paper.

**Attendance**

If you cannot attend a session, please notify me or my assistant as soon as possible.

**Tutorial**

The tutorial is taught by Sebastien Fanzun, starting in the second week of term, time and place tba. The tutorial is highly recommended. It will provide you with the opportunity to discuss the theoretical texts, define critical concepts and develop ideas for your essays in a smaller group.