

This is a syllabus from 1997, when I last taught this seminar. The selection of topics and readings will change to some extent, but it will give you an idea of the general orientation of the course

History 202-307: European Intellectual History, 1945-1990

FALL 1997

College Hall 320A

Wed. 2-5

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If late nineteenth and early twentieth-century thinkers were preoccupied by the question of the “death of God,” philosophical discourse in the late twentieth century, particularly in France, has been obsessed by the death of “Man.” The most dominant thinkers of the post-war period have exposed the idea of the human “subject” -- the “self” or “ego” -- to unprecedented criticism. What is meant by the “death of Man”? Does the human “self” have a “center,” or is the self nothing but a linguistic construction or the fragmented relations of power and desire? What are the alternatives to “humanism” which contemporary philosophy offers? What are the political and social implications of the critique of “humanism”? What are the implications for our conception of “reason,” “history,” and “progress”? Can “humanism” be reformulated in the face of its post-modern critics?

An exploration of what has become known as the debate between “Humanism” and “Anti-Humanism” will allow us to address these central questions of post-war European intellectual history.

Course Requirements

Class Participation 30%

In-Class Presentation 10%

Short Papers [4 x 5%] 20%

Take-Home Final 40%

(You will be required to write **four short papers** (2-3 pages) based on the weekly reading assignments. Please note: you must have written **two** of these papers by **Oct. 22**. The **Final Take-Home Exam** will consist of a number of broad interpretive questions. You will be required to write an essay in response to **one** question (8-10 pages). The exam will be distributed on **Tuesday Dec. 9 after 9:00 a.m.** and will be due on **Friday Dec. 12 no later than 4:00**)

Course Materials:

The following books may be purchased at House of Our Own Bookstore, 3920 Spruce Street (ph. # 222-1576) and are also available at Rosengarten Reserve:

Charles Guignon and Derk Pereboom, *Existentialism Basic Writings*. Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre

Jean-Paul Sartre, *No Exit and Three Other Plays*

Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, revised and expanded edition. ed. David Farrell Krell

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. An Introduction*

Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, trans. Geoff Bennington

Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*

Claude Levi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning: Cracking the Code of Culture*

*** All other readings are in the Bulk Pack available at Campus Copy Center on Walnut St. ***

*** Bulk Pack readings marked by an asterix ***

Reading Assignments:

Sept. 3 Introduction

Sept. 10 Humanism, Existentialism, and the Legacy of War

Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect. French Intellectuals, 1944-1956*, pp. 15-98*;

Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Humanism of Existentialism" in *Existentialism Basic Writings*;

Sartre, "No Exit" in *No Exit and Three Other Plays*

Sept. 17 Existentialism at the "Source": Martin Heidegger

Being and Time [selection in *Existentialism Basic Writings*, pp. 203-246]; Thomas

Sheehan, "Reading a Life: Heidegger and Hard Times"*

[You might also find it helpful to consult Dorothea Frede, "The Question of Being:

Heidegger's Project" in *Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* on reserve at Rosengarten]

Sept. 24 Heidegger's "Turn"

Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism" and "The Question Concerning Technology" in *Basic*

Writings; Anson Rabinbach, "Heidegger's 'Letter on Humanism' as Text and Event"*

Oct. 1 Structuralism and the Linguistic Turn

Ferdinand Saussure, "On the Nature of Language"*; Claude Levi-Strauss, *Myth and*

Meaning: Cracking the Code of Culture; Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological

State Apparatuses"*; Francois Furet, "French Intellectuals: From Marxism to

Structuralism"*

Oct. 8 Post-Structuralism

Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Prejudices of Philosophers," *Beyond Good and Evil**;

Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" and

"The Ends of Man"*

Oct. 15 Post-Structuralism: Foucault

Discipline and Punish, pp. 3-31, 135-308; "The Subject and Power"* [optional]

[Please note: we will discuss Miller and Halperin's exchange on Oct. 22, but you might find it useful to read the first Miller selection for the week of Oct. 15]

Oct. 22 Foucault, contd.

The History of Sexuality; James Miller, "Foucault's Politics in Biographical

Perspective"*; David Halperin, "Bringing Out Michel Foucault"*; Miller, "Policing

Discourse: A Response"*

Oct. 29 "New Subjects": Feminism From Existentialism to Post-Structuralism

Simone de Beauvoir, "Introduction to the Second Sex"*; Beauvoir, "Women and

Creativity"*; Helene Cixous, "Sorties"*; Luce Irigaray, "This Sex Which is not One" *;

Luce Irigaray, "Sexual Difference"*

[Suggested reading: Claire Duchen, *Feminism in France: From May '68 to Mitterand* on reserve at Rosengarten]

Nov. 5 Post-Modernism

Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Post-Modern Condition*; Jürgen Habermas, “Modernity versus Postmodernity”*; Anthony Giddens, “Modernism and Post-Modernism [a reply to Habermas]”*

Nov. 12 Critical Theory: Capitalist Mass Culture and the Residues of Utopia

Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* [skip Chapter 7]

[Suggested reading: Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination*; Barry Katz, *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation* on reserve at Rosengarten]

Nov. 19 Critical Theory and the Project of Modernity

Jürgen Habermas, “An Alternative Way out of the Philosophy of the Subject: Communicative Versus Subject-Centered Reason”*; “The Normative Content of Modernity”*; “The Dialectics of Rationalization: An Interview with Jürgen Habermas”*

Nov. 26 No Class: Happy Thanksgiving!

Dec. 3 Conclusion

Pick-up TAKE-HOME FINAL on Tuesday Dec. 9 after 9:00 a.m.

FINAL EXAM is due on Friday Dec. 12 no later than 4:00