

FALL 2021

COL 690: Dissertation Workshop

Kalliopi Nikolopoulou

Fridays 3:00-5:40pm

Clemens 708

Class #16569

The Dissertation Writing Workshop facilitates the transition from course work and exam preparation to the writing of the dissertation students with at the dissertation stage a structured environment for completion of the first chapter of the dissertation. Students in the Writing Workshop present a completed chapter of the dissertation to other workshop participants for critique. In addition, they develop the chapter for oral presentation and publication. The Dissertation Writing Workshop also serves as a forum for career related academic preparation. Course is offered in the fall semester only and is open only to Comparative Literature Ph.D. students. Course is taught in Graduate Studies in Comparative Literature.

COL 713: Special Topics

What is Philosophy?

Rodolphe Gasche

Tuesdays 12: 45-3:25

Clemens 708

A:22209

B:22208

Rather than an introduction into philosophy, or a history of philosophy, this seminar seeks to explore an altogether different genre v... "Philosophy?," a question that all introductions already assume to have been answered. There are only very few examples of this genre that are of rather recent origin. Unless one considers Georg Simmel's studies "On the essence of philosophy" from 1910 a response to what philosophy is, it is Jose Ortega y Gasset who, with his lectures in 1928 at Buenos Aires, and then in Madrid a year later, seems to start this type of inquiry. Martin Heidegger's "What is Philosophy?" from 1955, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's, as well as Giorgio Agamben's "What is Philosophy?" date from 1991, and 2016 respectively. A chapter in Louis Althusser's book "On Reproduction" from 2011 is also on the question. By reading Ortega y Gasset, Heidegger, Deleuze/Guattari, Agamben, and perhaps Althusser's works, I will seek to define questioning about philosophy, and the reasons that may have motivated the interest in

this question. This will involve discussing the questioning, and its relation to philosophy, the beginning of philosophy in Greece, and what its specific difference is compared to other formations.

COL 712: Special Topics

Poetic Thinking

Krzysztof Ziarek

Wednesdays 12:45-3:25

Clemens 708

A:22207

8:22209

This course will explore the way in which thinking takes its radical shape through poetic innovation in language. How does language thinking in surprising and unexpected ways, breaking free of the idea of representational thought? What is the place of listening in listening to what resonates in poetic language beyond words, images and their meaning? How do those issues gain significance in information technology and the reduction of language to information and algorithmic processing? We will read a number of 20th century poets, likely including Wallace Stevens, Gertrude Stein, George Oppen, Susan Howe, Paul Celan, Francis Ponge, John Cage, Erin Moure, and in parallel, we will examine Heidegger's pursuit, unique among philosophers, of the necessity of "poetic thinking": the sense of the "poet" in his work; its critical import for conceptual and representational thought as well as for the critique of technology and its information significance for rethinking poetry and the work of art.

COL 711: Special Topics

Post-Truth & Biblical Law

Sergey Dolgopolski

Mondays 5:30-8:10pm

Clemens 708

A: 22212

B: 22211

This seminar will explore the most recent and older concepts and practices of "Post-truth" and "Alternative Facts." The main path of through Modern Subjectivity to the Biblical Law today.

The guiding question of the course will be the role of the Biblical, Jewish, Christian and Muslim conceptions of truth and new truth in current reemergence of post-truth. To address this

question, the course will situate the current horizon of "post-Truth" and "alternati double-move (1) upstream of the unfolding history of the paradigms or horizons of thinking and practicing truth and (2) downstream the newest version of post-Truth is threatening to unveil. The work in the seminar will proceed from post-Cartesian horizon of truth to the medieval Arabic and Western Christian horizon of truth as "correspondence" between intellect (divine and human) on the one (res) on the other; to late medieval Rabbinic horizon of truth as "refutation;" to the medieval Eastern Orthodox-Christian horizon of 1 presence and existence (hupostasys and huparxis), to the late-ancient Rabbinic and Christian horizons of the truth of a testament/ff New Testament, in the Mishnah, and in the Palestinian Talmud; to Philo of Alexandria's invention of huparxis as the truth of the enga Biblical G-d in the world; to the Aristotelian notion of truth before logos, to th!! archaic Greek and archaic Biblical horizons of truth c resistance to the powers of oblivion, of the impossible, of the lie, and of the unsayable. This moving back from Descartes will allow t currently unfolding sense of post-truth both opens up as a possibility and precludes moving forward.

In addition to readings in the relevant primary texts in translation, the theoretical component of the course will include a selection oi and Time, his lectures, courses and notes between 1933 and 1942, as well as Alain De Libera's theoretical and methodological worki "archeology of modern subjecti(vi)ty."

Spring 2022

COL 112: Cross-Cultural Explorations: Encounters with Western, East Asian, and African Cultures

Alexander Sell

Monday, Wednesday 3:30pm-4:50pm

Frczk 454

Class# 18341

The principal objective of this course is the study of the diversity of Western, East Asian, and African cultures from the Renaissance to the Modern Age. Although we will explore cultural diversity in its various expressions in politics, religious thought, social customs, everyday beliefs, and scientific advances our primary focus will be the study of art, literature, and big ideas. One of the central concerns of this course will be different cultural and historical conceptions of the human and its relation to nature, politics, and science. In the first part of the course we will examine the different formations of humanism in the Western cultures from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment; from Romanticism to Marxism. In the second part of the course we will focus on the non-Western ideas of the human and humanity and their expression in religions, political organizations, and artworks. We will begin with Daoism and Confucianism and their impact on Chinese ethics, philosophy, politics, and culture during the Ming (1368-

1644) and Qing (1644-1911) Dynasties. We will also briefly discuss the Cultural Revolution and Maoism in 20th century China. We will follow the influence of Confucianism in Japanese culture and its confluence with Zen and the Shinto Revival. In the context of politics we will focus primarily on the Tokugawa Shogunate. In the context of the arts we will analyze the place of the human in nature as reflected in Japanese landscape paintings, poetry, and woodblock prints. We will conclude our course with the discussion of the devastation of colonialism and the struggle for independence in Africa. We will analyze the influence of traditional (for example, masks and music) and modern African cultures (Fanon, Achebe, and Soyinka) in the contemporary world. This course is the same as [COL 112](#) and course repeat rules will apply. Students should consult with their major department regarding any restrictions on their degree requirements.

COL 200: "We the People": On Democracy and Justice in America

Donald Cross

Monday, Wednesday 8:00am-9:20am

Clemens 119

Class# 22765

This course explores issues central to democracy. First, it examines the relation between democracy's claim to protect and promote both universal freedom and universal equality. Second, it considers the unresolvable tension between popular sovereignty ("we") and individual rights ("I"). Third, it considers the limitation of democracy in its necessary calculus of citizenship, the dual question of both how to count and who counts. Fourth the course takes up the role of narrative (recounting and accounting, telling) in establishing citizenship and the tradition or legacy of democracy. The course focuses on detailed readings and discussions of founding and foundational documents of the United States' democratic experiment: declaration of independence, articles of confederation, constitution of the United States, debates on the constitution; writings of Jefferson, Douglass, Lincoln, Stanton and Anthony, Larsen, MLK, Morrison; and major supreme court decisions concerning citizenship, racial equality, reproductive rights, rights to privacy, same sex marriage. In sum, "We the people" asks what it means to be a citizen and why democracy is at once the worst and the best form of government. In sum, in its consideration of the language of democracy--of citizenship and rights--"We the People" asks what it means when African-American novelist Toni Morrison remarks, in *Beloved*, that the story of slavery and of a mother's desire to "free" her daughter is "not" one "to pass on." What does it mean not "to pass on" the haunted narrative of our cultural and legal inheritance.

COL233: Literature and Happiness

Marc Johnson

Tuesday, Thursday 3:30pm-4:50pm

Baldy 105

Class# 19423

We all want to be happy. But what is happiness? This course will investigate the answers given to this question. We will be reading, writing, and talking about a wide variety of short texts from different fields such as art and literature, journalism, neuroscience, philosophy, psychology, religion, and sociology. We will study visual media as well. Through literary and philosophical analysis, some of the questions we will try to answer will be the following: What makes us happy? Do we deserve to be happy? Can we create our own happiness? What is the relation between happiness, virtues, pleasure, and friendship?

COL 704: Derrida and Death
Shaun Irlam
Tuesday 11:00am 1:40pm
Clemens 708
Class#A 21905 Class#B 21906

The political theory of modernity is replete with speculative narratives regarding the origins and interpellation of person, citizen and subject as the pre-eminent political and social units constructing the modern nation-state conceived as a state defined by rights. The past century has further seen the rise of a discourse of human rights as a *supplementary* idiom around the fate of the citizen when civil rights miscarry, fail to materialize or are deliberately withheld. Thus Agamben reflects on the condition of 'bare life' as a state of being distinguished by the absence of rights. However, political theory has almost nothing to say about how the biography of the Citizen might end (whether prior to the end of the *natural* life of the citizen or even upon his/her death) and even less to say about any miscarriage or withdrawal of those last rites that constitute and consecrate the *proper* end of the subject.

How does the state record the end of the subject? What are the rights of the dead? Do the dead retain rights, and if so, to whom or what do these rights attach in the absence of the physical body. To what narrative structure do kin of the deceased appeal when they speak of seeking "closure"? Under what circumstances does the subject end *improperly* and what can Derrida's work teach us about any of these issues?

We will read selections from Hegel and Blanchot as well as a broad selection of Derrida's texts exploring these questions including *Margins of Philosophy*, *The Gift of Death*, *Glas*, *The Work of Mourning*, *Demeure*, *The Animal That Therefore I Am* and *The Beast and the Sovereign*, vol. II

COL 705: Concept, Idea, Ideal
Rodolphe Gasche
Tuesday 2:00pm-4:40pm
Clemens 708
Class#A 21907 Class# B 21908

This seminar will be entirely devoted to Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. However, in distinction from traditional interpretative readings of this crucial work which proceed in line with Kant's own structuring of the book into a transcendental doctrine of the elements and a transcendental dialectic (with all their numerous subdivisions), and finally a transcendental doctrine of method, I will choose a different path. As the title of the seminar: CONCEPT, IDEA, IDEAL, suggests, a title which which should have also included sensible INTUITIONS (*Anschauungen*), I intend to read the treatise in relation to the different representations (*Vorstellungen*) of the mind distinguished by Kant in conformity with the tradition. The goal of the seminar is to produce a rigorous understanding of these notions; what the powers of the mind are that are involved in their production; what their differences are with respect to one another; what qua representations of the mind they accomplish; and of how they relate to one another in the process of the formation of determined knowledge. A carefully selected number of passages that will be read closely will allow us to highlight the path breaking accomplishment of Kant's First Critique for modern philosophy.

COL 707: Toward a Critique of the Present: Myth and Enlightenment from Kant to QAnon
Noam Pines

Tuesday 4:10-6:50pm
Clemens 120
Class#A 24613 Class#B 24614

In critical thought, the concept of myth designates a representation of reality that lies outside the purview of rationality, and in which the heteronomous authority of tradition remains firmly entrenched. Consequently, the objects that draw their meaning from myth are not merely abstract ideas, but political and social realities. Recently, the mythical has resurged in public discourse with the rise of authoritarian political figures. Under their political leadership, the spread of governmental misinformation, “fake news,” and conspiracy theories has reproduced knowledge gaps necessary for the perpetuation of oppressive power relations. In this context, the seminar will focus on key historical reactions to myth by means of a critique of the present known as “Enlightenment.” Readings include Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Lukacs, Benjamin, Adorno and Horkheimer, and Foucault.