

idsva

704 Syllabus: Seminar IV **The Subject and Object of Art**

Online & Videoconference
5 Credits

Dates: Jan 21 – April 13, 2025 (Spring Break: Mar 3 - Mar 9)
Instructor: Professor Silvia Mazzini
TA: Amy Schuessler

Course Description

Seminar IV, *The Subject and Object of Art*, will intertextually loop back to Seminar II, Part 2, *Art in Theory Revisited*. In tracing the relationship between the subject and the object as it develops over the last two centuries, we start with Karl Jasper's reading of Kant alongside Kant's own writings and then move to Alexandre Kojève's introduction to Hegel. This seminar, which Kojève gave at the École Pratique des Hautes Études from 1933 to 1939, greatly influenced French intellectual thought. (Participants included Bataille, Merleau-Ponty, Breton, Lacan, and Sartre; and Foucault and Derrida figure prominently among others who acknowledge a sizable debt to Kojève.).

We then venture into subject formation as a question of language and ethics, with Bakhtin's theory of dialogical consciousness. While here, in particular, Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* provides a point of focus, the intent is to think through theories of language toward a philosophy of visual art. To that end, Henri Bergson's *Creative Evolution* will question the Darwinian mechanism of evolution with an evolution motivated by an *élan vital*, a naturally creative impetus that shapes human experience. In addition, Bergson's notion of subjective time, influential in the work of modern writers and thinkers, can illuminate other developments in the field of human subjectivity. We will then examine Deleuze & Guattari's anti-psychoanalytic philosophy, back up to revisit Freud on the question of neurosis, and turn to Woolf's novel for an emerging feminist aesthetic that anticipates so many of the issues standing at the more recent intersection of subjectivity, embodiment, and psychoanalysis.

We then turn to Lacan's theory of the gaze and its, more specifically, ocular focus on issues of the object/other. From here, we move to Jacqueline Rose's feminist reading of Lacan and film theory. With Levinas, we encounter a different notion of the gaze, one focused on the 'face' of the other as a mode of 'address' that grounds the phenomenon of responsibility in the self-other relation. Finally, we turn to Amelia Jones' important discussions of visual culture, art, and the feminism-postmodernism and-or postcolonial relation more broadly, and, with Rose as background, these essays may prompt us to wonder about a feminist critique of Levinas.

Learning Objectives

Focusing on subject/object relations as constituted and/or represented in art, students will learn to approach philosophical and theoretical critique from the standpoint of close reading and intertextual analysis. Texts are read and discussed in terms of their intertextual relations with the other texts in the course and with the key ideas of Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. The analysed theories, along with the discussions online and on the OCF, will help stimulate and explore students' dialogical and hermeneutical skills.

Course Requirements

Videoconferences involving all students in the seminar are scheduled roughly every three weeks; Individual Phone Calls are also scheduled every three weeks. The TA will moderate Open Class Forum (OCF) discussions roughly every three weeks.

Open Class Forum. In designated OCF weeks, there will be a formal and collaborative discussion of readings. OCF is a focused conversation with the readings and one another (not a social-media forum).

- During these weeks, the TA will post on OCF up to three intertextual questions based on the assigned readings. These questions will be posted as one post no later than Monday at 12 am Eastern Time.
- Replies to questions should be thoughtful and succinct (under 200 words) in order to keep the conversation lively and to the point.
- Replies should (i) address at least one of the questions, and (ii) engage productively with other student comments.
- You are welcome to reply to more than one question, but please post the replies separately.
- Every student is required to answer a question in OCF in designated weeks. Replies must be posted by **Sunday** at midnight at the latest, but you are strongly encouraged to post replies sooner, to enable more fruitful discussion.
- There will also be optional discussions in Canvas every week.
- In addition to serving our immediate learning and engagement with the material, Open Class Forum discussions should also lay the groundwork for the seminar essay questions. Cohort OCF discussion is archived and, if you have a good solid OCF trail, oral exam prep is very doable. Without that, orals prep can be very difficult.

Videoconferences. Students are required to *participate* in videoconference seminar discussions, so please come to class having done the readings for that week. The critical approach will be grounded in close-reading and intertextual analysis, with the primary focus being on the given week's assigned reading. You should factor in 2 hours per videoconference (plus some buffer time in the beginning and the end).

VC etiquette:

- Students are expected to participate via webcam. Being on **video** implements the interactive character of the VC, level of attention of the students, and helps the instructor to engage more actively in their communicative skills. Any exemption should be discussed with the professor in charge before the class takes place and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. For

example, if you are travelling or have problems with your connection, ask the professor for permission not to use the webcam or to participate via phone.

- Please make use of the **chat function** only if you encounter technical problems or in order to post information and links that are addressed during the discussion. Avoiding parallel conversations helps develop a shared conversation with all students and the professor.

Attendance policy: students are expected to attend *every* class. Video recordings are available as a make-up resource for missed classes, but they should not be considered equivalent to attending the class in person. More than two missed Videoconferences will lower the final grade of 0.25 points per missed meeting. Please inform the TA and the professor in advance if you cannot attend the VC.

Individual Phone Calls (IC).

Each student will engage in a phone/zoom discussion with Prof Mazzini. The Calls will be scheduled approximately a week in advance, and they last approximately 30 minutes (except for the Small Group Calls, which will last 45 minutes). Students should come to the calls prepared to discuss the readings for that week and with a couple of questions about the reading to be discussed with the professor.

Attendance policy:

If you need to reschedule your IC, please notify the professor in advance. Please reschedule only for urgent reasons and possibly within the designated IC week.

More than two missed ICs will lower the final grade by 0.25 points per missed meeting. Please inform the TA and the professor in advance if you cannot attend the IC.

(We suggest you add the scheduled IC to your calendar: in this way, you'll make sure not to miss it.)

Written Assignments (Questions will be provided):

Q1: posted on 2/6, due 2/13

Q2: posted on 2/27, due 3/10

Q 3: posted on 3/24, due 4/14

- At set dates, Prof. Mazzini will post a question online, to be answered in four to five pages, double-spaced (the final assignment will be five to seven pages).
- All questions should be addressed in terms of close reading and intertextual analysis, and all questions must be discussed and strategized in teams of two or three students. (However, all written material submitted must be solely that of the person submitting.)
- Please use a Times New Roman font, point 12, double-spaced, leaving a 1" margin all around. No other fonts or formats are acceptable. Make sure all your documents are editable: files should have a word **.doc or .docx** extension – no .pdf or .pages will be accepted. Clearly mark your name, seminar and assignment on the front page of your document, and number your pages. Each assignment should also include the names of at least two students with whom you have worked on the question.

- Please use MLA style in your papers. Please also review the *IDSVA Writing Guide* (available in Canvas), especially Section VIII, for some tips on discussion style and writing style and mechanics. Submitted documents should be uploaded through Assignments in Canvas, and the file named according to the following format:

family name, givenname_704_assignment #_yymmdd
(e.g., “Jones, Sally_704_assignment 1_180211”).

Assessment and Grading

- The course grade will be based on the average grade of your writing assignments (70%; all must be completed); the grade for your collaboration work on OCF (10%); the grade for your contributions to Videoconference seminars (10%) and the grade for your Individual Phone Call discussions (10%).
- Students are required to familiarize themselves with the Rubric for Short Papers Evaluation (available in Canvas), which will be used as a meter to assess final papers.
- Late submissions will not be graded unless prior arrangements have been made with Professor Mazzini for a brief extension (made on a case-by-case basis in response to special circumstances). Extensions are granted on a case-by-case basis in response to special circumstances. For extensions exceeding two weeks after the due date at the end of the semester, students should request an Incomplete (see Student Handbook).
- Papers will be graded no later than two weeks after the deadline.
- Please be reminded of the policies on Academic Honesty, including those regarding multiple submissions (see [IDSVA Student Handbook](#), pp. 29-30). Try to work on intertextuality and analysing different works of art in your papers. This will improve both your academic writing and your hermeneutic skills.

Suggestions

1) You will notice that the reading schedule is very tight. It is important to have a good start on the readings *before* our January 30 start (and to have completed the Dostoevsky by then). You should scan the texts to note the number of pages you will need to read daily in a given week to stay on schedule. If you find yourself running into trouble, please notify the professor and the TA right away so we can strategize before the issue gets out of hand.

2) Some of the texts you will be reading are famously difficult. Do not skip! Even if you are reading long passages that seemingly make no sense, go on reading, and we will make sense of them later.

Recommended Texts

The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, Second Edition. Ed., Robert Audi. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

A Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory. Ed., Michael Payne. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1997.

Required Texts

Acquire the correct editions (listed below), confirming that the publisher, translator, and year are the same. If you intend to use an electronic version please make sure it is the correct edition. The available ISBN #s for the books are listed; this is another way you can search (although it is not always an exact science). All the texts are available in paperback. ‘♦’ indicates that the assigned reading is limited to certain selections.

1. Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *The Brothers Karamazov*. Trans. Richard Pevear. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2002. ISBN 0-374-52837-3 OR 978-0-374-52837-9 (Read this book *before* the course begins).
2. Jaspers, Karl. *Kant* [from *The Great Philosophers*, Vol 1]. Ed., Hannah Arendt, Trans. Ralph Manheim. New York: Harvest, 1962. ♦ Read: Sections III-IV (pp.19-88), Section VII & VIII (pp.135-54). ISBN 0-15-646685-6 OR 978-0-15-646685-1
3. Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics: With Selections from the Critique of Pure Reason*. Edited by Gary Hatfield. (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy), Cambridge University Press, 2004 (be sure to get the Updated Edition). ♦Read: General Question: Sections 4-5 (pp.24-31); Main Transcendental Question First Part: Notes 2-3 (pp.40-45); Main Transcendental Question Second Part: Sections 22-23 (pp.56-58) & Sections 32-35 (pp.66-69) & Section 39 (pp.74-78); Main Transcendental Question Third Part: Sections 40-45 (pp.79-85) & Section 57 (pp.102-108); Solution to the General Question of the Prolegomena (pp.116-122); Preface and Introduction to Critique of Pure Reason (pp.139-155). ASIN B00E297ZX0 (**PDF in Canvas**)
4. Kojève, Alexandre. *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*. Ed., Alan Bloom. Trans. James H. Nichols, Jr. Ithica: Cornell UP, 1969. ISBN 978-0-8014-9203-7 OR 0801492033 OR 978-0801-492037 (**PDF in Canvas**)
5. Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Ed., Trans. Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1984. ♦ Read all except Chapter 5 and Appendix 1 are optional. ISBN 0-8166-1228-5 OR 0-8166-1227-7
6. Bergson, Henri. Trans. Mitchell, Arthur. *Creative Evolution*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan 2007. (**Note: This book is hard to find – a PDF will be available in Canvas**). Alternative edition: eBook, Henri Bergson: *Creative Evolution*. Abingdon, Oxon, New York, NY: Routledge, 2023.

7. Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987. ♦Read: Intro and Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 14, 15. ISBN 0-8166-1402-4 OR 0-8166-1401-6
8. Freud, Sigmund. *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis* (1914) in *Freud: Complete Works*. (PDF in Canvas)
9. Woolf, Virginia. *To the Lighthouse*. New York, London: Harcourt, 1981. ISBN 0-15-690739-9 OR 0-15-190736-6
10. Levinas, Emmanuel. *Entre-Nous*. Trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshaw. New York: Columbia UP, 1998. ♦Read: Chapters 1, 2, 4, 6, 12, 15, 17. ISBN 0-231-07911-7 OR 0-231-07910-9. Also read: Richard Kearney Interview with Levinas (PDF in Canvas).
11. Lacan, Jacques. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Ed., Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York and London: Norton, 1998, 1981. ♦ Read: Preface – Chapter 9 (pp. VII – 119). ISBN 0-393-00079-6 OR 978-0393000795 OR 0393317757 OR 978-0393317756
12. Rose, Jacqueline. *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*. London & New York: Verso, 2006, 2005. ♦ Read Introduction: Feminism and the Psychic, Part One, Femininity and Representation: Chapters 2, 3, 6. Part Two, The Field of Vision: Chapters 7, 10. ISBN 978-1-84467-058-1 OR 8170463246 OR ASIN B00HQLMX92
Available also here: <https://archive.org/details/sexualityinfield0000rose/mode/2up>
13. Jones, Amelia, ed. *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003. ♦ Read: Chapters 4, 7, 12, 14, 15, 21, 26, 31, 36, 39, 46, 55, 57, 60. ISBN 0-415-26706-4 OR 978-0-415-26706-9. OR 0-415-26705-6
Available also here: <https://archive.org/details/feminismvisualcu0000unse>

Schedule

You should complete readings *prior to* the week in which they are listed, then *review* them in-depth during the assigned week. You are strongly advised to create a reading schedule for yourself and to block in times to complete x amount of pages every day.

A ‘❖’ indicates that the assigned reading will be limited to certain selections, which are noted below.

A ‘➡’ indicates the focus of the readings: these pages are of pivotal importance for our close reading and for the discussion. This means that although all assigned readings are necessary in order to reflect on the relationship between subject and object, these specific pages have priority (in terms of time) and shall be read before our meetings, in order to be discussed together and more in-depth.

Times are Eastern Standard Time**Week 1 (Jan 20-Jan 26) VC: Saturday, 1/25, 12 pm -2 pm EST**

Jaspers, *Kant*. ❖ Read Sections III-IV (pp.19-88), Section VII & VIII (pp.135-54).
&
Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics: With Selections from the Critique of Pure Reason*. ❖ Read: General Question: Sections 4-5 (pp.24-31); Main Transcendental Question First Part: Notes 2-3 (pp.40-45); Main Transcendental Question Second Part: Sections 22-23 (pp.56-58) & Sections 32-35 (pp.66-69) & Section 39 (pp.74-78); Main Transcendental Question Third Part: Sections 40-45 (pp.79-85) & Section 57 (pp.102-108); Solution to the General Question of the Prolegomena (pp.116-122); Preface and Introduction to Critique of Pure Reason (pp.139-155). Total Reading = 143pp.
➡ Jaspers, pp. 19-54; Kant, pp. 24-31; pp. 40-45; pp.102-108; pp. 139-155

Week 2 (Jan 27-Feb 2) Individual Calls (TBD)

Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*. Total Reading = 256pp.
➡ Chapters 1, 2 and 6 (pp. 3-70 and 150-168)

Written Assignment 1**Week 3 (Feb 3-9) OCF 1****(Post 2/2 Reply 2/9)**

Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. ❖ Read: All, but Chapter 5 and Appendix 1 are optional. Total Reading = 206pp.
➡ Chapters 1 and 3 (pp. 5-48; 78-100)

Week 4 (Feb 10-16) VC 2: Sat 2/15, 12 pm -2 pm EST

Bergson, *Creative Evolution*. Total Reading = 391 pp.
➡ Pp. xix-xxv; 3-62; 97-108; 164-194; 240-258; 324-330; 357-374

Week 5 (Feb 17-23) OCF 2**(Post 2/23 Reply3/2)**

Freud, *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis* (PDF in Canvas)
& Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*. Total Reading = 317pp.

Week 6 (Feb 24-Mar 2) IC 2 (TBD)

Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*. ❖ Read: Translator's Foreword and Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 14, 15.
➡ Chapter 1 (Introduction), Chapters 2, 10 and 15 (conclusion)

Week 7 Spring Break: Mar 3 - Mar 9

Written Assignment 2

March 9: Daylight saving time in the US (please check your Google calendar regarding times of the appointments if you live in different countries)

Week 8 (Mar 10-16) **VC 3: Sat 3/15, 12 pm - 2 pm EST**

Levinas, *Entre-Nous*. ❖ Read: Chapters 1, 2, 4, 6, 12, 15, 17. Also Read: Richard Kearney Interview with Levinas (Kearney PDF in Canvas). Total Reading = 90 pp.

Week 9 (Mar 17-23) **OCF 3**
(Post 3/16 Reply 3/23)

Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. ❖ Read: Preface – Chapter 9 (pp. VII – 119). Total Reading = 123pp.

➡ Chapter 2, 3, 6, 9

Week 10 (Mar 24-30) **IC 3 / Small Groups Calls (TBD)**

Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*. ❖ Read: Introduction: Feminism and the Psychic, Part One, Femininity and Representation: Chaps 2, 3, 6. Part Two, The Field of Vision: Chaps 7, 10. Total Reading = 149pp.

➡ Chapters 3, 6, 7

Week 11 (Mar 31-April 6) – **VC 4: Sat 4/5, 12 pm -2 pm EST**

Jones, *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*. ❖ Read: Chapters 4, 7, 12, 14, 15, 21, 26, 31, 36, 39, 46, 55, 57, 60. Total Reading = 102 pp.

➡ Chapters 7, 12, 21, 36, 39, 46, 57

Week 12 (April 7-13) **Writing/Reading Period (no class)**

Written Assignment 3