

Psychoanalysis and Cultural Studies

Erik S. Roraback

Docent/Habilitation, Charles University

Doctor of Philosophy, University of Oxford

Bachelor of Arts, Pomona College www.erikroraback.com

Contact: eroraback@aeprague.org

Course Description:

In this course, we shall engage a select band of the seminars offered by the major postFreudian psychoanalytic thinker, teacher, and practitioner, Jacques Lacan (1901–81), and some outstanding Lacan-criticism. We shall also engage Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) and some important post-Lacanian thinkers with special reference to Slavoj Žižek (1949–) and to Julia Kristeva (1940–), in order to use theoretical psychoanalysis as a powerful critical tool to diagnose individual and social reality, psychic systems, and specific artworks.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes:

In this seminar, students will be equipped with the capacity to employ theoretical psychoanalysis to grapple with complex artworks and with complicated practical realities, and thereby to highlight new dimensions and promote greater understandings of such cultural objects and vitally important, contemporary phenomena. In so doing, the course will enable students to become more astute critics and thinkers.

Course Requirements:

Reading: there is not an over-abundance of matter to be read for the class; therefore, that which is assigned deserves your careful attention.

Two essays a midterm of 2500 words and a final essay of 3000 words; topics will be given two weeks in advance, but you can also make your own creative choice of topic area that must have the professor's approval in advance; regrettably, late papers will not be accepted.

Attendance at the weekly sessions to discuss the guided readings (one absence allowed, beyond that your grade will be lowered a full letter grade for each additional excused or unexcused absence). Your mental participation and over-all effect on the quality of the class inform this grade as much as how much you contribute to seminar discussions; arriving more than ten minutes late for class or leaving for more than ten minutes for any part of the class session will result in an absence for that day. There will be two ten-minute breaks during each week's session.

Oral presentations by the students in the class, which may be seen as work in progress toward one of the two writing assignments

Grading Policy:

Participation/attendance in the class sessions: 30%

Midterm essay: 25%

Final essay: 35%

In-class presentation: 10%

Mandatory Completion Policy

Note that all mandatory assignments and exams must be completed to the best of your ability in order for your final grade to be issued. Failure to complete a mandatory assignment or exam may result in a failing grade.

Letter Grade	Percentage	Description
A+	97-100	Excellent Work
A	93-97	Outstanding Work
A-	90-92	
B+	87-89	Good work
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	
C+	77-79	Acceptable Work
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	
D+	67-69	Work that is significantly below average
D	63-66	
D-	60-62	
F	0-59	Work that does not meet the minimum standards for passing the course

AEP Academic Integrity Policy

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are not tolerated. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the development of knowledge and learning is encouraged at many stages of the learning process. While we value technology for educational purposes, we also value originality and the retainment of knowledge, and thus using AI for assignments and examinations, even if rephrased, is strictly prohibited and considered an academic integrity violation, unless the instructor explicitly allows for it in the context of evaluated work

AEP Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy

The AEP program in Prague promotes a diverse learning environment where the dignity, worth, and differences of each individual are valued and respected. Discrimination and harassment, whether based on a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or other legally protected characteristics, are repugnant and completely inconsistent with our objectives. Retaliation against individuals for raising good faith claims of harassment and/or discrimination is prohibited.

AEP Diversity Policy

AEP is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming community that values diversity in all its forms. We believe that one of the most meaningful lessons of studying abroad is learning to navigate and appreciate differences with curiosity and an open mind. While engaging across differences can sometimes be challenging or uncomfortable, these moments are essential for growth and learning. We recognize that every member of our community, even with the best intentions, may occasionally make missteps. Our commitment is to provide a supportive environment where respectful and honest dialogue helps us learn from these experiences, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive and broaden their perspective.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

CEE Introductory Lecture Series

AEP Introductory Lecture Series

Week 2

General Introductions

Recommended to watch on your own outside of class time:

“Psychotherapy: Sigmund Freud”, “Psychotherapy: Anna Freud”, “Psychotherapy: Donald Winnicott”, “Psychotherapy: Melanie Klein” and “Psychotherapy: John Bowlby” from The School of Life series

Week 3

FREUD I

- Peter Gay “Sigmund Freud: A Brief Life” pp. ix–xxiii
- Sigmund Freud, On Dreams pp. 1–32 (online)
- Sigmund Freud, On Dreams pp. 33–76 (online)

Watch a video on Freud and discuss it as a class

Week 4

FREUD II

- “The Future Prospects of Psychoanalytic Therapy” pp. 139–51 from The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XI (1910): Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis, Leonardo da Vinci and Other Works (online)

FREUD III

- Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents pp. 1–35
- Introduction by Leo Bersani pp. vii–xxii (online; also, a hard copy in CERGE-EI library)

Week 5

FREUD III

- Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents pp. 36–82 (online; also, a hard copy in CERGE-EI library)

Week 6

LACAN I

Watch DVD video Rendez-Vous Chez Lacan English version 51 minutes

Discuss Rendez-Vous Chez Lacan

- Michel de Certeau, “An Ethics of Speech” pp. 47–64 from Heterologies: Discourse on the Other (online)

Week 7

Mid-term essay due

LACAN II

- Alexandre Leupin, Lacan Today: Psychoanalysis, Science, Religion (online and hard copy in CERGE-EI library)
- “Introduction” pp. xiii–xxxvi, Chapter 1: “The Structure of the Subject” pp. 1–29

LACAN III

- Malcolm Bowie, Lacan (selections, i.e., Chapter One Freud and Lacan pp. 1–6 and Concluding Remarks pp. 197–203, both online)

Week 8

AFTER LACAN I

- Julia Kristeva, Intimate Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis, Volume 1 (selections online read pp. 1–31)

Recommended reading during or after the life of the course

- Lacan Seminar 11 The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis (online)

Week 9

AFTER LACAN II

- Julia Kristeva, *Intimate Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis*, Volume 1 (continued selections online, revisit again pp. 1–31)

Watch an example of Lacan teaching online and discuss as a class

Week 10

LACAN IV

- Alexandre Leupin, *Lacan Today: Psychoanalysis, Science, Religion* (online and hard copy in CERGE-EI library)
- Chapter Three: “The Master, the Academic, the Psychoanalyst, and the Hysteric: Four Discourses” pp. 67–85
- Chapter Four: “There Is No Sexual Rapport” pp. 87–103; “Conclusion” pp. 105–28

Optional reading:

- Chapter Two: “Epistemology” pp. 30–66, and Chapter Five: “God is Real” pp. 105–23

Week 11

ŽIŽEK I

- Slavoj Žižek, *Interrogating the Real* (selections online, Editor’s Intro. pp. 1–7 and Author’s Preface pp. 8–17, Author’s Afterword pp. 328–55 and Glossary pp. 356–74)

Watch a Žižek lecture online and discuss as a class

Week 12

ŽIŽEK II

- James Mellard, *Beyond Lacan* (in hard copy of reader and online, read chapter 8 pp. 211–54)

Watch a Žižek lecture online and discuss as a class

Erik Roraback will discuss Slavoj Žižek’s publications including one from 2022 on *Surplus-Enjoyment: A Guide for the Non-Perplexed*

CONCLUSIONS

Week 13

Final essay due, which takes the place of the Final Exam

Readings:

Extracts from a select band of the following critical and theoretical texts will be available in a course reader, available online, or will be discussed by the instructor in class:

- Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, *Lacan: The Absolute Master*, trans. Douglas Brick (Stanford, 1991).
- Malcolm Bowie, *Lacan* (Harvard, 1991).
- Michel de Certeau, “Lacan: An Ethics of Speech” from *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi, foreword Wlad Godzich, *Theory and History of Literature, Volume 17* (Minnesota, 1986).
- Lorenzo Chiesa, *Subjectivity and Otherness: A Philosophical Reading of Lacan*, Short Circuits series, ed. Slavoj Žižek (MIT, 2007).
- Bruce Fink, *A Clinical Introduction to Psychoanalysis: Theory and Technique* (Harvard, 1997).
- Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (Penguin, 2002).
- Sigmund Freud, *On Dreams* (Norton, 1980) with “Sigmund Freud: A Brief Life” by Peter Gay (1989).
- Sigmund Freud, “The Future Prospects of Psycho-Analytic Therapy” pp. 139-51 from *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XI (1910): Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis, Leonardo da Vinci and Other Works*, trans. from the German under the gen. editorship of James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (Vintage, 2001).
- Stephen Greenblatt, “7: Psychoanalysis and Renaissance Culture” pp. 176–95 in *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture*, with a new introduction by the author (Routledge, 1990/2007).
- Alice Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking: An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva*, Alice Jardine, ed. Mari Ruti (Bloomsbury, 2020).
- A. Kiarina Kordela, *Surplus: Spinoza, Lacan* (SUNY, 2007).
- Julia Kristeva, *Intimate Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis, Volume 1* (Columbia, 2000).
- Julia Kristeva, *Intimate Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis, Volume 2* (Columbia, 2002). —Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book VII*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. with notes Dennis Porter (Routledge, 2008).
- Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book XI*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (Norton, 1981). —*Reading Seminar XI: Lacan’s Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysts*, Richard Feldstein, Bruce Fink, Maire Jaanus, eds. (SUNY, 2005).
- On Feminine Sexuality: The Limits of Love and Knowledge, 1972-73: Encore, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. with notes Bruce Fink (Norton, 1998).

—Alexandre Leupin, *Lacan Today: Psychoanalysis, Science, Religion* (Other Press, 2004). *

Two copies of the text available in CERGE-EI library

—Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *The Title of the Letter: A Reading of Lacan*, trans. François Faffoul and David Pettigrew (SUNY, 1992).

—James Mellard, *Beyond Lacan* (SUNY, 2006).

—Erik S. Roraback, “A Gateway to a Baroque Rhetoric of Jacques Lacan & Niklas Luhmann”.

In: Prague English Studies Centenary and the Transformation of Philologies. 1st ed. Eds.

Martin Procházka and Ondřej Pilný. Prague: Karolinum Press, 2013, 218 pp., pp. 166–83.

_____. *The Philosophical Baroque: On Autopoietic Modernities* (Brill, 2017).

_____. *The Power of the Impossible: On Community and the Creative Life* (Iff, 2018). —Marika

Rose, *A Theology of Failure: Žižek against Christian Innocence* (Fordham, 2019).

—Mari Ruti, *The Call of Character: Living a Life Worth Living* (Columbia, 2014). —Gabriel

Tupinambá, *The Desire of Psychoanalysis: Exercises in Psychoanalytic Thinking*, foreword

Slavoj Žižek (Northwestern, 2021).

—Slavoj Žižek, *Absolute Recoil: Towards a New Foundation of Dialectical Materialism* (Verso, 2014).

_____. *Antigone* (Bloomsbury, 2016).

_____. *Disparities* (Bloomsbury, 2016).

_____. *The Fragile Absolute; or, Why is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?* (Verso, 2000).

_____. *Interrogating the Real* (Continuum, 2005).

_____. *Less than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (Verso, 2012).

_____. *Living in the End Times* (Verso, 2010).

_____. *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (MIT, 2003).

_____. *Surplus-Enjoyment: A Guide for the Non-Perplexed* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2022).

_____. *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (Verso, 2008).

—Slavoj Žižek and Boris Gunjević, *God in Pain: Inversions of Apocalypse* (Verso,

2012).