DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC LANGUAGES

GER 382: The French Connection: German Theory in Comparative Contexts
TTH 12:30-2, BUR 232 Unique 37880 (= CL 382 unique 32970)
Instructor: Katherine Arens
Semester: Fall, 2010
Office: BUR 320
Office Hours: T 12-12:30 and by appointment
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Course Description
This course is designed to correlate the emergence and adaptation of major streams of 19th and 20th-century criticism with specific cultural/political/social agenda of their contexts. The goal is to take a comparative approach to theory, to show how philosophical models adapt under institutional pressures over time -- the fundamental problem of an historical epistemology. In particular, we will stress how tacit problems remain when nineteenth-century German philosophical models are reintroduced into twentieth-century contexts (particularly in France, but also in Germany and the United States).

This course will focus on how to read theory comparatively and diachronically, instead of internationally and synchronically, working with theory as philosophical interpretive models undergoing national adaptations in a "source and target" model or what has come to be called a project of historical epistemology, correlating scientific knowledge with a cultural context. It will reveal the secret of the 20th-century theory project: most, if not all, contemporary theory sources back to six to seven Germanophone philosophers.

Over the course of the semester, each student will be responsible for building up their own philosophy/theory project. Ideally, students should have a reading knowledge of German and French for this course; practically, most major texts are available in translation, and will be on reserve.

Grading
- First writing assignment = 20 % of grade
- 3 précis x 5% of grade = 15 % of grade
- Second writing assignment (abstract) = 25% of grade
- Final paper or bibliography = 40% of grade
- Plus/minus grading will be used.
ASSIGNMENTS:

First Writing Assignment: Thought Piece/Theory Analysis
What elements of the Kantian legacy pertain to your scholarly interests (AKA which philosophers are cited in your fields)?

Take the 6 lynchpins of German Idealism (Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and Husserl) and sort out what issues they bring out that still have resonance in your discipline or in your own scholarly project. This is a pure theory essay that requires some citation of definitions or issues from text, but no research. At least two of the theorists we have read must be treated in some detail as belonging or antithetical to your project/discipline. The goal of this short paper (5-10 pages, MAX) is an exercise in historical epistemology: of situating certain theoretical problems within a context of origin, and then modulating them to explain how they still pertain and what changes/syntheses have taken place. This is an exercise in the who, what, when, where, and why of theory formation. MLA or Chicago Style, plus page numbers.

Précis (see attached description)
Précis 1 and 2 are analytic précis, focused on uncovering the logic of a single text from the "lynchpins" series. Précis 3 is a synthetic précis, focused on working in detail on one of the Connections posited. You will have to take one of the connection texts, then relate it back to one of the lynchpin texts (or to a version of that lynchpin’s thought — it doesn’t need to be from a single text as the source). The logic here is probably a comparison/contrast, but it may be different.

Second Writing Assignment: Abstract for final project
This abstract needs to offer a focus for your final paper in an analysis of the data, method of analysis/comparison, and goal -- why this particular connection is important for the project you propose. See handout in syllabus for how to do an abstract. This abstract will be a little longer than a standard abstract because it should also contain a rationale for the connections made. Goal length: 500-1000 words. MLA or Chicago style, with citations and page numbers.

Final Writing Assignment: Paper or Annotated Bibliography
Possible project areas include the development of a theory model to fit a field of data you are already interested in, a historical epistemology that discusses how a source is adapted into another context and why, an assessment of the degree to which claimed connections actually work, and/or an annotated bibliography that fleshes out an entire area of theory in or related to the Connections texts (which means re-creating the episteme in which a particular text appears -- not just a discipline, a thought world. Other options are possible, as long as the link between theory /epistemology / theory projects and a historical moment or moments is preserved.

A paper = 10-15 pages, MLA or Chicago Style, with citations and page numbers.

Annotated bibliography: the number of citations will vary, but your goal is to also write HEADERS for sections in the bibliography that summarizes why the texts that follow belong together. This would be the material for a lecture on the origin and structure of the topic you are dealing with. For books of secondary literature, include a review or two.
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FINAL PROJECT DUE DATE: Monday, December 13, 9:00-12:00 noon

French Connection: Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Week 1  (26 August)
Thursday:  Introduction to the Course: An Historical Epistemology
http://www.columbia.edu/cu/societyoffellows/historical_epistemology.html
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaston_Bachelard
Gaston Bachelard, The Formation of the Scientific Mind, Intro, Chaps. 1-3
REC: Jürgen Renn, "Historical Epistemology and the Advancement of Science"

SECTION 1. German Roots
Week 2  (31 August, 2 September)
Tuesday:  Immanuel Kant, Philosophical Writings
-What is Enlightenment, 263-269
-Critique of Pure Reason, Preface & Intro., 3-37

Thursday:  Immanuel Kant, Philosophical Writings
-Critique of Judgment, Preface & Intro., 129-159
-CoJ, Analytic of the Sublime, On Genius, 201-237
OPT: Gilles Deleuze, Kant's Critical Philosophy, all

Week 3  (7, 9 September)
Tuesday:  G.F.W. Hegel, Reason in History
-esp. 20-43, 78-95

Thursday:  Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, German Ideology
-Part 1: Feuerbach, 39-95
Marx, Theses on Feuerbach, 121-123
*Précis 1 due: choice of reading section

Week 4  (14, 16 September)
Tuesday:  Friedrich Nietzsche, Genealogy of Morals
-Section 1, "Good and Evil," "Good and Bad"
-OPT: rest
Wilhelm von Humboldt, On Language (all)
OPT: Friedrich Nietzsche, On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life, all passim

Thursday:  Sigmund Freud, Outline of Psychoanalysis , all (9-97)

Week 5  (21, 23 September)
Tuesday:  Edmund Husserl, The Paris Lectures , all (3-55)

Thursday:  Martin Heidegger, Basic Writings
-Being and Time: Introduction, 37-89
-What Calls for Thinking, 341-367
-OPT: Origin of the Work of Art, 143-187
*Précis 2 due: choice of reading section
SECTION II: FRENCH CONNECTIONS

Week 6 (28, 30 September)
Connection 1: Phenomenology, Existenzphilosophie, and Existentialism
Tuesday: Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*
- Introduction: The Pursuit of Being, 3-30
- Part One: The Problem of Nothingness, passim
- OPT.: first few pages of each book

Thursday: 30 September
NO CLASS -- attend the "Cold War Cultures" Conference

Week 7 (5, 7 October)
Connection 2: Linguistics and Intersubjectivity
Tuesday: Simone de Beauvoir, *Ethics of Ambiguity*
- I. Ambiguity and Freedom, 7-34
- Conclusion, 156-159
Simone de Beauvoir, *Second Sex*
- Introduction, xv-xxxv
- Book 1, passim 285-297
- Book 2, 301-366 and 755-end (both excerpts passim)

*FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE: short theory analysis*

Week 8 (12, 14 October)
Connection 3: Linguistics, Subjectivity, and Psychology
- Introduction, 3-24
- The Symbolic Universe, Materialist Definition, 27-39
- Freud, Hegel and the Machine, 64-76
BACKGROUND: David Macey, *Lacan in Contexts*

Thursday: French Feminism
Julia Kristeva, "The System and the Speaking Subject"
Luce Irigaray, *This Sex which is Not One*
- Commodities Among Themselves, 192-197
- This Sex Which Is Not One, 23-33
- Psychoanalytic Theory: Another Look, 34-67
Hester Eisenstein & Alice Jardin, eds., *Future of Difference*, 73-87, 106-21
BACKGROUND: Claire Duchen, *Feminism in France*, passim

Week 9 (19, 21 October)
Connection 4: The Linguistics of Power
Tuesday: Gilles Deleuze/Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, all (passim)

Thursday: Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, Chaps. 1, 2, 7, 8 (+ passim)
Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words*
- Fieldwork in Philosophy, 3-33
- Social Space and Symbolic Power, 123-139
RECOMMENDED: Jean-François Lyotard, "Judiciousness in Dispute."

Week 10 (26, 28 October)
Tuesday: Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?"
*Précis 3 due: choice of reading section + background*
Connection 5: Reading Marx

**Thursday:** Denis Hollier, ed. *College of Sociology*
- Note on the Foundation, 3-5
- Roger Caillois, Winter Wind, 32-42
- Alexandre Kojève, Hegelian Concepts, 85-93
- Roger Caillois, Power 125-136
- Roger Caillois, Festival, 279-303

**Week 11** (2, 4 November)

**Tuesday:** Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*
- "The Work of Art in the Age of Technical Reproduction"
  (better translation: "in an era of technical reproducibility")
- "Theses on the Philosophy of History"
- "Exposé of 1935," Arcades Project/Passagenwerk
- "The Artist as Producer" (Arato, ed. *Essential Frankfurt School Reader*)

**Thursday:** Michel Foucault, *Foucault Live*
- The Order of Things, 1-10
- The Discourse of History, 11-33
- The Archaeology of Knowledge, 45-56
- An Historian of Culture, 73-88
- The Masked Philosopher, 193-202
- How Much Does it Cost to Tell the Truth?, 233-256

**Week 12** (9, 11 November)

**Tuesday:** Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, excerpts
  *Second Writing Assignment Due: Abstract of final project*

**SECTION III: RE-IMPORTS**

**Connection 6: Marxisms without Marx, 2nd Postwar Generation**

**Thursday:** Max Horkheimer & Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*
- Concept of Enlightenment, 3-42
- The Culture Industry, 120-167 passim

**Week 13** (16, 18 November)

**Connection 7: From Linguistic Systems to Power Systems**

**Tuesday:** Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 1*
- Rationality, Some Characteristics . . . , 1-74

**Thursday:** Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*
- The Dialectic of Sex, 1-15
- Freudianism: The Misguided Feminism, 46-80
- (Male) Culture, 176-191

Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*
- Freud: The Making of a Lady, I, 5-91 passim
- Conclusion: The Holy Family and Femininity, 364-416

**Week 14** (23, 25 November)

**Tuesday:** Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, all
RECOMMENDED
Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*
- Habermas, Modernity: An Incomplete Project, 3-15
- Jameson, Postmodernism and the Consumer Society, 111-125

Andreas Huyssen, "Mapping the Postmodern"

**Thursday** 25 November -- Thanksgiving
Week 15  (30 November, 2 December)
Connection 8: The Posthuman and Systems Theory

Tuesday: Gilles Deleuze/Félix Guattari, *1000 Plateaus*
- "Introduction: Rhizome"
- "10,000 B.C."
- "Conclusion"

Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems*, excerpts *passim*

Thursday: final class

**FINAL PROJECT DUE:** Monday, December 13, 12:00 noon (official university exam date)


Michel Foucault, *Foucault Live* (Semiotext(e) Foreign Agents [Columbia U.], 1989; ISBN 0-936756-32-2); na


Max Horkheimer & Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Continuum 1975; ISBN 0-8164-9153-4); B327 H 8473 P513


Andreas Huyssen, "Mapping the Postmodern" (photocopy)


Frederic Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" (photocopy)

Immanuel Kant, Philosophical Writings (Continuum, 1986; German Library, Vol. 13; ISBN 0-8264-0299-2); B 2758 1986


Friedrich Nietzsche, Genealogy of Morals (Vintage, 1969; ISBN 0-394-70401-0); B 3312 E5 G6


Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness (Pocket Books, 1983; ISBN 0-671-49606-9); 111 SA 77 ettb


Good background


Format for Precis (weekly assignments)

There is a difference between a text's facts and the strategy used to present those facts. A "precis" (pray-see) reflects this difference. It is designed to reflect the structure of a text's argument, not just a set of notes on the text's contents. A precis is one typed page long.

No matter what type, a precis has three sections:
1) A statement about the text's FOCUS. This is the main issue that the text addresses.
   **You write a concise statement (1-2 sentences) of that focus.**
   Likely alternatives:
   - issues or problems
   - representative concerns of a group, or its interlocked set of beliefs
   - institutions/systems
   - events and their characteristics or repercussions
   E.G.: "The structure of the mind and how it relates to behavior in the social world."
   What not to do: Do not include journalistic commentary, or examples, or evaluations -- just state what the topic is.

2) A statement of LOGIC and GOAL (its Intent), which will introduce a CHART WITH HEADINGS encompassing the text's data in two parallel columns of notes (usually with page references to the reading).
   **You write a sentence describing the logic pattern (E.g., "By examining the sources of ___________, the author shows the consequences of ___________.");
   "In order to ___________ the text correlates the ______ and ________ of social behaviors.")
   Typical verbs indicating such logic: compare, contrast, link causally, cause, follow from . . .
   **After that, you write two column headings creating classes of information which the author systematically correlates with each other. Under these headings, you typically add three or four examples which fit the content of the text into its form.
   Typical categories of information:
   - characteristics of a model, role, event
   - stages in an event or process
   - sources, conditions, or restrictions on a contexts
   - participants or interest groups
   - effects, impact, consequences
   - goals, purposes to be realized.

3) A paragraph (ca. 3 sentences) indicating the IMPLICATIONS of the information pattern. This is not a description of the information pattern or focus, but rather an extension of the covert statement implied by the information and pattern. That is, what is this text/precis good for, especially as seen from the outside? In setting the argument up this way, what is being hidden, asserted, or brushed aside? What is new or old-fashioned about the correlations made? Who would profit most by this arrangement?

Grading

- clear focus = + 1
- logic statement clear = + 1
- information pattern clear and pertinent = + 1
- consistency (does logic match information match focus match implication?) = + 1
- implications (are they pertinent, well-expressed, well-thought-out? do they follow from the development of the argument, or come from nowhere?) = + 1

TOTALS: + 5 = A; + 4 = B; + 3 = C; + 2 = D; + 1 = F. Assignments are one page long; top grade is 90 (unless extraordinary synthesis happens in the implications).


Analytic, Synthetic, and Interpretive Precis: Three Rhetorical Genres

While the precis format given on the previous page applies to all types of analysis, it may nonetheless be used for several other purposes, reflecting different purposes for the writer and reader.

An analytic precis aims at recreating the focus, strategy/goal (intent), and information of one particular text. You, as the writer, intrude only at the level of evaluation (in the implications). Your job is to present and assess the claims made by a particular text as text-generated criteria, and then to specify the (outside) contexts in which those claims are valid, dangerous, useful, etc.

A synthetic precis sets up a comparison/contrast between two (or more) texts. Its focus is the/an issue shared by the two texts. However, it is up to you, the writer, to specify (as the strategy/goal statement) on which grounds and to what end the comparison will be carried out. The information pattern will be drawn from the text; the implication is again provided by you, in terms of "why do this comparison."

An interpretive precis uses one text to read another (applies one systematic strategy to a text). That is, you pretend to be the writer of one text, and read another as s/he would; at the conclusion, you step out of the role-play, and evaluate the relation between the two points of view. It places a still higher burden on you as writer: you must specify the focus (the interpretive issue that the precis will address, and the strategy/goal of how you will explicate that issue -- all before you start. The information pattern will often be arranged as an "issue/example" format, with the issues drawn systematically (i.e., in recognizable form) from the strategy text and the examples also systematically drawn from the text to be interpreted. An interpretation will not be successful if either text is treated willfully (e.g., against the spirit of its internal organization). Your implication is, again, directed at explaining why you bothered to set up this interpretation this way -- what it is good for.

A creative precis exists, as well-- usually as an outline for an original essay. The writer uses it as an organizer for rhetorical strategy and for information generally drawn from meny sources, without particular address to the argumentation of those sources.]

How do I turn these into essays, and what kinds of essays are they?

An analytic precis turns into something like a good book review or proposal evaluation -- the introduction introduces the central issue and the rhetorical tactic that the source text (issue, or party) uses, together with the writer's goal of bothering to explain these. The body of the paper fleshes out the execution of the text's logic, and presents interim evaluations that set up the big evaluation that is the conclusion of the piece.

A synthetic precis resolves a conflict in the favor of one party or another, or shows how the two positions are totally compatible (despite their seeming differences in terminology). The introduction for its essay version must state the basis for the comparison, and the strategy through which the comparison is stated. It will end with a hint as to why this comparison is illustrative or important. The body of the paper must contain a balanced presentation of comparable points (each comparison introduced in terms of the more general overview). The conclusion must decide which side wins -- in terms of a stated set of outside needs/problems that the information addresses.
An interpretive precis applies a point of view to a text explicitly. The introduction to the essay version must state which systematic point of view will be applied to what issue (who you are playing, and why), why that point of view was chosen, how the point of view will be applied (strategy/goal of the evaluation), and hint at what the goal of the particular interpretation will be. The body of the paper must contain a running dialogue between the p.o.v. and the textual information -- it must move stepwise through the p.o.v. and re-interpret the text's data through that lens -- no matter your individual preferences as writer. You will therefore have two levels of critique in the paper: first, a decisive critique of one writer from the p.o.v. of the chosen role, and second, your suggestions about what bringing these two other voices together has achieved. You must interject a decisive critique of both p.o.v.'s as part of the work's final implications (only correctives can be hinted at as it goes along, or foreshadowings of a larger objection that will be dealt with in detail after the immediate analysis is concluded -- don't subvert the voice you're playing at being until you're through).

[A creative precis will set up an op/ed piece or any literary essay, like Robert Benchley's -- the writer is only responsible for the fictive universe set up by the precis, even in the implication. And the implications disappear -- there is no outside, except in the mind of the readers.]

**WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS are a combination of two precis types:**
- on the first page, do an analytic precis of one of the theory texts written (including an implication about its usefulness, weakness, or distinctive properties)
- on the second page, do an interpretive precis, applying that theory text (or the model drawn from an amalgam of texts in that particular school or critical movement) to James Joyce's *The Dead* (copy attached).

**THE GOAL OF THIS ASSIGNMENT IS TWOFOLD:**
- to get you used to working with theory texts as models (that is, learning to distill the philosophical premises of each school in a clear fashion); and
- to get you used to using theory as a model for interpretation (that is, learning how to apply a model's premises in the spirit in which they were designed, not in a randomly eclectic manner -- to interpret literature the way a particular school would, not the way you necessarily want to [which you'll get to later in your graduate student career]).