Poetics of Difference: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida/Blanchot, Édouard Glissant

At least since Plato’s Dialogues the ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy does not offer two separate opposed ways of thinking but in the entanglement of the two appears a poietic force that infuses both poetry and philosophy. Thus, in question is the limit and delimitation of philosophy with respect to language and the question of language as poietic event. The aim of this course is to introduce the question of the possibility of a poietic philosophy, that is, by making explicit the way thought may arise at the limit of the rational through poietic embodied experiences. This is not merely an inversion of the mind-body rational-irrational relation, but the issue refers one to another way of thinking than that which sustains Westernized rationalist modernity. Some of the main issues discussed will be: the question of the origin/s of language, of words, the relation between silence and word and word and image, the relation between oral and written tradition, the working of the work of art, disposition as a basic element for thought, style versus feeling and affect, ritual and symbolic thought. Some of the sites of relation in which possibilities and openings for such thinking occur are in the way poetry and philosophy interact within and beyond westernized thought. This course moves from some of the encounters between poetry and philosophy within the Western tradition and the challenges that arise from these, to a poetics of relation that arises beyond this tradition. Where the latter transforms not only our understanding of poetry but offers a distinct way of articulating experience and finding senses of being in a dynamic pluriversal thought-experience. The main figures discussed will be Nietzsche (Birth of Tragedy), Heidegger, Derrida and Blanchot, and Édouard Glissant. The course will consist in close reading and interpretation of selected texts supplemented by lectures that will situate the material historically and conceptually in a broader context and with respect to contemporary issues. Reference will also be made to Plato and Aristotle, as well as to various modern and contemporary poets. Students are encouraged to use the original languages when sufficiently proficient.

Texts Required:
Heidegger, Poetry, Language, Thought
Derrida/Blanchot, Demeure: Fiction and Testimony / The Instance of my Death
Derrida, Monolingualism of the Other, or the Prosthesis of Origin
Édouard Glissant, Poetics of relation; Caribbean Discourses
Nietzsche, Birth of Tragedy (Suggested)

Course Requirements:
2 leading questions per reading/class 20%
A presentation 20%
A final paper 40%
Class participation 20%
1. **Leading Questions for Each Class.**
Each class you will be responsible for presenting 2 questions central to the text, which indicate your acquaintance with the assigned reading, and which are sufficiently focused to serve as leading questions for class discussion. These should be typed and will be collected at the end of class (they will serve as your attendance signature).

2. **Participation.**
You are expected to attend all lectures and to participate actively in completing assignments in class and in class discussions. During class discussion you will be expected to refer to and respond to your pears with respect.

3. **Class presentation.** All students will present an outline of their final paper, to be discussed by the class.

4. **Final paper.**
The paper should be from ten to twelve pages in length. The length does not include title page and reference page. The paper should be double-space, font 12, with standard margins. The topic will concern material covered and discussed in class and should be approved by the instructor. Secondary materials may be used when justified by the subject matter, and should be approved by instructor. All papers should be printed out; do not send papers by e-mail. Plagiarism will result in the automatic failure of the course (see Rules of Academic Honesty, below).

Additional Requirements:
Any short writing in class must be clearly legible. All assignments outside of class are to be typed and turned in when due, unless you have a documented excuse. All late assignments are to be turned in no later than a week after their original due date and with the permission of the professor.

**Course Policies**
1. **Attendance**
It is the student’s responsibility to be in class and to make up the class assignments you have missed.
Two consecutive unexcused absences will result in a “D” or lower grade for the course. If you know that you will be absent from class or if you have an emergency, notify me before class or as soon as you can, make sure that you speak with me in person. Only serious emergencies will be considered as sufficient reason for an excused absence. Unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your grade.

2. **Grade Breakdown**
Leading questions 20%, presentation 20%, final paper 40%, and participation 20%. Each of the four parts fulfills a different aspect of the course: Therefore, failure to complete any one of the four requirements will result in a “D” for the semester or failure of the course.
Grade Rubric:

A = excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.
B = good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.
C = OK. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.
D = poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.
F = failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

Please note that the grades refer to the expected level of general performance, and to the understanding and articulation of the material covered in this course.

3. Rules of Academic Honesty

The following acts of academic honesty will result in course failure, i.e., an "F"

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else’s product, words, ideas, or data as one’s own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references, such as footnotes. By placing one’s name on work submitted for credit, one certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. Verbatim statements by others must be enclosed by quotation marks or set off from the regular text as indented extracts.

Students will avoid being charged with plagiarism if there is acknowledgement of indebtedness. Indebtedness must be acknowledged whenever: 1) one quotes another person’s actual words or replicates all or part of another’s product; 2) one uses another person’s ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories, even if they are completely paraphrased in one’s own words; 3) one borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative material—unless the information is common knowledge.

Unauthorized collaboration with others on papers or projects can inadvertently lead to a charge of plagiarism. If in doubt, consult the instructor or seek assistance from the staff of Academic Learning Services (68 PLC, 346-3226). In addition, it is plagiarism to submit as your own any academic exercise prepared totally or in part by another person, even if that person is acting as a tutor or editor (and ends up substantially producing part of the work).

**Fabrication:** Fabrication is the intentional use of information that the author has invented when he or she states or implies otherwise, or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive. Examples include, but are not limited to: 1) citing information not taken from the source indicated; 2) listing sources in a reference not used in the academic exercise; 3) inventing data or source information for research or other academic exercises.

**Cheating:** Cheating is an act of deception by which a student misrepresents or misleadingly demonstrates that he or she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he or she has not mastered, including the giving or receiving of unauthorized help in an academic exercise. Examples include but are not limited to: 1) copying from another student’s work; 2) collaborating without authority or allowing another student to copy one’s work in a test situation; 3) using the course textbook or other material not authorized for use
during a test; 4) using unauthorized material during a test; for example, notes, formula lists, cues on a computer, photographs, symbolic representations, and notes written on clothing; 5) resubmitting substantially the same work that was produced for another assignment without the knowledge and permission of the instructor; 6) taking a test for someone else or permitting someone else to take a test for you.

**Contact Information and Office Hours**
Professor Vallega will be available during regular office hours or by appointment. Office Number: Philosophy Department, 248 Susan Campbell Hall. Office hours: Wednesday 2:00-4:00 p.m.. Email: avallega@uoregon.edu