This seminar examines structuralism and post-structuralism within the context of contemporary philosophy and literary theory. We will begin by tracing the emergence of scientific structuralism within the linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure, and consider its legacy in the works of Levi-Strauss and Lacan. We will then turn to the post-structuralist critique of scientific structuralism as developed especially in Derrida’s classic work *Of Grammatology* (in a 40th Anniversary edition reissued and revised in 2016), as well as essays such as ‘*Différance*’, and the interviews from *Positions*, with an emphasis on Derrida’s deconstructive reading of Saussure as well as Levi-Strauss and Rousseau. We will conclude with selections from Julia Kristeva’s *Revolution in Poetic Language*, where she challenges Derrida to include the semiotic (the living, desiring body) alongside an emphasis on the symbolic aspects of cultural signification. Throughout the term we will seek to identify the distinctive features of the poststructuralist approach, and situate them in relation to other contemporary schools of thought. Our focus is going to be thematic as well as historical, and we will address a number of themes at the intersection of language, social structures, subjectivity, desire, and the living body.

Reading Schedule

**WEEK 1 (03/28 – 04/03):**


WEEK 2 (04/04 – 04/10)

Recommended: Stawarska, Saussure’s Philosophy of Language as Phenomenology (2015), P. I, Ch. 1. The Signifier and the Signified (pp. 23-31; 47-70).
4. Course, Part Two, Synchronic Linguistics (with an emphasis on ch. 4. Linguistic Value, ch. 5. Syntagmatic and Associate Relations, and ch. 6. The Language Mechanism).
Recommended: Stawarska, (2015), P. I, Ch. 3. La langue and la parole, synchrony and diachrony (pp. 85-106).
Chomsky, Aspects of the Theory of Syntax (a selection).

WEEK 3 (04/11 – 04/17)


WEEK 4 (04/18 – 04/24)

“Semiology and Grammatology. An Interview with Julia Kristeva” (Positions, 17-36).
Of Grammatology: Introduction by J. Butler (VII-XXIV); Translator’s Preface by G. Spivak (pp. CII-CXI); 2016 Afterword (recommended).

WEEK 5 (04/25 – 5/1)

Part I, chapter 2. “Linguistics and Grammatology.” Please review Introduction, Ch. 6, in Saussure’s Course in General Linguistics.
Recommended: Stawarska, (2015), P. I, Ch. 2. Phonocentrism: Derrida (pp. 71-84)

WEEK 6 (5/2 – 5/8)

11. Part I, ch. 3 “Of Grammatology as a Positive Science.”
Recommended: ‘A Writing Lesson’ in Levi-Strauss’ Tristes Tropiques (pp. 294-304).

WEEK 7 (5/9 – 5/15)

Part I, 2. “….That Dangerous Supplement …..”.
14. Rousseau, *On the Origin of Language*. Chapters 1-2 (pp. 5-12);
    (Note: P. II, ch. 3, I “The Place of the Essay” is recommended but not required).

**WEEK 8 (5/16 – 5/22)**

**WEEK 9 (5/23 – 5/29)**
18. **Post-structuralism and the Semiotic.**
    **Prospectus due Thursday in class.**

**WEEK 10 (5/30 – 6/5)**
20. Grad Presentations: final paper projects; concluding remarks.

Note: I reserve the right to make changes to the reading list.

All books are available at UO Bookstore. PDF copies of additional readings will be made available on Canvas.

**Course requirements:**

1. Participation in-class discussion. You are expected to come prepared to each class: you need to have read the required reading carefully, and be ready to discuss it.

2. Two in-class presentations of 20 minutes on the required meeting assigned for the day. Your presentation outlines the thesis developed in the reading, with specific references to the text.

3. Prospectus for the final paper
   You will select a topic for your final paper and submit a 2 pages long prospectus with an outline and literature review for approval and comments. Please plan to meet with me at least once before submitting the prospectus.
4. Short presentation of the final paper project on the last day of class.

5. Final paper
The term paper is a conference style paper, 10-15 pages in length.

All written assignments should be double spaced, font size no smaller than 11. Detailed guidelines for the in-class presentations, the prospectus, and the final paper will be distributed in class.

**Grade components (out of 100%)**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class presentations on required readings</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prospectus and final paper project presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term paper</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Attendance policy**

No more than one unexcused absence is allowed. Each additional unexcused absence negatively affects your grade (-0.3 of the final grade).

If you have questions about the assignments, requirements, or subject matter, please let me know. If you have special needs due to a disability, please talk with me as soon as possible so that your needs can be addressed.