Phil 407-507 Justice, Metaphysics, Violence Fall 2013
Professor Alejandro Vallega. M,W 4:00-5:50 p.m., 101 PETR

This course focuses on the one hand, on the possibility of exposing and undoing the semi-transcendental nonrepresentational authoritative structures operative in society and in philosophical thought. On the other hand, we will follow alternative configurations and articulations of plural existences. Central themes to the course are the task of thinking in the des-integration of philosophy as a concept, the separation between affective embodied thinking and rationalist instrumental modern traditions, pre-reflexive experience, and the figuration of subjectivities beyond the identification of philosophical thought and inter-subjectivity with justification, betterment, and progress. These themes will be explored in the fictional writing of Latin American thinkers Jorge Luis Borges and Julio Cortázar. The course has as background the work of Martin Heidegger, Walter Benjamin, Georges Bataille, Gadamer, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault. All lectures and discussion will be in English but students who are able to read the original texts are encouraged to do so.

Books Required
Please notice that the required materials are in English but native speakers and advanced Spanish majors as well as students who read German or French are encouraged to read the authors in the original language. The books in translation are available at the U of O Bookstore, and all other readings will be found in blackboard.
1. Walter Benjamin, Illuminations Publisher: N.Y.: Schocken Books
2. Jorge Luis Borges: Borges: Collected Fictions, Publisher: Penguin (Non-Classics)
3. Julio Cortázar, Blow Up and Other Stories, Publisher: Pantheon.

Contact Information and Office Hours
Office Number: Philosophy Department, Susan Campbell Hall 248.
Office hours: R, 1:00-3:00, or by appointment.
Email: avallega@uoregon.edu
(In your emails please specify your full name and the title of the course you are attending.)

Requirements
Undergraduates: 2 course reports 40% (20% each); Final Paper 50%;
Attendance and Participation 10% (see supplement for assignment details)

Graduate Students: 2 Presentations 40% (20% each); Final Paper 50%;
Attendance and Participation 10% (see supplement for assignment details)

1. Final Paper The papers should be double-space, font 12, with standard spacing and margins. All papers should be printed out and handed in the day they are due; do not send papers by e-mail. Plagiarism will result in the automatic failure of the course (see Rules of Academic Honesty, below).
6-8 pages for undergraduates (number of pages does not include title page or bibliography); title page and bibliography; one secondary source from the articles discussed in class.

10-12 pages graduate students (number of pages does not include title page or bibliography). Besides title and bibl., graduate papers should include at least 2 secondary sources.

2. Undergraduates. Two class journals. For each week you will be expected to have one-page. The page will include: 1. A paragraph that identifies and defines the main ideas discussed in the lectures and discussion groups, 2. The main issues or questions raised about those concepts, 3. A brief paragraph explaining which was the most interesting issue for you and why. Each page should be well written, grammatically correct, and part three should have the form of an argument, that is, a conclusion followed or preceded by clear premises or reasons for your position. The class report should be typed, and written in your own words. All criteria of academic honesty apply to these as well as any other class assignments.

Graduate Students. Two Class Presentations. Graduate students will be responsible for making two class presentations. 1st presentation: students will be expected to introduce the reading material due for a specific class. Students will sign up for presentations, and will be responsible for presenting a clear and concise overview of the reading, highlighting the main ideas and issues, raising pertinent questions, and relating the reading to previous readings and discussions when necessary. 2nd presentation: Students will present their final paper proposal and discuss it with the class.

Course participation and class discussion (10%). You are expected to attend all lectures and to participate actively in completing assignments in class and in class discussions. Keep in mind that this is a philosophy course, and this means that unlike other courses you must take the time to digest the ideas and themes of the course and to develop your understanding of them and your ability to think critically. This is accomplished in part by participating in class discussions: both by offering your understanding of the material and issues in a clear manner, and by listening carefully to your fellow students. During class discussion you will be expected to refer to and respond to your peers with respect.

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. Make sure you have at least one person in class who can provide you with notes and assignment information. Once you have
worked on the material you missed, if you do not understand it or need clarification
make sure you come and see me during office hours.

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 the instructor before class or as soon as you can, make sure that you speak
with him in person. Only serious emergencies will be considered as sufficient reason
for an excused absence. Those who must be absent from class for athletic activities
or other responsibilities related to the university will be expected to make up all
work and may be required to meet with the instructor in order to discuss in detail
their understanding of the material covered in class.

Unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your grade.

2. Computer, Cell Phone, and Electronic Equipment Policy
The use of computers, cell phones, or any other electronic equipment not
specifically allowed by the instructor is not permitted during class.

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.
4. Grade Rubric

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.

Reading Schedule (all readings due before class)

I.
Sept. 30- Syllabus and Introductory Lecture
Oct 2- Order
Foucault’s preface to The Order of Things (Les Mots et les choses) (xv-xxiv); Borges, “The Analytical Language of John Wilkins.” (Blackboard)

II. Language
7- Risser, The Life of Understanding. Ch.1 (Blackboard)
9- Risser, The Life of Understanding. Ch.2 (Blackboard)

III. Violence
14- Benjamin Illuminations, “The Storyteller.”
(Recommended: Illuminations, “The Task of the Translator.”)
16- Benjamin Illuminations, “Thesis on the Philosophy of History”

IV. Inoperative originary narratives
21- Bataille, Literature and Evil, “Baudelaire,” and “Blake”: poems by Baudelaire (Blackboard)
23- Class cancelled due to SPEP preparations

SPEP- Oct 24-26

V.
28- Bataille, Literature and Evil, “Sade,” “Kafka,” “Gene” (Blackboard)
(Suggested: “Chant D’Amour” by Gene) (César Vallejo handout)
30- Carlos A. Manrique Ospina: lecture on Derrida and César Vallejo.

VI.
Nov. 4- Borges introduction. “Ragnarök” (321); “The Garden of Forking Paths” (67-128).
6- Borges, Ibid. (Presentations)
VI.

VII.
20- Cortázar Ibid. (Presentations)

IX.
[Presentations]
27- Cortázar Ibid. (Presentations)

28-29 Thanks Giving---------------------

X.
Dec. 2- Cortázar, “Blow Up.”
4- Cortázar, “Blow Up.”

Monday Dec 9th. **FINAL PAPER DUE**
(9-13 Exams Week)