

PHIL 463/563
Author: Jacques DERRIDA

Fall 2019
10:00 - 12:50pm, M & W

Instructor: Professor Beata Stawarska
Office Hours: M 1:30-3:20pm & by
appointment
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Description

This class surveys representative works by the contemporary Algerian-Jewish-French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004). We will focus especially on the tasks and methods of deconstruction, which is first and foremost a style of *reading* texts that attends to their logical and rhetorical dimensions. A related focus will be on Derrida's critique of Western metaphysics of presence with its set of violent and vertical dichotomies such as interiority and exteriority, speech and writing, male and female, self and other, and on his attempt to thematize difference in a more complex, dynamic, and non-hierarchical manner – both at the level of theory and practice. These two main foci determine the design of this class, which begins by examining Derrida's deconstructive reading of Husserl's phenomenology of consciousness with its commitment to the primacy of sound and/or voice (*The Voice and Phenomena*); we will then discuss Derrida's deconstructive reading of Saussure's linguistics, Rousseau's philosophy, and Levy-Strauss' anthropology with their shared attachment to a presumed pure and simple origin of meaning (*Of Grammatology*). We will conclude by discussing one of Derrida's more recent, socially and politically situated works, focused on linguistic and cultural identity within a post-colonial context (*Monolingualism of the Other*).

Course requirements:

ATTENDANCE: This is a small seminar style class, and you are expected to attend all the meetings and participate actively in the conversation. Two unexcused absences are allowed per term.

READING. This course has a sizable reading load, and you will be required to read the assigned texts carefully, and be prepared to discuss them in class. In addition to attending the class, you will need to plan your schedule to allow sufficient time to read the texts assigned for each class. Grads are expected to read most if not all of the recommended readings. They are optional for Undergrads, but UGs are encouraged to read them as well.

WRITING. Undergrads: Each Wednesday by 10am (excluding weeks 1 and 10) you will submit a two-page long typed up reflection on the readings assigned for the week. The response must include citations from Derrida's texts with your commentary that closely engages the primary text. The response is not expected to be a polished piece of writing (but needs to be readable and free from spelling/grammatical errors); it provides an opportunity for you to actively engage the material in preparation for the midterm and final papers. Please submit your response on Canvas (under 'Assignments'/Reading Response).

There will be one midterm and one term paper. The midterm is 5-7 pages long. The term paper is 8-12 pages long. Topics and guidelines for both papers will be provided in advance; in some cases, students may write the final on a topic of their own choice (approved in advance by the instructor).

Grads: students select their own topic for the final, and submit 2-page long prospectus with a topic outline and literature review for approval and comments. The prospectus is due in week 9. You are advised to meet with me at least once before submitting the prospectus. Paper guidelines will be distributed in advance.

All written assignments should be typewritten, double-spaced, font size no smaller than 11. They need to include the class title, your name - and my name for the midterm and final papers.

PRESENTATIONS. Grads will offer a 20 min. in-class presentation dealing with one of the required readings covered in class; presentation guidelines will be distributed in advance. Grads will also give a brief presentation of their final essay project on the last day of class.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to identify and discuss main debates, terms, and methods deployed by Jacques Derrida, one of key authors in contemporary Continental Philosophy.

Accommodations: please contact me if you require accommodations in this class.

Grade components (Undergrads):

Participation: 10%

Weekly reading response: 10%

Midterm paper: 30%

Final paper: 50%

Total: 100%

Grade components (grads):

Participation, including one in-class presentation: 20%

Prospectus, and final paper presentation (week 10): 20%

Final paper: 60%

Total: 100%

Grading

What kind of paper deserves an "A," "B," etc.? The following rubric reflects the general standards of the Philosophy Department at the University of Oregon.

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: what counts as "excellent" or "OK," for example, depends in part upon the nature and level of the class in question.

Late paper policy: late papers will not be accepted unless you have contacted me before the deadline and received an extension; the penalty for all late papers is 0.3 grade per day after the paper is due.

Plagiarism: a failure to cite your sources and give credit to others for their work is a violation of academic honesty, and can result in an F grade for the class.

Final Paper due by 2pm on Wednesday in the Finals Week, SCH 211.

Electronics policy: no electronics are allowed during class period. If you would like to discuss exceptions please contact me directly.

Required Texts by Derrida (UO Bookstore):

Voice and Phenomena (Northwestern UP, 2011 [1967]); *Of Grammatology* (John Hopkins UP, 2016); *Monolingualism of the Other* (1998 [1996]).

All other readings are available on Canvas.

Please always bring a copy of the reading with you to class. Please bring a hard copy of the required reading posted on Canvas.

Class Schedule:

WEEK 1 (9/28-10/2)

1. Monday class not in session (Fall term begins on Oct. 1, 2020).

2. **Intro Lecture. Derrida in his own words.**

Readings: Interviews. "The Almost Nothing of the Unrepresentable;" "Unsealing ("the old new language")" (*Points*); "Deconstruction of Actuality" (*Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews 1971-2001*)

Recommended: "The time of a thesis: punctuations" (*Philosophy in France Today*).

In-class viewing of *Derrida's Elsewhere*.

WEEK 2 (10/3-9)

Deconstruction. Reading Husserl with Derrida:

3. Readings: *Voice and Phenomena* (1967). Introduction, chapters 1 and 2; Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, s. 1-4 (Canvas). Recommended: Translator's Introduction (*Voice and Phenomena*).

4. *Voice and Phenomena*, ch. 3 and 4; Husserl, *Logical Investigations* s. 5-8.

WEEK 3 (10/10-16)

5. *Voice and Phenomena*, ch. 5 and 6.

6. *Voice and Phenomena*, ch. 7. "Différance" (1972);

Recommended: "Implications. Interview with Henri Ronsboeuv" (*Positions*).

WEEK 4 (10/17-23)

7. ***Grammatology: The Book and Unlimited Writing.***

"Semiology and Grammatology. An Interview with Julia Kristeva" (*Positions*, 17-36).

Of Grammatology: Part I, Exergue and chapter 1. "The End of the Book and the Beginning of Writing."

Recommended: *Of Grammatology*: Introduction by J. Butler (VII-XXIV); Translator's Preface by G. Spivak (pp. CII-CXI); 2016 Afterword.

8. ***Grammatology: Derrida with Saussure (and Levi-Strauss)***.

Part I, chapter 2. "Linguistics and Grammatology."

Recommended: Introduction, Ch. 6, in Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* (Canvas). Stawarska, Beata (2015), P. I, Ch. 2. Phonocentrism: Derrida (pp. 71-84)

WEEK 5 (10/24-30)

Midterm Paper due in class on Monday (Undergrads)

9. Part I, chapter 2. "Linguistics and Grammatology" (contd).
10. Part I, ch. 3 "Of Grammatology as a Positive Science."

WEEK 6 (10/30-11/6)

11. P. II, 1. The Violence of the Letter: from Levi-Strauss to Rousseau (*Of Grammatology*). Recommended: 'A Writing Lesson' in Levi-Strauss' *Tristes Tropiques* (pp. 294-304).
12. ***Grammatology – Derrida with Rousseau (and Levi-Strauss)***
Part I, 2. "....That Dangerous Supplement"

WEEK 7 (11/7-13)

13. Rousseau, *On the Origin of Language*. Chapters 1-2 (pp. 5-12);
Derrida, Part II, ch. 3, II, Imitation. "The Interval and the Supplement," "The Engraving and the Ambiguities of Formalism," "The Turn of Writing."
(Note: P. II, ch. 3, I "The Place of the Essay" is recommended but not required)
14. Rousseau, ch. 4 and 7 (pp. 14-16; 24-28). Derrida, Part II, ch. 3, III. Articulation. ""That Movement of the Wand,""" "The Inscription of the Origin," "The Neume," "That Simple Movement of the Finger."

WEEK 8 (11/14-20)

15. Part II, ch. 3, III. Articulation. (contd).
16. Rousseau, ch. 3 and 5 (pp. 12-13; 16-22). Derrida, Part II, ch. 4, From/Of the Supplement to the Source: The Theory of Writing. "The Originary Metaphor," "The History and System of Scripts," "The Supplement of (at) the Origin" (Recommended: "The Alphabet and Absolute Representation," "The Theorem and the Theater," pp. 321-341).

WEEK 9 (11/21-27)

Final paper prospectus due in class on Monday (Grads).

17. Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority (*Acts of Religion*, 1990).
18. *Monolingualism of the Other* (1996), 1-3.

WEEK 10 (11/28-12/4)

19. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 4-6.
20. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 7-8. Final paper presentations (Grads).

Note: I reserve the right to change the reading schedule throughout the term.