

New York University
Department of Media, Culture, and Communication
Special Topics in Cultural and Visual Studies:
DELEUZE'S AESTHETICS

FALL 2012

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MCC-GE 3113 & COLIT-GA 1560
Time: Thursdays, 2 - 4:10 pm
Location: 411 Lafayette, 3rd floor
conference room

Course Description

The French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) has had a profound influence on today's cultural and visual studies. Often (incorrectly) labeled a poststructuralist, Deleuze is notable in that he technically remains outside the core canon of critical theory--loosely defined as the Marxian and Freudian tradition of socio-cultural critique beginning with the Frankfurt School--while nevertheless remaining one of the most influential writers in that same theoretical legacy. Charting his own course through the disorientation and schizophrenia of modern life, Deleuze rehabilitated a special sub-category of philosophy populated by "radically materialist" thinkers hand-selected from throughout history (Heraclitus, Spinoza, Hume, Bergson, Whitehead, and others).

Deleuze is perhaps best known for one of his collaborative books with Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), or his signal work of ontology, *Difference and Repetition* (1968). Yet in this seminar, we bypass much of the more well-known Deleuze, skipping over the philosophical monographs of the 1960s and much of the collaborations with Guattari during the 1970s, in order to focus on Deleuze's aesthetics during the 1980s. References to art, literature, and aesthetics permeate nearly all of his writings. Yet with his important 1975 collaboration with Guattari on the literature of Franz Kafka and then later with subsequent books published in the 1980s, Deleuze deals with aesthetic themes in a more systematic way, first with painting, then with cinema, and the Baroque.

In this doctoral seminar we will draw on Deleuze's late work on aesthetics, focusing on his relevance to cultural and visual studies by way of painting, cinema, and photography. Additional themes will include machines, the diagram, territory, multiplicity, and the distinction between the digital and the analogue. Supplemental readings will be drawn from several figures in dialogue with Deleuze and his legacy, including Alain Badiou, Elizabeth Grosz, Michel Henry, François Laruelle, and Catherine Malabou.

Required Books

Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, trans. Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).
Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara

- Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).
———, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1989).
———, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).
Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).
Michel Henry, *Seeing the Invisible: On Kandinsky*, trans. Scott Davidson (London: Continuum, 2009).
François Laruelle, *The Concept of Non-Photography*, trans. Robin Mackay (Falmouth, UK: Urbanomic, 2011; co-published with Sequence Press of New York).

Part I -- A Realist Aesthetics

September 6 -- *course introduction.*

September 13

Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art.*

September 20

Deleuze & Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, pp. 1-83, 163-199.

September 27

Deleuze & Guattari, "Introduction: Rhizome" (PDF).

Deleuze & Guattari, "1914: One or Several Wolves?" (PDF).

Malabou, "Who's Afraid of Hegelian Wolves?" (PDF)

Deleuze & Guattari, "1837: Of the Refrain" (PDF).

October 4 -- *midterm paper topics distributed today*

Badiou, *Deleuze.*

Part II -- Painting

October 11

Deleuze, *Francis Bacon.*

October 18 -- *midterm papers due today*

Henry, *Seeing the Invisible.*

Additional suggested reading:

- Wassily Kandinsky, *Point and Line to Plane* (New York: Dover, 1979).

Part III -- Cinema

October 25

Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, Chapters 1-5, skipping part of Chapter 3 (pp. 40-55), the end of Chapter 4 (pp. 66-70), and part of Chapter 5 (pp. 76-80).

Watch as many as you can of the following:

- *Broken Blossoms* (d. Griffith, 1919).
- *October: Ten Days That Shook the World* (d. Eisenstein, 1927).
- *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (d. Murnau, 1927).
- *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (d. Dreyer, 1928).
- *Metropolis* (d. Lang, 1927).
- *Man with a Movie Camera* (d. Vertov, 1929).

November 1

Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, Chapters 6, 7, 9, 10, and 12, skipping the end of Chapter 7 (pp. 111-122), and the end of Chapter 9 (pp. 155-159).

Watch as many as you can of the following:

- *A Man Escaped* (d. Bresson, 1956).
- *The Scarlet Empress* (d. Sternberg, 1934).
- *The Great Dictator* (d. Chaplin, 1940).
- *Rio Bravo* (d. Hawks, 1959).
- *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (d. Ford, 1962).

November 8

Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, Chapters 1, 4, and 5, skipping pp. 78-83.

Watch as many as you can of the following:

- *Rome, Open City* (d. Rossellini, 1945).
- *Late Spring* (d. Ozu, 1949).
- *The Rules of the Game* (d. Renoir, 1939).
- *Last Year at Marienbad* (d. Resnais, 1961).
- *Citizen Kane* (d. Welles, 1941).

November 15

Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, Chapters Chapters 7, 8, and 10

Watch as much as you can of the following:

- *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (d. Akerman, 1975).
- *Hitler: A Film from Germany* (d. Syberberg, 1977).

Part IV -- Photography

November 29 -- *final paper topics distributed today*

Laruelle, "Introduction," from *Philosophies of Difference: A Critical Introduction to Non-philosophy* (PDF).

Laruelle, "The Truth According to Hermes" (PDF).

Laruelle, "On the Black Universe, In the Human Foundations of Color" (PDF).

December 6

Laruelle, *The Concept of Non-Photography*, pp. 1-123.

December 13 -- *review and workshopping final papers.*

Monday, December 17, 5pm -- *all papers due*

Suggested further reading relevant to the seminar

- Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: Dover, 1998).
- ———, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (New York: Zone, 1994).
- Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).
- Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "7. Year Zero: Faciality," *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).
- Paola Marrati, *Gilles Deleuze: Cinema and Philosophy*, trans. Alisa Hartz (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).
- *Pli* 16. "Diagrams of Sensation: Deleuze and Aesthetics" (2005)
http://www.warwick.ac.uk/philosophy/pli_journal/?p=vol16
- D. N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).
- Steven Shaviro, *Without Criteria: Kant, Whitehead, Deleuze and Aesthetics* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009).

Course Assignments

Reading

All students are expected to read the assigned texts in advance of class.

Writing

Each student should write a total of 20 pages for the semester, preferably split into two shorter papers of 10 pages each, but other combinations are also possible. Suggested paper topics will be provided, but students are also encouraged to create their own topics. All papers should be on par with doctoral level work and should demonstrate a close reading of the required materials and exhibit a methodology of critical analysis.

Grading Requirements

Each student will be evaluated based on the course assignments. All students will be expected to do the course reading, and to write papers of approximately 20 pages total. Grades will be determined according to the following formula:

80% paper(s)

20% in-class discussion

Laptop Policy

I discourage the use of electronic devices in class. This includes all laptops, iPads, PDAs, phones, and other devices. There is mounting evidence that such devices impede learning and place an undo strain on the pedagogical experience of both students and teachers.

While an outright ban poses its own difficulties, please note that I discourage the use of such devices and consider them to be detrimental to the social and pedagogical climate of the classroom. (Exceptions can be made for readings that have been distributed in electronic form, and for students with special learning needs.)