William J. Urban

SUBJECTIVITY AND THE PSYCHOANALYTIC SUBJECT

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this course we shall read significant texts from antiquity to the contemporary in order to assess the thesis that the psychoanalytic subject lies at the very foundation of the Humanities. Although only dating from the turn of the last century, the field Freud originally founded is privileged in this course which further considers subjectivity properly existing only in a psychoanalytic mode. Thus the course title should not be read in an idealist sense where the second term is taken as an instance of an abstract general first term, but rather in the materialist sense where the second term designates the concrete conditions of the very existence of the first term.

In his autobiography Althusser tells us his methodological approach began with taking 'soundings' from a body of philosophical thinking which he gleaned through hearsay; only after being armed with such 'philosophical core samples' could he then delve more deeply into that body. In the spirit of Althusser this course provides weekly core samples composed of a **classic text** selected from an established tradition to be **re-read with** a contemporary psychoanalytic text providing secondary commentary. Through such test borings the student will gain a valuable foothold on these often difficult primary texts and will also appreciate how the subject concerning us is not limited to psychoanalysis but pervades other fields of thought. Repetition also extends from week-to-week so that students will recognize a recurrence of figures, themes and schools of thought significant to the subject of the Humanities.

This strategy of re-reading fulfills a key objective of this course of questioning the object of textual exegesis: eg, when Dolar re-reads Althusser, is this the true reading of Althusser? Is there one? Where does Althusser end and Dolar begin? Frustrating the apprehension of texts through other texts concerns what Lacan called *jouissance* [enjoyment] which problematizes the status of meaning itself and moves us toward the non-hermeneutical phenomenological approach this course seeks to put into play. Žižek's work in cultural studies is relevant in this respect as it enlivens what is often considered dead abstract theory. His texts calling for a return to German Idealist philosophy by way of Lacanian psychoanalysis are here highlighted with the hope they demonstrate that he is a major philosopher in his own right.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:

Students are expected to have read the required readings for each week and to contribute substantively to class discussion. Each student is required to give one class presentation which introduces the readings for the week and promotes discussion by drawing upon additional texts to contextualize the material. A 10 page essay is further required which evaluates the re-reading of a classic text from course material, as well as a 20 page essay which examines a critical issue in the Humanities relating to subjectivity.

Participation	15%
Presentation	15%
Essay (10pp)	20%
Essay (20pp)	50%

OVERVIEW OF WEEKLY READINGS:

Week 1: Introduction

I THE PRE-MODERN

Week2: Ethical Subjectivity in the Ancient Greek World

Classic Text: Sophocles — Re-read with: Lacan

Week 3: Religious Subjectivity

Classic Text: Saint Paul — Re-read with: Badiou, Žižek

II. THE MODERN: 17TH – 19TH CENTURIES

Week 4: The Birth of Modern Subjectivity

Classic Text: Descartes — Re-read with: Badiou, Lacan, Žižek

Week 5: Transcendental Subjectivity

Classic Text: Kant — Re-read with: Heidegger, Žižek, Zupančič

Week 6: Modern Ethical Subjectivity

Classic Texts: Kant — Re-read with: Zupančič

Week 7: Subjectivity in German Idealism

Classic Texts: Fichte, Hegel — Re-read with: Dolar, Žižek

III. THE MODERN: 20TH – 21ST CENTURIES

Week 8: Subjectivity in Classic Psychoanalysis

Classic Texts: Freud, Lacan — Re-read with: Brodsky, Lacan

Week 9: Ideology and Subjectivity

Classic Text: Althusser — Re-read with: Dolar

Week 10: Aesthetic, Political and Economic Subjectivity

Classic Texts: Rancière, Resnick/Wolff — Re-read with: Žižek

Week 11: Cognitive Science and Subjectivity

Classic Text: Dennett — Re-read with: Žižek

Week 12: Sexual Difference and Subjectivity

Classic Text: Butler — Re-read with: Copjec

DETAILED WEEKLY READINGS:

Week 1: Introduction

- overview of course material with special emphasis on repetition as a methodological approach to textual exegesis
- lecture on repetition and its relation to the emergence of the being and meaning of subjectivity
- film clips from *Blade Runner* and *Vertigo*

I. THE PRE-MODERN

Week 2: Ethical Subjectivity in the Ancient Greek World

A close study of the philosophical texts of antiquity, particularly those of Plato and Aristotle, has traditionally comprised an important part of the Humanities. But its aesthetic texts are equally important since they capture a subject interacting in a world said to embody far different concerns than our own. The plays of Sophocles have been returned to throughout the ages, most famously by Freud who named the great scandal of the human subject, the Oedipus complex, in remembrance of the ancient tragedy *Oedipus The King*. Lacan marks his own return to Sophocles but mines instead the sequentially last of the Theban trilogy, treating *Antigone* as an instantiation of the formal structure of the ethical act.

Classic Text:

Sophocles. *Antigone* (trans. Elizabeth Wyckoff) in *Sophocles I: Three Tragedies*, pp. 157-204 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1954)

Re-read with:

Lacan. "The Essence of Tragedy: A Commentary on Sophocles's Antigone" in *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-1960*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Dennis Porter, pp. 241-87 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997)

Recommended Readings:

Hegel, G. W. F. Selection from "Ch. VI. Spirit: A. The *true* Spirit. The ethical order" [sections: "a. The ethical world. Human and Divine Law: Man and Woman" and "b. Ethical action. Human and Divine knowledge. Guilt and Destiny"] (§§438-76) in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller, pp. 263-89 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977)

Hyppolite, Jean. "Immediate Spirit" (Part V, Ch. I) [sections: "Immediate Spirit: The Emergence of the Self" and "Tragic Action: The Self as Action"] in *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Samuel Cherniak and John Heckman, pp. 334-64 (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974)

Sophocles. *Oedipus The King* (trans. David Grene) in *Sophocles I: Three Tragedies*, pp. 9-76 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1954)

Zupančič, Alenka. Selection from "Ch. 8. Ethics and Tragedy in Psychoanalysis" and "Thus..." (Conclusion) in *Ethics of the Real: Kant, Lacan*, pp. 170-211, 249-59 (London: Verso, 2000)

Week 3: Religious Subjectivity

Scriptural texts are also a significant focus for the traditional scholar of the Humanities. In these texts man is ultimately subject to other-worldly authorities which often conflict with secular powers. The epistles of St Paul, the most important early Christian missionary apostle and theologian, are exemplary in this respect and through them St Paul became Rome's most dangerous opponent. Badiou regards this inventor of Christianity as having newly delineated a universal subjectivity, unidentifiable by legal categories, in what he says is a subtractive conception of a subject taking a necessary distance from the State. However, Žižek finds Badiou's defense of St Paul's assertion of Christ's Resurrection as not moving beyond the Althusserian gesture of interpellating individuals into subjects and thus feels Badiou misses the truly subversive potential of St Paul's articulation of religious subjectivity.

Classic Text:

Saint Paul. *Paul's Letter to the Romans* in *Good News Bible with Deuterocanonicals/Apocrypha*, pp.201- 19 (New York: American Bible Society, 1979)

Re-read with:

Badiou, Alain. "Paul: Our Contemporary" (Ch. 1) and "In Conclusion" (Ch. 11) in *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. Ray Brassier, pp. 4-15, 107-111 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003)

Žižek, Slavoj. Selection from "The Politics of Truth, or, Alain Badiou as a Reader of St Paul" (Ch. 3) in *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, pp. 141-67 (London: Verso, 1999)

Recommended Readings:

Badiou, Alain. "Pascal" (Meditation 21) in *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham (London: Continuum, 2005)

Hallward, Peter. "Subject and Event" (Ch. 5) and "The Generic Procedures" in *Badiou: A Subject to Truth*, pp. 107-51, 181-3 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003)

II. THE MODERN: 17TH – 19TH CENTURIES

Week 4: The Birth of Modern Subjectivity

The Humanities includes a trajectory of modern philosophical thought beginning with Descartes. His *Meditations* trace the path of an individual arriving at self-certainty through a systematic procedure of hyperbolic doubt. Lacan problematizes this conception of *cogito* through a return to Freudian psychoanalysis. With his famous Graphs of Desire he illustrates what Descartes overlooked: the distinction between me (the ego) and the I. Using popular films Žižek reinserts this distinction back into the philosophical arena, arguing that while Descartes falls prey to believing self-consciousness renders self-transparent the thinking thing, Kant and the German Idealists do not. Badiou acknowledges Lacan's recognition that any conscious certitude of existence is to be dismissed as transcendent, yet faults Lacan for still remaining too attached to the Cartesian epoch of science. Since our modern notion of subjectivity begins only after Descartes, properly speaking any discernment of a subject in older (Greek and biblical) texts is due to our retroactive post-Cartesian gaze.

Classic Text:

Descartes, René. Dedication, Preface, Synopsis, First and Second Meditation in *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. and ed. John Cottingham, pp. 1-23 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

Re-read with:

Badiou, Alain. "Descartes/Lacan" (Meditation 37) in *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham, pp. 431-5 (London: Continuum, 2005)

Lacan, Jacques . Selection from "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 681-700 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006)

Žižek, Slavoj. Selection from "'I or He or It (the Thing) Which Thinks'" (Ch. 1) in *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology*, pp. 9-18, 39-44 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993)

Recommended Readings:

Blade Runner. Dir. Ridley Scott. Warner Brothers, 1982. Film.

Fink, Bruce. "Reading 'The Subversion of the Subject'" (Ch. 4) in *Lacan to the Letter: Reading Écrits Closely*, pp. 106-28 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004)

Johnston, Adrian. "The Immanent Genesis of the Transcendent" (Introduction) and "In Idealism More Than Idealism Itself: The Extimate Material Kernel of Psychical Life" (Ch. 2) in *Žižek's Ontology: A Transcendental Materialist Theory of Subjectivity* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008)

Week 5: Transcendental Subjectivity

In philosophy the first significant exposure of Descartes' error was made by Kant. By making use of a visual model used by Lacan to illustrate the distinction between ego and I, Zupančič re-reads the Third Paralogism to show how the experience of a substantial personhood is illusory. Focusing on other areas of Kant's text, Heidegger accuses Kant of shrinking-back from the transcendental power of the imagination (which harbors the subject's capacity for spontaneity) because he later sought a more rational ground for subjectivity. Agreeing with this assessment, Žižek argues that Heidegger and Kant nevertheless both overlook how the subject's capacity for spontaneous action is, paradoxically, the very founding gesture of subjectivity itself. In psychoanalytic terms this spontaneous founding gesture corresponds to the Freudian death drive and thus involves a pure self-contraction of subjectivity.

Classic Text:

Kant, Immanuel. Transcendental Deduction (A-ed.), Schematism, Third Paralogism: Of Personality (A-ed.) in *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, pp. 129-38, 180-7, 341-4 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965)

Re-read with:

Heidegger, Martin. "The Originality of the Previously Laid Ground and Kant's Shrinking-Back from the Transcendental Power of Imagination" (§31) in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, pp. 112-20 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997)

Žižek, Slavoj. Selection from "The Deadlock of Transcendental Imagination, or, Martin Heidegger as a Reader of Kant" (Ch. 1) in *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, pp. 22-33, 59-66 (London: Verso, 1999)

Zupančič, Alenka. "From the Logic of Illusion to the Postulates" (Ch. 4) in *Ethics of the Real: Kant, Lacan*, pp. 64-78 (London: Verso, 2000)

Recommended Readings:

Allison, Henry E. "The Transcendental Deduction" (Ch. 7), "The Schematism of the Understanding and the Power of Judgment" (Ch. 8), "The Paralogisms" (Ch. 12) and "The Regulative Function of Reason" (Ch. 15) in *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense,* Revised and Enlarged Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004)

Beiser, Frederick C. Selection from Part I: "The Second Edition Refutation of Problematic Idealism"(Ch. 6), "Kant and the Way of Ideas" (Ch. 7), "The Transcendental Subject" (Ch. 8) and "The Status of the Transcendental" (Ch. 9) in *German Idealism: The Struggle against Subjectivism, 1781-1801* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002)

Johnston, Adrian. "I or He or It, the Thing... That Dies: Death and the Euthanasia of Reason" (Ch. 3) and "Avoiding the Void: The Temporal Loop of the Fundamental Fantasy" (Ch. 4) in *Žižek's Ontology: A Transcendental Materialist Theory of Subjectivity* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008)

Žižek, Slavoj. "The Deadlock of Transcendental Imagination, or, Martin Heidegger as a Reader of Kant" (Ch. 1) in *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London: Verso, 1999)

Week 6: Modern Ethical Subjectivity

Perhaps unexpectedly the motif of Enlightenment according to Kant is 'Argue freely in public but in private, obey!' Ultimately what is to be obeyed is the ethical injunction and Kant provides a deduction of the reciprocal relationship between freedom and the moral Law in the 3rd section of the *Grounding*. Generally deemed a failure, Zupančič instead accounts for its seemingly circular claim of how freedom stands as the condition of freedom by making reference to the structure of subjectivity. By grasping the intimate relation between the constitution of the subject and the formulation of the moral Law, Lacan's contention that Kant's revolutionary break from traditional ethics was the philosophical starting point leading to the Freudian discovery of the unconscious is better appreciated.

Classic Texts:

Kant, Immanuel. "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" in *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor, pp. 16-22 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

_____. "Third Section: Transition from a Metaphysics of Morals to a Critique of Pure Practical Reason" in *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (with *On a Supposed Right to Lie Because of Philanthropic Concerns*), trans. James W. Ellington, pp. 49-62 (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993)

Re-read with:

Zupančič, Alenka. "The Subject of Freedom" (Ch. 2) in *Ethics of the Real: Kant, Lacan*, pp. 21-42 (London: Verso, 2000)

Recommended Readings:

Allison, Henry E. “Autonomy and spontaneity in Kant’s conception of the self” in *Idealism and Freedom: Essays on Kant’s Theoretical and Practical Philosophy*, pp. 129-42 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

Chiesa, Lorenzo. "Pure Desire, *Jouissance*, and the Ethics of Psychoanalysis" in *Subjectivity and Otherness: A Philosophical Reading of Lacan*, pp. 167-82 (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007)

Foucault, Michel. "What is Enlightenment?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. P. Rabinow, pp. 32-50 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984)

Horkheimer, Max and Adorno, Theodor. "The Concept of Enlightenment" in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, pp. 1-34 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002)

Johnston, Adrian. "Against Embodiment: The Material Ground of the More-than-Material Subject" (Ch. 5) in *Žižek's Ontology: A Transcendental Materialist Theory of Subjectivity* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008)

Kant, Immanuel. Preface, First Section, Second Section and Supplement: "On a Supposed Right to Lie Because of Philanthropic Concerns" in *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (with *On a Supposed Right to Lie Because of Philanthropic Concerns*), trans. James W. Ellington, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993)

Taylor, Charles. "Responsibility for Self", in *The Identities of Persons*, ed. A. O. Rorty, pp. 281-99 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976)

Žižek, Slavoj. "On Radical Evil and Related Maters" (Ch. 3) in *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993)

Zupančič, Alenka. Introduction, "The (Moral-) Pathology of Everyday Life" (Ch. 1), "The Lie" (Ch. 3), "Good and Evil" (Ch. 5) and "Between the Moral Law and the Superego" (Ch. 7) in *Ethics of the Real: Kant, Lacan* (London: Verso, 2000)

Week 7: Subjectivity in German Idealism

Kant's immediate successors achieved superior philosophical conceptions of subjectivity by working through the internal inconsistencies of his texts. Fichte recognizes how Kant often erred in articulating the subject as if it was determined by some object external to itself and instead rigorously inquires into what must have gone on before the subject could establish a relation to external reality. His identity of the I with itself is offered as the original unity of subject-object and the absolute starting point of philosophy. Hegel goes further by theorizing a social bond between subject-subject: his famous Master-Slave dialectic suggests there is no self-consciousness without at the same time the establishment of a minimal social structure. Žižek finds both this dialectic, as well as Hegel's baffling passage on phrenology, as necessitating a vanishing moment of pure subjectivity. Dolar closely re-reads this latter passage with Lacanian categories to demonstrate how Hegel effectively severs all ties between subject-object so as to end their dialectical relation.

Classic Texts:

Fichte, J.G. Selection from "Second Introduction to the Science of Knowledge: For readers who already have a philosophical system" in *The Science of Knowledge, with the First and Second Introductions*, trans. and ed. Peter Health and John Lachs, pp. 29-42 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982)

Hegel, G. W. F. "Independence and dependence of self-consciousness: Lordship and Bondage" (§§178-96) and "Observation of self-consciousness in its relation to its immediate actuality. Physiognomy and Phrenology" (§§328-46) in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller, pp. 111-9, 197-210 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977)

Re-read with:

Dolar, Mladen . “The Phrenology of Spirit” in *Supposing the Subject*, ed. Joan Copjec, pp. 64-83 (London: Verso, 1994)

Žižek, Slavoj. "The Subject as 'Vanishing Mediator'" in *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology*, pp. 33-5 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993)

Recommended Readings:

Beiser, Frederick C. Selection from Part II: "Fichte and the Thing-in-Itself" (of Ch. 3), "Freedom and Subjectivity" (Ch. 4), "Knowledge of Freedom" (Ch. 5), "Critical Idealism" (Ch. 6) in *German Idealism: The Struggle against Subjectivism, 1781-1801*, pp. 269-319 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002)

Breazeale, Daniel. “Check or Checkmate? On the Finitude of the Fichtean Self” in *The Modern Subject: Conceptions of the Self in Classical German Philosophy*, eds. Karl Ameriks and Dieter Sturma, pp. 87-114 (Albany: SUNY, 1995)

Hyppolite, Jean. "Part III: The Transition from Natural Self-Consciousness to Universal Self-Consciousness" and selection from Part IV, Ch. 3: "Physiognomy and Phrenology" in *Genesis and Structure of Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Samuel Cherniak and John Heckman, pp. 141-217, 264-71 (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974)

Kojève, Alexandre. "In Place of an Introduction" (Ch. 1), "Summary of the First Six Chapters of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*" (Ch. 2) and selection from "The Dialectic of the Real and the Phenomenological Method in Hegel" (Ch. 7) in *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr., ed. Allan Bloom, pp. 3-70, 224-59 (New York: Basic Books, 1969)

Johnston, Adrian. "Part 3. The Semblance of Substance and the Substance of Semblance: The Thing and Its Shadow. (Hegel- Žižek)" in *Žižek’s Ontology: A Transcendental Materialist Theory of Subjectivity* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008)

Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Hegel: The Restlessness of the Negative*, trans. Jason Smith and Steven Miller (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002)

Žižek, Slavoj. Selection from “Fichte’s Laughter” (Ch. 3) in *Mythology, Madness, and Laughter: Subjectivity in German Idealism*, eds. Markus Gabriel and Slavoj Žižek, pp. 137-67 (London: Continuum, 2009)

_____. "From Kant to Hegel" in *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology*, pp. 18-22 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993)

_____. "The Violence of Imagination" and "The Hegelian Ticklish Subject" (Ch. 2) in *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, pp. 41-6, 70-123 (London: Verso, 1999)

III. THE MODERN: 20TH – 21ST CENTURIES

Week 8: Subjectivity in Classic Psychoanalysis

The Freudian discoveries at the turn of the 20th century necessitate the Humanities directly contend with psychoanalytic categories of subjectivity, particularly with the privileged structure of hysteria. When his patient Dora reports how her father turned her into an object of exchange, offering her to Mr. K so her father could pursue an affair with Mrs. K, Freud endeavors to confront Dora with her own complicity in this exchange to no avail. Lacan re-examines this paradigmatic case, exposing how Freud's operative notion of natural (and not normative) heterosexuality lead to his erroneous belief that Dora's hysteria stems from a refusal to acknowledge a secret desire for Mrs. K. Instead Lacan demonstrates how Dora identifies with Mr. K, taking as her own the desire which she perceives him to have for Mrs. K. The theoretical background for such a case is provided by Brodsky who distinguishes the hysterical core of subjectivity from the neurotic unleashing of hysteria. Lacan himself re-works his classic 1936 paper throughout the remainder of his career to highlight various facets of subjectivity.

Classic Texts:

Freud, Sigmund. *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. VII, pp. 15-111 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1958)

Lacan, Jacques. "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 75-81 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006 [1936, 1949])

Re-read with:

Brodsky, Graciela. "The Alchemy of Hysteria" in *Mental: International Journal of Mental Health and Applied Psychoanalysis*, 12, May 2003, pp. 71-6, trans. Maria-Cristina Aguirre.

Lacan, Jacques. "Presentation on Transference" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 176-85 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006)

Recommended Readings:

Chiesa, Lorenzo. "Part I: The Subject of the Imaginary (Other)" in *Subjectivity and Otherness: A Philosophical Reading of Lacan* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007)

Fink, Bruce. Selection from Part II: "A Lacanian Approach to Diagnosis" (Ch. 6) and "Neurosis" (Ch. 8) in *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997)

Freud, Sigmund. *Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. X, pp. 151-318 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1958)

Jameson, Fredric. Selection from "Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan: Marxism, psychoanalytic criticism, and the problem of the subject" in *Jacques Lacan: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory. Volume III: Society, Politics, Ideology*, ed. Slavoj Žižek, pp. 3-31 (London: Routledge, 2003)

Week 9: Ideology and Subjectivity

The Althusserian account of ideological interpellation is a major breakthrough in modern Marxist thought regarding the subject of the Humanities. Ideology is no longer a distorting screen intervening between subject-object, but now conceived as an indispensible medium for the production of forms of subjectivity itself. This medium is theorized as a structured range of material practices embedded in material institutions imposing themselves on man without necessarily having to pass through consciousness. However, Dolar finds that Althusser's use of Lacan's 1936 Mirror Stage paper overlooks its crucial distinction between the imaginary ego and the symbolic I. So when ideology hails an individual as a subject, the result is an illusory self far more stable and unified than what Lacan proposes. Althusser has in effect produced an ideology of the ego rather than one of the turbulently desiring subject-I.

Classic Text:

Althusser, Louis. Selection from "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)" in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster, pp. 158-86 (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971)

Re-read with:

Dolar, Mladen. "Beyond Interpellation," *Qui Parle*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 75-96 (Spring/Summer 1993)

Recommended Readings:

Badiou, Alain. "Theory of the Subject" (Meditation 35) in *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham (London: Continuum, 2005)

Žižek, Slavoj. "Ideological Interpellation" *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, pp. 257-260 (London: Verso, 1999)

_____. "The Precipitous Identification" and "Subjectivity and Grace" in *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology*, pp. 73-80, 169-74 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993)

Week 10: Aesthetic, Political and Economic Subjectivity

Althusser has influenced important contemporary thinking on subjectivity. Privileging Marx's statement that he deals with individuals only insofar as they personify economic categories, Resnick and Wolff have brought Althusserian interpellation to its logical conclusion: a notion of the subject all but disappears from their analysis of political economy since individuals are to be considered only as overdetermined sites of specific subsets of social processes. Alternatively, in his most succinct text on politics and the aesthetics it implies Rancière criticizes Althusserian elitism of speaking for the ideologically mystified masses. He elaborates instead the contours of those poetic moments in which excluded classes put forward their claim to speak for themselves while effecting a change in the perception of social space so that their claim can find a legitimate place in it. Although Žižek commends this move forward from Althusser as avoiding the morass of post-structuralist logic (in which Resnick and Wolff find themselves immersed), he argues that Rancière's aesthetico-political configurations nevertheless amount to a misguided effort to reduce the subject to the secondary process of subjectivization.

Classic Texts:

Rancière, Jacques. "Ten Theses on Politics" (Ch. 1) [1996] in *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. and ed. Steven Corcoran (London: Continuum Books, 2010)

Resnick, Stephen A. and Wolff, Richard D. Selections from "Chapter 3: A Marxian Theory of Classes" in *Knowledge and Class: A Marxian Critique of Political Economy*, pp. 109-24, 158-63 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987)

Re-read with:

Žižek, Slavoj. Selection from "Political Subjectivization and Its Vicissitudes" (Ch. 4) in *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, pp. 228-39 (London: Verso, 1999)

Recommended Readings:

Althusser, Louis. Selection from “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster, pp. 127-57 (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971)

Badiou, Alain. "The State of the Historical-social Situation" (Meditation 9) in *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham (London: Continuum, 2005)

Jameson, Fredric. Selection from "Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan: Marxism, psychoanalytic criticism, and the problem of the subject" in *Jacques Lacan: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory. Volume III: Society, Politics, Ideology*, ed. Slavoj Žižek, pp. 31-43 (London: Routledge, 2003)

Resnick, Stephen A. and Wolff, Richard D. Selection from "Chapter 3: A Marxian Theory of Classes" in *Knowledge and Class: A Marxian Critique of Political Economy*, pp. 124-58 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987)

Žižek, Slavoj. "The Nonequivalent Exchange," "Money and Subjectivity" and "From Subject to Substance...and Back" in *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology*, pp. 22-33 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993)

_____. Selection from "Political Subjectivization and Its Vicissitudes" (Ch. 4) in *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, pp. 171-228 (London: Verso, 1999)

Week 11: Cognitive Science and Subjectivity

Although in general the Humanities has little concern for the natural sciences, an exception must be made for cognitive science. Representative here is the work of Dennett. Seeking an empirical account of the emergence of the self-conscious subject out of the biological evolutionary process, Dennett rejects the Cartesian *cogito* as a central controlling agency coordinating mental activity and opts instead for a conception of the mind as a bricolage of multiple agents and narratives fighting for hegemony. Žižek concedes that Dennett may have explained consciousness but cautions that he has not explained the unconscious. More importantly he further argues that the *cogito* Dennett rejects is not the same *cogito* which Lacan equates with the subject of the unconscious. Dennett is thus ultimately charged with failing to arrive at the psychoanalytic subject, with overlooking how self-consciousness (*cogito*) and the unconscious do not exclude but rather presuppose each other.

Classic Text:

Dennett, Daniel C. "Prelude: How Are Hallucinations Possible?" "The Theater of Consciousness Revisited" and "When Words Want to Get Themselves Said" in *Consciousness Explained*, pp. 3-18, 126-34 and 242-52 (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1991)

Re-read with:

Žižek, Slavoj. “The Cartesian Subject versus the Cartesian Theater,” in *Cogito and the Unconscious*, ed. Slavoj Žižek, pp. 247-74 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998)

Recommended Readings:

Johnston, Adrian. Selection from *Žižek’s Ontology: A Transcendental Materialist Theory of Subjectivity*, 203-10 (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008)

Week 12: Sexual Difference and Subjectivity

The notion of sexual difference which lies at the foundation of the Humanities assures this foundation is not solid. For Butler sex is a culturally constructed discursive practice and she concludes her text by offering a positive project of unbounded performative games of constructing multiple subject-positions to subvert every fixed identity and confound the binary of sex. Copjec agrees that sex is not a pre-discursive natural fact but instead provides for a more radical desubstantialization, re-reading Butler by following Freud and Lacan in arguing that sex is not susceptible to cultural manipulations since it concerns the drives: sex comes to be where discursive practices falter and not where they succeed in multiplying meaning. Copjec also invokes Kant by suggesting the attempt to contemplate sex throws reason into conflict with itself and concludes that the subject is indeed sexed, necessarily having to assume either a male or female position within any discourse. Far from constraining the subject, this psychoanalytic notion of sexual difference is what assures its sovereignty.

Classic Text:

Butler, Judith. "Bodily Inscriptions, Performative Subversions" and "Conclusion: From Parody to Politics" in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, pp. 128-49 (New York: Routledge, 1990)

Re-read with:

Copjec, Joan. 'Sex and the Euthanasia of Reason' in *Read My Desire: Lacan against the Historicists*, pp. 201-36 (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994)

Recommended Readings:

Allison, Henry E. "The Antinomy of Pure Reason" (Ch. 13) in *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense,* Revised and Enlarged Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004)

Chiesa, Lorenzo. "Sexuation and the Feminine Oedipus Complex" in *Subjectivity and Otherness: A Philosophical Reading of Lacan*, pp. 82-8 (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007)

Hallward, Peter. "Love and Sexual Difference" (Ch. 7) in *Badiou: A Subject to Truth* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003)

Johnston, Adrian. Selection from *Žižek's Ontology: A Transcendental Materialist Theory of Subjectivity*, 27-31 (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008)

Kant, Immanuel. "The Antinomy of Pure Reason" in *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, pp. 384-484 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965)

Lacan, Jacques. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge, Book XX, Encore 1972-1973*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998)

Vertigo. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Paramount Pictures, 1958. Film.

Žižek, Slavoj. "Passionate (Dis)Attachments, or, Judith Butler as a Reader of Freud" (Ch. 5) in *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London: Verso, 1999)

_____. Selection from "*Cogito* and the Sexual Difference" (Ch. 2), "The Principle of the Insufficient Ground" and "Identity, Difference, Contradiction" in *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology*, pp. 45-73, 125-34 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993)

Required Texts:

Althusser, Louis. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971 [1970])

Badiou, Alain. *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham (London: Continuum, 2005 [1988])

_____. *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003 [1997])

Brodsky, Graciela. "The Alchemy of Hysteria" in *Mental: International Journal of Mental Health and Applied Psychoanalysis*, 12, May 2003, pp. 71-6, trans. Maria-Cristina Aguirre.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990)

Copjec, Joan. *Read My Desire: Lacan against the Historicists* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994)

Dennett, Daniel C. *Consciousness Explained* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1991)

Descartes, René. *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. and ed. John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 [1641])

Dolar, Mladen. "Beyond Interpellation," *Qui Parle*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 75-96 (Spring/Summer 1993)

_____. "The Phrenology of Spirit" in *Supposing the Subject*, ed. Joan Copjec, pp. 64-83 (London: Verso, 1994)

Fichte, J.G. *The Science of Knowledge, with the First and Second Introductions*, trans. and ed. Peter Health and John Lachs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982 [1794])

Freud, Sigmund. *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. VII, pp. 1-122 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1958 [1905])

Hegel, G. W. F. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller, pp. 1-493 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977 [1807])

Heidegger, Martin. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997 [1929])

Johnston, Adrian. *Žižek's Ontology: A Transcendental Materialist Theory of Subjectivity* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008)

Kant, Immanuel. "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" in *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor, pp. 16-22 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 [1784])

_____. *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965 [1781, 1787])

_____. *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (with *On a Supposed Right to Lie Because of Philanthropic Concerns*), trans. James W. Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993 [1785])

Lacan, Jacques. "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 75-81 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006 [1936, 1949])

_____. "Presentation on Transference" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 176-85 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006 [1951])

_____. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-1960*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Dennis Porter (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997 [1986 posth.])

_____. "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 671-702 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006 [1960])

Rancière, Jacques. *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. and ed. Steven Corcoran (London: Continuum Books, 2010 [1996-2004])

Resnick, Stephen A. and Wolff, Richard D. *Knowledge and Class: A Marxian Critique of Political Economy*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987)

Saint Paul. *Paul's Letter to the Romans* in *Good News Bible with Deuterocanonicals/Apocrypha*, pp.201-19 (New York: American Bible Society, 1979 [*c*.58 AD])

Sophocles. *Sophocles I: Three Tragedies*, pp. 157-204 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1954 [*c*.441-405 BC])

Žižek, Slavoj. "The Cartesian Subject versus the Cartesian Theater," in *Cogito and the Unconscious*, ed. Slavoj Žižek, pp. 247-74 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998)

_____. *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993)

_____. *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London: Verso, 1999)

Zupančič, Alenka. *Ethics of the Real: Kant, Lacan* (London: Verso, 2000)

Recommended Texts:

Allison, Henry E. “Autonomy and spontaneity in Kant’s conception of the self” in *Idealism and Freedom: Essays on Kant’s Theoretical and Practical Philosophy*, pp. 129-42 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 [1995])

_____. *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense,* Revised and Enlarged Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004 [1983, 2004])

Beiser, Frederick C. *German Idealism: The Struggle against Subjectivism, 1781-1801* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002)

Blade Runner. Dir. Ridley Scott. Warner Brothers, 1982. Film.

Breazeale, Daniel. “Check or Checkmate? On the Finitude of the Fichtean Self” in *The Modern Subject: Conceptions of the Self in Classical German Philosophy*, eds. Karl Ameriks and Dieter Sturma, pp. 87-114 (Albany: SUNY, 1995)

Chiesa, Lorenzo. *Subjectivity and Otherness: A Philosophical Reading of Lacan* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007)

Fink, Bruce. *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997)

_____. *Lacan to the Letter: Reading Écrits Closely* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004)

Foucault, Michel. "What is Enlightenment?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. P. Rabinow, pp. 32-50 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984)

Freud, Sigmund. *Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. X, pp. 151-318 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1958 [1909])

Hallward, Peter. *Badiou: A Subject to Truth* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003)

Horkheimer, Max and Adorno, Theodor. "The Concept of Enlightenment" in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, pp. 1-34 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002 [1947])

Hyppolite, Jean. *Genesis and Structure of Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Samuel Cherniak and John Heckman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974 [1946])

Jameson, Fredric. "Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan: Marxism, psychoanalytic criticism, and the problem of the subject" in *Jacques Lacan: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory. Volume III: Society, Politics, Ideology*, ed. Slavoj Žižek, pp. 3-43 (London: Routledge, 2003 [1977])

Kojève, Alexandre. *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr., ed. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1969 [1947])

Lacan, Jacques. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge, Book XX, Encore 1972-1973*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998 [1975])

Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Hegel: The Restlessness of the Negative*, trans. Jason Smith and Steven Miller (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002 [1997])

Taylor, Charles. "Responsibility for Self", in *The Identities of Persons*, ed. A. O. Rorty, pp. 281-99 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976)

Vertigo. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Paramount Pictures, 1958. Film.

Žižek, Slavoj. "Fichte's Laughter" in *Mythology, Madness, and Laughter: Subjectivity in German Idealism*, eds. Markus Gabriel and Slavoj Žižek, pp. 122-67 (London: Continuum, 2009)