

CONTEMPORARY CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY

(DELEUZE, BADIOU, MEILLASSOUX, LARUELLE)

(formerly 'Deleuze, Badiou, Zizek')

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TEXTS:

Gilles Deleuze/Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*

Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*

Alain Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*

Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude*

François Laruelle, *The Non-Philosophy Project*

Course Packet

[Optional: you may find John Mullarkey, *Post-Continental Philosophy* helpful as a secondary source but it is not required.]

PREREQUISITES: Graduate or advanced undergraduate standing (although exceptions may be made upon permission of the instructor).

DESCRIPTION:

In the wake of a generation or two (roughly, 'Poststructuralism') that largely regarded philosophy as either fatally suspect on ideological grounds, merely one group of literary texts among others, or as having reached an historical terminus, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, in 1991, published a work entitled *What is Philosophy?* that both represented a vigorous defense of philosophy, proposed a 'new image of thought,' and initiated a spirited discussion that continues today. This course will trace the path of this discussion through Alain Badiou's *Manifesto for Philosophy*, Quentin Meillassoux's *After Finitude* (which spawned the contemporary 'movement' sometimes referred to as 'Speculative Realism'), and François Laruelle's attempts to establish a new 'science of Non-Philosophy.' On the basis of this discussion, we will attempt to critically assess the current status of philosophy (at least within the 'Continental' tradition), its potential points of connection with contemporary 'analytic philosophy,' and its prospects for the 21st century.

FORMAT: This course will be conducted as a seminar, involving assigned readings, in-class presentations, and discussion.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING: Regular attendance* and participation, together with written assignments tailored to the level and interests of individual students. We will discuss written assignments in more detail in class. (Normally, graduate students will be expected to submit the equivalent of about 20 pages of written

work and an in-class presentation; undergraduate students about 12 pages of written work and presentations as appropriate.)

*My general policy on attendance is that students may miss 3 class sessions without affecting your final grade. If you must miss 4 classes, you should speak with me right away to make sure you remain up to date with the class. At 5 absences (which is, in fact, a quarter of the course), I will suggest that you drop the class and try again another time.

SYLLABUS

Week I: Historical and conceptual introduction to the 'state of philosophy' in the late 20th century, with special attention to poststructuralist critiques of philosophy as an enterprise.

Read: First two sections of Course Packet (CP) and opening sections of Surber, in CP.

Week II: An introduction to the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze.

Read: CP, Gilles Deleuze: Some Introductory Comments

Week III: Deleuze and Guattari's defense of philosophy and 'new image of thought' in *What is Philosophy?*

Read: Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, Part One.

Week IV: Deleuze and Guattari on philosophy its 'others': science, art, and philosophy.

Read: Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, Part Two.

Week V: Badiou's critique of Deleuze

Read: Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*; CP, Badiou on Deleuze: Some Passages for Discussion.

Week VI: Badiou's conception and defense of philosophy.

Read: Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*; CP, Some Notes on Badiou.

Week VII: Meillassoux's critique of Badiou

Read: CP, essay by Meillassoux; also Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, Chaps. 1 and 2.

Week VIII: Meillassoux and the foundations of 'Speculative Realism'

Read: Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, Chaps. 3-5; also CP, Surber, section on Meillassoux and 'Speculative Realism.'

Week IX: Laruelle's 'Non-Philosophy' Project.

Read: Laruelle, *The Non-Philosophy Project*, Introduction and Chaps. 2, 1, 5, and 9; also CP, Heidegger, 'The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking' (read this first).

Week X: 'Scientific philosophy,' the end of philosophy, the 'science of non-philosophy,' or philosophy for the future?

Read: CP, 'Preface' to *What is Philosophy: Embodiment-Signification-Ideality*