

## HUMA 1301.009: Exploration of the Humanities

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(and by appointment)

Fall 2013  
T R 1-2:15  
MC 2.410

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### **Course description**

This course aims to introduce students to the kind of thinking practiced by humanities scholars. We will focus on the premise that the world is made up of signs and may therefore be read as text. By studying the late nineteenth-century thinkers who began to theorize signs, we will gain a sense of how systems of signification developed and how they continue to be productive for analytic work today.

### **Student learning objectives**

This course aims to have students:

1. understand basic questions motivating scholars in the humanities.
2. learn the fundamental interventions of key figures in humanities scholarship.
3. practice analyzing cultural objects and texts.

### **Required texts**

Available at Off-Campus Books on Campbell Road and at the on-campus bookstore:

Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*

Published by Hill and Wang; ISBN 978-0374521509

Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*

Published by Liveright; ISBN 978-0871401182

Blue books (for exams)

## **Course Policies**

### **Primary responsibilities**

Students must:

1. complete all of the assigned reading on time. Before each class session, expect to spend *two* hours reading carefully and thoroughly. Provide yourself with appropriate notation materials and a quiet study environment. You need not perform any extra research on the texts assigned, but you should always make sure you understand at least one key idea that is presented.
2. bring a hard copy of the assigned reading to every class session. Editions marked [ER] must be accessed from the e-reserves Web site and must be printed. The address for our course is:  
<http://utdallas.docutek.com/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=1577>  
The password is available from the professor.
3. act respectfully towards the viewpoints of others—those present in class and those whom we will read.
4. use personal technology responsibly. Looking up an unfamiliar word is okay; texting your friends is not. Phones and laptops should be off desks.

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to be present *and prepared* in all class sessions. Semester grades will reflect this expectation as follows:

Four absences or unprepared presences will result in the final grade being lowered by five points. Five absences or unprepared presences will result in the final grade being lowered by ten points. More than five absences may result in failure of the course. Coming late to class twice is the equivalent of being absent once.

There are no distinctions made between excused and non-excused absences. If an emergency occurs that will require absences beyond the allotted four, contact the instructor or teaching assistant as soon as possible.

Attendance will be taken based upon a seating chart produced on Thursday, 8/29.

### **Communication**

Email will be used for course updates or to notify students of individual concerns, so be sure to check your UTD account regularly. Paper copies of assignment sheets will always be distributed in class; digital versions will also be available through e-learning.

You may stop by your instructor's or your teaching assistant's office hours (or make an appointment via email) at any time. In the event that the terms of this course become difficult to meet, please contact one of us immediately. Our goal is for you to successfully complete the course once you have begun it.

## **Evaluation**

Student performance will be evaluated on an A-F grading scale, with components weighed as follows:

### **Exams: 60%**

Exams will be given in class at the conclusion of units two, three, and four to assess your comprehension of the lecture material. To prepare for the exams, you should complete all assigned reading, attend class regularly, listen carefully during lectures, take excellent notes, and ask about any ideas that are not clear to you. If you are not comfortable asking questions in class, email yours to the teaching assistant or instructor and/or stop by during office hours. Make-up exams are not permitted except in cases of documented emergency or illness. If this should occur, email the teaching assistant or instructor as soon as possible to schedule an alternative time.

### **Contribution to class: 10%**

In a class of this size, participatory discussions are not always practicable. Nonetheless, you will earn points for contributing positively to our learning environment: for coming to class prepared, listening attentively, respecting all the persons present, completing any quizzes, and communicating questions or uncertainties regarding the lecture material.

### **Homework Assignment: 5%**

The written assignment due on 9/10 will be discussed and distributed on 9/5. It will be graded on a pass/fail basis. Late assignments will not be accepted.

### **Final paper: 25%**

A final paper of 1,000 words will be assigned on 11/19. On 12/3 and 12/5, you will be required to bring preparatory material to class and to develop it with help from your peers. All work done on these days must be included with your final paper and will be taken into account for your final paper grade.

## **University Policies**

University-wide policies such as academic integrity, grievances, incompletes, disability services, and plagiarism are included in the scope of this syllabus. Please read them on the provost's Web site: <<http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>>.

## **Adjustments**

Any changes made to this syllabus at the instructor's discretion will be announced in class and communicated via email.

## **Schedule of readings and assignments, DUE ON THE DATE LISTED**

[ER] = available through the library e-reserves site (see page 2)

[R] = available through the library reserves system

unmarked = available in books required for class

### **I. Signs from God**

- |   |      |   |
|---|------|---|
| T | 8/27 | Introduction  |
| R | 8/29 | Jonathan Edwards, "letter on spiders" [ER]  |
| T | 9/3  | Mary Rowlandson, <i>A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration</i> , to p. 275 (The Thirteenth Remove) [ER] |
| R | 9/5  | Mary Rowlandson, <i>A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration</i> , complete [ER]                          |
| T | 9/10 | Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown" [ER]<br>Puritan for a day (written assignment due)                 |

### **II. Signs from the Unconscious**

- |   |      |  |
|---|------|--|
| R | 9/12 | Sigmund Freud, <i>Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis</i> : Lectures 1-2, "Introduction" and "Parapraxes"  |
| T | 9/17 | Freud, <i>Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis</i> : Lectures 3-4, "Parapraxes, (continued)" and "Parapraxes, (concluded)"                                |
| R | 9/19 | Freud, <i>Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis</i> : Lectures 5-6, "Difficulties and First Approaches" and "The Premises and Technique of Interpretation" |
| T | 9/24 | Freud, <i>Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis</i> : Lecture 7, and "The Manifest Content of Dreams and the Latent Dream-Thoughts"                        |
| R | 9/26 | no class   |
| T | 10/1 | <i>In Treatment</i> : Season 2, Episode 9, screened in class   |
| R | 10/3 | Review session on Freud  |
| T | 10/8 | Exam on Freud  |

### III. Signs from History

- R 10/10 Karl Marx, *Capital*: Part I, Chapter 1, Sections 1-2 [ER]
- T 10/15 Marx, *Capital*: Part I, Chapter 1, Sections 3-4 [ER]
- R 10/17 Marx, *Capital*: Part 2, Chapters 4 & 6 [ER]
- T 10/22 Marx, *Capital*: Part 3, Chapter 7 [ER]
- R 10/24 *In Time* [R]
- T 10/22 Review session on Marx
- R 10/24 Exam on Marx

### IV. Signs from Other Signs

- T 10/29 *Arrested Development*: Season 1, Episode 2, screened in class
- R 10/31 Ferdinand de Saussure, "Course in General Linguistics" [ER]
- T 11/5 Saussure, "Course in General Linguistics" [ER]
- R 11/7 Review session on Saussure
- T 11/12 Exam on Saussure

### V. Reading Cultural Signs

- R 11/14 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*: "Soap-powders and Detergents"; "Toys"; "Steak and Chips"
- T 11/19 Barthes, *Mythologies*: Prefaces from 1957 and 1970  
Final paper assigned
- R 11/21 Barthes, *Mythologies*: "The New Citroen"; "Plastic"  
[M 11/25 - F 11/29 Thanksgiving break]
- T 12/3 Final paper instruction; three signs due in class
- R 12/5 Final paper instruction; three signs + interpretation due in class
- T 12/10 Final papers due