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**Professor of English
Distinguished Teaching Professor**

English Depart.: 817 272 2692.

English 6340: Metacritical Theory: Poststructuralism, Biopolitics and the (Material) Human

Wednesdays 6-8:50

Carlisle 201

Course Description:

This class traces the shift from postmodernisms, poststructuralisms, and other discursively oriented theories toward new materialisms and biopolitics. The course will focus on the constitution of the human (and its others) within various conceptualizations, theories, and figurations. What is it to be human in the work of Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari, Agamben or Barad for example? What do poststructuralism, the rejection of modernism, new materialism, and the nonhuman turn mean for how we understand "the human." Is there, can there be, any such thing as "the human"? The course is broadly conceived to include many different topics, such as race, indigeneity, gender, sexuality, environmentalism, science studies, posthumanism, ethics, and politics. The course concludes by asking, with Catherine Malabou--who will be speaking at UTA in February--"What Should We Do with our Brains?"

Required Texts: [Please note that many of these are very short!]

Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I am*

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*

Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman*.

Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*

Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*

Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*

Cary Wolfe, *Before the Law: Humans and Other Animals in a Biopolitical Frame*

Beatriz Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*

[If you have an objection to reading an X-rated text, please read this instead:

Ann Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*]

Alexander G. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*

Catherine Malabou, *What Should We Do With Our Brains?*

Selected articles and chapters will be available on Blackboard.

Course Requirements

Participation, two presentations: 15%

Weekly papers: 25%

Seminar paper (including presentation of seminar paper): 60%

You must complete all the required work in order to obtain credit for the course.

Eight short response papers (3-4 double-spaced typed, stapled pages) will be required. These will be due at the beginning of class each week and will be handed in again, gathered together in a folder, at the final class period. These papers are not meant to be fully fleshed out arguments or analyses. Instead, these papers should analyze and interpret the texts for the week, compare them to other readings in the course, remark upon the most significant ideas, evaluate the merits and limitations of particular arguments and theoretical frameworks, and raise significant and provocative questions. The response papers will receive immediate comments but not grades; these papers will be graded in a portfolio manner, along with your presentation and participation, at the end of the course. (If the papers are C, D, or F papers, they will receive those grades, however.) There will be a different assignment, for Week Nine, March 19th, which will be required and which will count as one of the short papers.

Attending two scholarly talks. You will be required to attend two scholarly talks and submit a brief summary of the presentations and a brief commentary connecting the talks to the questions and theories of this class. You may hand in the short paper anytime before the final class period. Most people will want to attend the Hermanns lecture series, on Friday October 23, 2015: "Writing American Lives: From Diary and Memoir to Twitter and Graphic Non-Fiction." You may also attend talks at the SLSA in Houston, November 12-15. <http://litsciarts.org/slsa15/biopolitics/> If neither of these options work for you, then please suggest other scholarly talks you would like to attend.

Two 15-minute presentations on the readings for that evening, which you will sign up for in advance will also be required. (A written version of your presentation can be handed in as that week's required paper.)

One 20-page seminar paper and an oral presentation of an abstract of that paper will be due the final class period. These papers should demonstrate an understanding and engagement with theoretical issues we have discussed in the course. The paper must include a one-page abstract.

Ph.D. students will also be required to attach a final page explaining how they would revise the paper for publication and listing five journals to which they would submit the paper. They should also list conferences and panel topics that would be a good fit for this paper. (Ideally, the paper will be presented at a conference and then be revised for publication.)

Mechanics: All papers must be "typed," stapled, and have a significant title. Please do NOT use plastic folders or paperclips for your paper—a staple is sufficient. All papers are due at the very beginning of the class. I never accept faxed papers or emailed papers. Be sure to keep an extra copy of your paper. Please Note: plagiarism is a serious offense and will be punished to the full extent.

Participation/Attendance

Your active, informed participation is crucial to the success of the course. Carefully prepare for each class period by doing the reading in a rigorous and inquisitive manner. Every day that you come to class you should have something valuable to say. I will grade on actual participation, rather than on mere attendance. However, if you miss class two or more times, I will lower your course grade and if you miss more than that you will fail the course.

Official UTA Policies:

Americans With Disabilities Act: The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 - The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of federal legislation entitled *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens. As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability. Also, you may visit the Office for Students with Disabilities in room 102 of University Hall or call them at (817) 272-3364.

Academic Integrity: It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University. "Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts." (Regents' Rules and Regulations, Series 50101, Section 2.2) [NOTE FROM DR. ALAIMO: PLAGIARISM IS INEXCUSABLE AT THE GRADUATE LEVEL; I WILL CERTAINLY PUNISH PLAGIARISM TO THE FULLEST EXTENT POSSIBLE.]

Support Services Available: The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. These programs include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 for more information and appropriate referrals.

Minimal standards for classroom etiquette:

1. **TURN OFF** all pagers, beepers, cell phones and other electronic devices! You may not have these devices turned on while in class. You may not text message or read email or engage in any other electronic activities during class. The only exception is if you choose to access the course readings electronically.
2. Arrive to class **ON TIME**. It is distracting to both the professor and the students to have someone come in late. If you come in late, you will be marked absent.
3. Arrive to class **PREPARED** to discuss the texts and materials in an informed manner. You are expected to make a substantial contribution to every class..
4. Treat your classmates with **RESPECT**. Learn to disagree without being disagreeable. We will often discuss controversial, volatile topics, so everyone needs to

learn how to disagree with someone's views, beliefs, or perspectives while maintaining a sense of civility.

Introductions

Week One. September 2

Derrida

Week Two. September 9

Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play," [PDF] and "Difference" [PDF]

Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I am*

Butler and Spillers

Week Three. September 16

Butler, "The End of Sexual Difference;" [PDF] "The Question of Social Transformation" [PDF] (Recommended, if you haven't read it: Butler, *Gender Trouble*.)

Hortense Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book."

<http://web.calstatela.edu/faculty/jgarret/texts/spillers.pdf>

Deleuze and Guattari

Week Four. September 23

Selections from Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*

Latour

Week Five. October 30

Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*

Latour, "A Compositionist Manifesto" [PDF]

Paul Lynch, "Composition's New Thing: Bruno Latour and the Apocalyptic Turn."

http://cdh.sc.edu/~hawkb/790/Lynch_Composition.pdf

Haraway and Braidotti

Week Six. October 7

Donna Haraway, Introduction to Primate Visions, "A Cyborg Manifesto," and "The Biopolitics of Postmodern Bodies: Constitutions of Self in Immune System Discourse" (pick two of the three) [PDF].

Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman*

Barad

Week Seven. October 14
Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*

Agamben

Week Eight. October 21
Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*

Wolfe and Shukin

Week Nine. October 28
Cary Wolfe, *Before the Law: Humans and Other Animals in a Biopolitical Frame*
Nicole Shukin, chapter from *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times*, [PDF]

Preciado (or Fausto-Sterling)

Week Ten. November 4
Beatriz Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*
[If you have an objection to reading an X-rated text, please read this instead:
Ann Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*]

Weheliye, Wynter, McKittrick

Week Eleven. November 11
Alexander G. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*.
Sylvia Wynter and Katherine McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species? Or, to Give Humanness a Different Future: Conversations" (excerpt).

Racism, Biopolitics, Genetics and Epigenetics

Week Twelve. November 18
Mark Rifkin, "Indigenizing Agamben: Rethinking Sovereignty in Light of the Peculiar Status of Native Peoples" [PDF];
Dorothy Roberts, "White Privilege and the Biopolitics of Race." [PDF]
Arun Saldanha, "Reontologizing race: the machinic geography of phenotype."
<http://www.tc.umn.edu/~saldanha/ss-saldanha.pdf>
Kim Tallbear, "Narratives of Race and Indigeneity in The Genographic Project,"
<http://gapjunctionscience.org/wp-content/uploads/TallBear+Narratives+of+race+and+indigeneity.pdf>
Shannon Sullivan, "Inheriting Racist Disparities in Health: Epigenetics and the Transgenerational Effects of White Racism" [PDF]

Malabou/Neuroscience

Week Thirteen. November 25

Catherine Malabou, *What Should We Do With Our Brains?*

Noelle Vahanian, "A Conversation with Catherine Malabou." [PDF]

Ruth Leys, "On Catherine Malabou's *What Should We Do with Our Brains?*,"

<http://nonsite.org/review/on-catherine-malabou-what-should-we-do-with-our-brain>

Seminar Papers

Week Fourteen. December 2

No Class. I will be in my office during class time and office hours, in order to discuss your seminar papers with you.

Week Fifteen. December 9.

Seminar Papers Due

Presentation of Seminar Papers

Please hand in a copy of your paper, stapled, in an envelope with all your graded weekly papers. [Remember to include all commented-upon weekly papers as well, in a folder, along with your mailing address if you do not have an English Department mailbox.]

Please do course evaluations on your own since they are now electronic. You should receive an email from UTA prompting you to do evaluations. Thank you!