

Lingnan University
Department of Philosophy

Course Title	: Postmodern Philosophy
Course Code	: PHI4369
Recommended Study Year	: 3 rd Year
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Lecture and Tutorial
Class Contact Hours	: 1.5 hours Lecture/week; 1.5 hours Tutorial/week
Category in Major Programme	: Programme Elective – Continental Philosophy Profile
Recommendation(s)	: PHI4261 Contemporary Continental Philosophy
Co-requisite(s)	: N/A
Exclusion(s)	: N/A
Exemption Requirement(s)	: N/A

Brief Course Description

Postmodern philosophy is so termed for its opposition to the project of modernity which endeavours to accomplish the realization of Reason and universality in history. More profoundly, it is an attempt to undermine the entire conceptuality of western philosophical thinking which it considers as being governed by the metaphysics of presence. In this respect, postmodern philosophy goes further than structuralism in its critique of identity, its liquidation of the subject, its anti-humanism and the insistence on the play of difference, etc. This course will study some of the major thinkers in continental postmodern philosophy.

Aims

To introduce to students certain themes and issues of present day philosophical concern that have profoundly changed the outlook of contemporary culture and society, and to enable students to gain a critical awareness of the presuppositions underlying traditional western philosophy through understanding alternative models of thought.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course, students will:

1. acquire a basic understanding of some essential concepts and ideas of several postmodern thinkers in contemporary continental philosophy.
2. understand the fundamental differences between postmodern way of thinking and that of traditional western philosophy.
3. be able to explain and interpret the texts of these postmodern thinkers in a philosophically significant and cogent way.
4. be able to express their ideas and argumentation clearly and systematically in writing.

Indicative Content

1. Lyotard
 - a. The postmodern condition
 - b. The critique of meta-narratives
 - c. Phrasing and the differend
 - d. The inhuman and the sublime
2. Foucault
 - a. From archaeology to genealogy
 - b. Power/knowledge
 - c. The body and the subject

- d. Technologies of the self
- 3. Derrida
 - a. Metaphysics and logocentrism
 - b. Deconstruction and dissemination
 - c. Writing and *différance*
 - d. The trace and the supplement
- 4. Deleuze
 - a. Difference and repetition
 - b. Machines and deterritorialization
 - c. Transcendental empiricism
 - d. Becoming

Teaching Method

Lectures and tutorials.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

1. Tutorial presentation and class participation: (LO1, LO2, LO3)
Students are required to do a presentation basing on a text by a postmodern philosopher. They are expected to identify and discuss the central issues in the text and the novelty of its concepts in relation to those of traditional Western philosophy.
2. Term paper: (LO1, LO3, LO4)
Students are required to write a final paper that demonstrates their grasp of the conceptuality and way of thinking of a postmodern philosopher. Students are expected to express their ideas in an accurate and concise manner.
3. Final examination: (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4)
The final examination will assess students' general understanding of the course materials. Questions will be set on issues and problems related to the thinking of each postmodern philosopher studied. Students are expected to reflect on the similarities and differences between their thinking and their philosophical concerns.

Assessment

30% Tutorial presentation and participation in class discussions

30% Term paper

40% Final examination

Required Readings

Drolet, Michael ed., *The Postmodernism Reader: Foundational Texts*, London: Routledge, 2004.

Supplementary Readings

Colebrook, Claire, *Gilles Deleuze*, London: Routledge, 2002.

Culler, Jonathan, *On Deconstruction*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983.

Derrida, Jacques, *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. C. Spivak; Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1977.

Dews, Peter, *Logics of Disintegration*, London: Verso, 1987.

Dreyfus, Hubert L. & Rabinow, Paul, *Michel Foucault: From Structuralism to Hermeneutics* (2nd ed.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

Eagleton, Terry, *The Illusions of Postmodernism*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.

Gordon, C. ed., *Power/Knowledge*, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1980.

Lyotard, Jean-François, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. G. Bennington & B. Massumi, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986.

Lyotard, Jean-François, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. G. van

Important Notes

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>