

Fall 2019
16:470:670:01
16:195:608:02
W 4:30-7:10
Craig Seminar Room, AB West Wing 4050

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Kafka and the Question of Interpretation

The question of interpretation is posed by Kafka not only in his famously self-referential and -critical works but also in his literary reinterpretations of others such as Homer, Ovid and Cervantes. Additionally, his works have themselves been the focus of much critical attention, drawing responses from some of the foremost philosophers, literary scholars and creative writers of the 20th- and 21st-centuries. The course will focus on a wide range of his writings including novels, short stories, parables, diary entries, and letters, examining these texts through the interpretive lens of Adorno, Agamben, Benjamin, Butler, Canetti, Deleuze, Derrida, Hamacher, Liska, Menninghaus, Moses, Ronell, Scholem, Vogl, and others. Readings will be available in German and English whenever possible. Discussion in English.

Books to be purchased:

Kafka *Selected Stories*

Kafka, *The Trial*

Syllabus

Only English titles are listed below but the German whenever available can be found on the Sakai site under Resources. Here's the link:

<https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal/site/445468ed-cfb6-4588-96d6-489379159bc1/tool/13eaabec-ee89-464e-98b8-bbd4676338a5>

September

- 4 Kafka, "First Distress"
Benjamin, "Franz Kafka: On the Tenth Anniversary of his Death"
- 11 Benjamin, "Franz Kafka: On the Tenth Anniversary of his Death"
Benjamin, "The Great Wall of China"
Levine, "Of Big Ears and Bondage"
Kafka, "Knock on the Manor Gate," "The Burrow," "The Great Wall of China,"
"Abraham," "The Hunger Artist," "The Hunter Gracchus"
- 18 "Before the Law" Guest: Professor Vivian Liska, University of Antwerp
Kafka, "Before the Law"
Orson Welles, *The Trial*

Liska, "Before the Law Stands a Doorkeeper"
Liska, "Kafka, Narrative and the Law" in *German-Jewish Thought and its Aftermath* (Chapter 4)
Agamben, "The Messiah and the Sovereign"
Agamben, "The Most Beautiful Six Minutes in the History of Cinema"
Derrida, "Devant la loi"
Levine, "A Flair for Theory"

- 25 Canetti, *Kafka's Other Trial* 1-60
Kafka, *Letters to Felice* 5-8, 10-23, 32-33, 59-60, 86, 99-137, 150-2, 158-60, 163, 175-6, 185, 202, 209-15, 224-28, 233-38, 249, 257, 264-69, 270-1, 287-88, 293, 309, 315-16, 385, 405
German: 20.9.12, 28.9.12, 27.10.12*,

October

- 2 Menninghaus, *Disgust* Chapters 1, 7
Kafka, "A Country Doctor," *Amerika* (sel.)
- 9 **No Class Yom Kippur** (to be rescheduled)
Kafka in Translation
Kafka, "The Metamorphosis"
Woods, *Kafka Translated*
Ozick, "The Impossibility of Translating Kafka"
Bernofsky, "On Translating Kafka's "The Metamorphosis"
<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/on-translating-kafkas-the-metamorphosis>
Levine, "After the Animal"
- 16 Ronell, *Loser Sons* Chapter 4
Kafka, *Letter to the Father*
- 23 **No class (to be rescheduled)**
Topic TBD
- 30 Butler, "How to Read Kafka"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSIA6qXoLio>
Butler, "Who Owns Kafka?"
Adorno, "Notes on Kafka"

Recommended: Benjamin Balint, *Kafka's Last Trial: The Case of a Literary Legacy*

November

- 6 Vogl, *On Tarrying*
Vogl, *Über das Zaudern*
Levine, "'A Place So Insanely Enchanting': Kafka and the Poetics of Suspension"

- 13 **No Class (to be rescheduled)**
Kafka, "In the Penal Colony"
- 20 Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*
Hamacher, "The Gesture in the Name: On Benjamin and Kafka"
Kafka, "Lecture on Yiddish," "A Crossbreed," "On Parables," "Cares of a Family
Man," "Jackals and Arabs,"
Levine, "Inspiring Hatred"
- 27 Thanksgiving

December

- 4 Shame: Guest: Dr. Dominik Zechner, Brown University
Kafka, *The Trial* (last chapter)
Blanchot, *Thomas the Obscure* (last part)
Benjamin, TBA
- 11 Blanchot, "Kafka and the Work's Demand" in *The Space of Literature*
Kafka, *Diaries*