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**Graduate Seminar**

**Spring 2017**

## **Nervous Systems**

**Gender, Literature, Technology (1895-1933)**

**16:470:671:01**

**Tuesdays, 4:30-7:10pm**

**AB 4050**

### **Course Description:**

This course examines the modernist predicament as nervous system, which contains various modalities of failure and collapse: Aphasia and addiction, the incarcerated subject, the decentered self and the teenager, liminality and poverty, hysteria and schizophrenia, apocalypse, suicide, and war.

We will be looking at these tropes and theories in regard to specific gender and media technologies that are being employed and by doing so, combine pertinent literary and critical works of the time between 1895 and 1933 with more recent theories: Deleuze's *Coldness and Cruelty* will be read together with Sacher-Masoch and Robert Walser; Butler's *Bodies That Matter* with Fontane's *Effi Briest* and the sex tragedies of Wedekind and Kokoschka; Ronell's *The Telephone Book* with Lasker-Schüler and Trakl; Freud's "Fragments of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" with the works of Schnitzler, Zürn, and Cixous; Derrida's "No Apocalypse, Not Now" with Futurist manifestos; and Kittler's *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* with Rilke's "Primal Sound," the fantasy tales of Mynona, and early silent cinema.

**Taught in English.** Readers of German and/or French are encouraged to read the texts in German. Advanced undergraduate students may take this course with the approval of the Undergraduate Director.

**Course Requirements:** 1 class presentation, 20. min (20%), 2 response papers, 3pp. each (20%), and 1 final research paper, 15pp. (60%).

**Learning Goals:** (1) Students will demonstrate familiarity with a variety of texts mainly related to the German tradition as well as methods of studying literature and culture in relation to pertinent theoretical readings and evaluate the nature, function and value of literature from a critical perspective. (2) Students will analyze a specific body of research and write a clear and well-developed paper or project about a topic related to more than one literary and cultural tradition.

**Required Books** (ordered through Rutgers University Bookstore, all other readings will be uploaded on Sakai):

- Deleuze, Gilles; Leopold von Sacher-Masoch. *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty and Venus in Furs*. Trans. Jean McNeil. Zone Books, 1991. ISBN: 9780942299557
- Fontane, Theodor. *Effi Briest*. Trans. Hugh Rorison, Helen Chambers. Penguin, 2001. ISBN: 9780140447668
- Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso. *Mafarka the Futurist*. Trans. Carol Diethe, Steve Cox. Middlsex University Press, 1998. ISBN: 978-1898253105
- Mynona, *The Creator*. Trans. Peter Wortsman. Wakefield Press, 2014. ISBN: 978-1939663078
- Walser, Robert. *Jacob von Gunten*. Trans. Christopher Middleton. New York Review Books Classics, 1999. ISBN: 978-0940322219
- Wedekind, Frank. *Lulu Plays and Other Sex Tragedies*. Riverrun Press, 1980. Trans. Stephen Spender. ISBN: 978-0714508689
- Zürn, Unica. *Dark Spring*. Trans. Caroline Rupprecht. Exact Change, 2008. ISBN: 978-1878972309

### **Class Schedule: (tentative)**

Week 1 – Tuesday, January 17

Introduction: **The Nervous Breakdown**

Week 2 – Tuesday, January 24

#### **Contractual Coldness**

Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, *Venus in Furs* (1870)

Gilles Deleuze, "Coldness and Cruelty"

Week 3 – Tuesday, January 31

#### **Dora at the Door**

Arthur Schnitzler, *Fraulein Else* (1924)

Freud, "Fragments of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" (1905); Hélène Cixous, *Portrait of Dora* (1976)

Week 4 – Tuesday, February 7

**Gender in Trouble**

Theodor Fontane, *Effi Briest* (1896)

Judith Butler, "Prohibition, Psychoanalysis, and the Production of the Heterosexual Matrix" (*Gender Trouble*, pp. 57-91); Herman Rappaport, "*Effi Briest* and *La Chose Freudienne*"

Week 5 – Tuesday, February 14

**Womanliness as Masquerade (Serial Killers I)**

Wedekind, *The Lulu Plays* (1894 and 1908)

Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage"; Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, pp. 57-91

Week 6 – Tuesday, February 21

**A Big Round Zero**

Robert Walser, *Jacob van Gunten* (1909)

Deleuze, "Coldness and Cruelty"

Week 7 – Tuesday, February 28

**Manliness as Masquerade (Serial Killers II)**

Oskar Kokoschka, *Murderer, Hope of Womankind* and *Sphinx and Straw Man*

Butler, "Subversive Bodily Acts" (*Gender Trouble*, pp. )

**1<sup>st</sup> response paper due (3pp.)**

Week 8 – Tuesday, March 7

**Language and Suicide**

Georg Trakl, *Poems and Sebastian Dreaming*

Avital Ronell, *The Telephone Book*, pp. 172-190; Heidegger, "Language in the Poem"

Week 9 – Tuesday, March 14

**The Young Thing**

Else Lasker-Schüler, *My Heart* (1912) and selected poems

Ronell, *The Telephone Book*, chapter: "The Young Thing: Woman to Woman," pp. 201-15

Week 10 – Tuesday, March 21

**Black Sun**

Unica Zürn, *Dark Spring* (1969)

Julia Kristeva, "Life and Death of Speech" and "Feminine Depression" (*Black Sun*, pp. 33-94)

Week 11 – Tuesday, April 4

**Apocalypse**

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Mafarka the Futurist* (1909) and "The Futurist Manifesto"

Jacques Derrida, "No Apocalypse, Not Now"

**2<sup>nd</sup> response paper due (3pp.)**

Week 12 – Tuesday, April 11

**Male Medium**

Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, pp. 115-182

Rilke, "Primal Sound"; Mynona, *The Creator*

Week 13 – Tuesday, April 18

**Early Silent Cinema**

Sven Gade/Asta Nielsen, *Hamlet*

Heide Schlüpmann, *The Uncanny Gaze*, pp. 1-37

Jacques Lacan, "Of the Gaze as Petit Objet a"

Week 14 – Tuesday, April 25

**Term Paper Workshop**

**Final research paper (15pp.) due by May 2, 2016**