

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
Department of Germanic, Russian and East European Languages and Literatures  
**SPRING 2014**

**Syllabus**

# **Impossible Economies: Literature and Prostitution**

470:672:01

195:609:01

Index #08393

M 4:30-7:10pm

German House, Seminar Room

Prof. Nicola Behrmann

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 3-4:30pm

This seminar explores the figurations, rhetorics, and economies of selling sex in a variety of literary master texts: If it is true that the (mostly female connoted) figure of the prostitute serves as a mere projection or screen for deviant phantasies, what is the impact of writing over an exchanged body? In what way does prostitution inform Russian Realism, French Symbolism, or German Expressionism? What is the gift of the "prostitute" and what are her/his stakes? What is actually being exchanged in the sporadic encounter with a sex worker? Participants in this investigation will be: Marquis de Sade, Giuseppe Verdi, Charles Baudelaire, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Leon Bloy, Frank Wedekind and German Expressionist poets, Marcel Duchamp, André Breton, Jean Genet, and Elfriede Jelinek. Discussions will be framed and guided by Theodor W. Adorno/Max Horkheimer, Georges Bataille, Walter Benjamin, Maurice Blanchot, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Sigmund Freud, Luce Irigaray, Jean-François Lyotard, and Karl Marx.

Discussions will be held in English. Graduate students in German are expected to use the German-language sources in their term papers, and to highlight and

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clarify key German terms in their class presentations. German editions of Benjamin, Marx, Wedekind, and German Expressionist poets are available through the University bookstore or will be uploaded on Sakai.

**Course Requirements:** 2 class presentations (20%), 2 response papers (30%), and 1 final research paper (50%).

**Learning Goals:** (1) Students will demonstrate familiarity with a variety of world literatures as well as methods of studying literature and culture across national and linguistic boundaries and evaluate the nature, function and value of literature from a global 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)

1. André Breton, *Nadja*, trans. Richard Howard (Grove Press, 1994) [ISBN-13: 978-0802150264]
2. Jacques Derrida, *Given Time I: Counterfeit Money*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (U of Chicago P, 1994) [ISBN-13: 978-0226143149]
3. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, trans. Richard Pevear (Vintage Classics, 1993) [ISBN-13: 978-0679734505]
4. Jean Genet, *The Thief's Journal*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (Grove Press, 1994) [ISBN-13: 978-0802130143]
5. Elfriede Jelinek, *Women as Lovers*, trans. Martin Chalmers (Serpent's Tail, 1995) [ISBN-10: 1852422378 - ASIN: B000Y51OQU]
6. Jean-François Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy* (Continuum Impacts, 2004) [ISBN-13: 978-0826477002]
7. Frank Wedekind, *Lulu and Other Sex Tragedies*, trans. Eric Bentley (Applause Books, 2004) [ISBN-13: 978-1557831736]

**Departmental Policies:**

**Attendance**

All students must attend regularly and arrive prepared; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. Those who miss more than two class sessions without a compelling excuse should expect a one-step reduction in the course grade (i.e. an A becomes a B+, a B+ becomes a B). Every additional three absences may entail a further one-step grade-reduction. Three late arrivals count as one absence. Note: It is the responsibility of students who have been absent (for any reason) to find out what they have missed and obtain materials that may have been handed out.

**Cell Phones**

Cell phones and all other technological devices (beepers, iPods, MP3players...) must be turned off during class out of respect for the instructor and fellow students. Please schedule all important phone communications outside of class time.

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**Photocopies**

Department photocopying fees add up quickly and impressively; we will therefore need to collect from each student 5 cents per page toward the cost of handouts other than quizzes and tests.

**Disability Support Services**

Students who may be requesting accommodations due to disabilities are encouraged to familiarize themselves with procedures and policies regarding disability support services at the following website: <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>. It is recommended that students seeking accommodations begin filing paperwork as soon as possible as the documentation review process may take up to 30 business days. Students are encouraged to speak with teachers about these issues at the beginning of the term. All such conversations will be kept strictly confidential.

**Academic Integrity**

Violations of academic integrity are an extremely serious matter, and can lead to a student's failing the course and being referred to the University's Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action. When referring to ideas other than your own, always acknowledge your sources clearly and completely, whether you are quoting or paraphrasing. Note also that use of online translation services is not permitted as a tool for generating work that you submit for course credit. Please see the University's policies on academic integrity at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>, and discuss with your instructor any questions you may have about this and related issues.

**Tentative Seminar Schedule**

Week 1 (Jan 27): Introduction: What Does A Woman Want?

**The Libertine Deal: Universal Prostitution (Enlightenment)**

Week 2 (Feb 3): de Sade, *Juliette* (1796), part I, pp. 3-209; Adorno/Horkheimer, *Dialectics of Enlightenment* ("Juliette or Enlightenment and Morality," pp. 63-93); Henaff, "Woman, Prostitution, Narrative"; Bataille: "The Use Value of D.A.F. Sade." Recommended: de Beauvoir: "Must We Burn Sade?"

Week 3 (Feb 10): de Sade, cont.; Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy* ("The Tensor," pp. 42-93, and "Economy of This Writing", pp. 42-93); Blanchot, "Sade's Reason"

**Criminals and Saints (Realism)**

Week 4 (Feb 17): OPERA: *Verdi: La Traviata* (Zeffirelli, 1982); Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts"; Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy* ("The Desire Named Marx," pp. 94-155, and "Trade," pp. 156-201).

Week 5 (Feb 24): **First response paper due**. Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment* (1866). Derrida, "To

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Forgive: The Unforgivable and the Imprescriptible." Recommended: Bloy, *Le Sang du Pauvre* (in French)

Week 6 (March 3): Baudelaire, *Le Spleen de Paris* (1862) and "The Painter of Modern Life" (1863); Derrida, *Given Time I: Counterfeit Money* (pp. 71-172). Recommended: Mauss, *The Gift*; Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Convolute O: "Prostitution, Gambling").

### Allegory of Modernity (Expressionism)

Week 7 (March 10): Benjamin, "Socrates," "Metaphysics of Youth," "The Life of the Students," "Beggars and Whores," and "Central Park"; Bachofen, *Mother Right* (excerpts). Recommended: Buci-Glucksmann, "Catastrophic Utopia: The Feminine as Allegory of the Modern."

(March 17): NO CLASS

Week 8 (March 24): Wedekind, *Pandora's Box* (1894); Freud, "A Special Type of Object Choice Made By Men," and "On Narcissism." Recommended: Rivière, "Womanliness as a Masquerade"; Lacan, "The Signification of the Phallus."

Week 9 (March 31): MOVIES (excerpts, shown in class): *Doctor Mabuse, The Gambler* (Lang, 1922), *The Joyless Street* (Pabst, 1925), *Diary of a Lost Girl* (Pabst, 1929); German Expressionist poets: Georg Heym, Gottfried Benn, Georg Trakl (selected poems); Buck-Morss, *The Flaneur, the Sandwichman, and the Whore: The Politics of Loitering.* Recommended: Hennings, *Das Brandmal* (1920, in German); Theweleit, *Orpheus am Machtpol* (in German).

### Bachelor Machines: Production of Desire (Surrealism)

Week 10 (April 7): **Second response paper due**. EXCURSION: Philadelphia Museum of Art (Duchamp's "Great Glass" and "Rose Sélavy"). Duchamp, "The Green Box"; Certeau, "Arts of Dying: Anti-Mystical Writing."

Week 11 (April 14): Breton, *Nadja* (1928); Benjamin, "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia" (1929); Bataille, *Eroticism* (Introduction, pp. 11-28, and "Prostitution," pp. 129-139). Recommended: Lautreamont, *Maldoror* (1874, excerpt); Bataille, "Madame Edwarda" (1941).

### Pimp and Prostitute (Postmodern)

Week 12 (April 21): Genet, *The Thief's Journal* (1949); Foucault: "Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias." Recommended: Sartre, *Saint Genet: Actor and Martyr* (excerpts/Sakai)

Week 13 (April 28): Jelinek, *Women As Lovers* (1975); Irigaray, *The Sex Which Is Not One* ("Women on the Market," pp. 170-191, and "Commodities Among Themselves," pp. 192-197). - Term Paper Workshop (2<sup>nd</sup> presentation)

Week 14 (May 5): Term Paper Workshop (2<sup>nd</sup> presentation)