Philosophical Psychology: Derrida [Psyc 620]
Fall 2011
Leswin Laubscher, Ph.D.
College Hall, 533
Laubscher@duq.edu
Tel: (412) 396-1843
Office Hrs. Mon. (10h00 -11h00),
Thu. (11h00 – 12h00), or by appt.

"Still today, I cannot cross the threshold of a teaching institution without physical symptoms, in my chest
and my stomach, of discomfort or anxiety. And yet I have never left school."
[Derrida]

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The course examines aspects of Jacques Derrida’s writing and thinking, with specific
reference to the impact of such theorizing on psychology. The course will be
participatory, conducted as a seminar, and rely on an intensive reading schedule.
Framing course objectives and learning outcomes include:
- that students will come to a sophisticated, complex appreciation of signatory
  Derridean themes, issues, and/or concerns
- that students will come to take a sophisticated, critical position vis-à-vis those
  Derridean themes, issues, and concerns
- that students will come to wrestle – in a creative and nuanced manner - with the
  implications of their Derridean readings on psychology

COURSE FORMAT

Course material will be covered through a combination of lectures, discussions, audio-
visual presentations, written assignments, experiential class activities, and student
presentations. It is my wish and expectation that everyone, instructor and students,
will participate actively and take joint responsibility for the success of this class.

READINGS

All required article readings, and selections from larger works, are available on the
Blackboard web space (http://www.blackboard.duq.edu/). However, I strongly
recommend that students purchase their own copies of as many of the texts cited as
possible.
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR SPECIAL NEEDS

Students with disabilities and/or special needs are entitled to reasonable accommodations if needed. Please contact either Special Student Services at room 309 in the Duquesne Union (412-396.6657) or come speak to me as soon as possible. Accommodations cannot be granted retrospectively.

ASSIGNMENTS / PROJECTS

Your participation in the assignments / projects listed below will form the basis for grading evaluation (official grading policy at Duquesne permits the assignment of the following graduate level grades: A, A-, B+, B, B-, I, and F).

Participation is expected in the following:
- Every student will select one of the prescribed readings to introduce to the class, and facilitate initial discussion on.

In addition, each student:
- Will write a final paper, principally titled “Derrida and Psychology”. Students are welcome to add qualifications (by comma, colon, dash, etc. – for example, “Derrida and psychology: Subjecting the subject”, or “Derrida and psychology: the future of an illusion”, or “Derrida and Psychology as aporia”, etc.), but all students have to proceed from the basic frame and border (porous as it may be) that is “Derrida and psychology”.
- Will present their papers at an end of semester symposium. The expectation is certainly for an academically rigorous, serious, and sophisticated symposium, but within a relaxed and social setting with food and drink (lest we forget. the etymology for symposium is sunder + potees, “to drink together”). More information will be provided in class.

COURSE SCHEDULE and READINGS

This schedule is a guide only, and while we will try to keep to it, as issues and debates present themselves, it may well be modified. Not listed here, as well, are supplemental & recommended readings, listed on Blackboard, referenced in class, or otherwise added as we come across new articles or as you share readings with me.

- Week One: Introductions, Course Overview & “Psychology’s (subject) matter”
- Weeks Two and Three. “The thing itself always escapes”
• Derrida, J. Structure, sign and play in the discourse of the human sciences, from *Writing and Difference*
• Derrida, J. The violence of the letter: From Levi Strauss to Rousseau, From *Of Grammatology*
• Derrida, J. Différence, from *Margins of Philosophy*
• Derrida, J. Letter to a Japanese Friend, from *Psyche: Invention of the Other.*

• **Weeks Four, Five, and Six: (Beyond) The mystic writing pad – Derrida and Freud**
  • Derrida. J. Freud and the scene of writing. From *Writing and Difference.*
  • Derrida, J. To speculate – On Freud, From *The Postcard*
  • Derrida, J. Selections from *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*

• **Weeks Seven and Eight: The subject is (the) subject**
  • Derrida, J. *Monolingualism of the other, or the prosthesis of origin*

• **Week Nine: Derrida – A Film**
  • A film by Kirby Dick & Amy Koffman

• **Weeks Ten, Eleven, Twelve: Beyond deconstruction/deconstruction’s beyond**
  • Derrida, J. *Of Hospitality*
  • Derrida, J. *The Gift of Death*
  • Derrida, J. *Learning to Live. Finally*

• **Week Thirteen: Derrida’s Elsewhere**
  • A Film by Safaa Fathy

• **Week Fourteen: End of Semester Symposium**

“I want my discourse to be justifiable, which is to say, just: so that I can answer for it before something we call justice, which ... does not exist, is not a given” [Derrida]