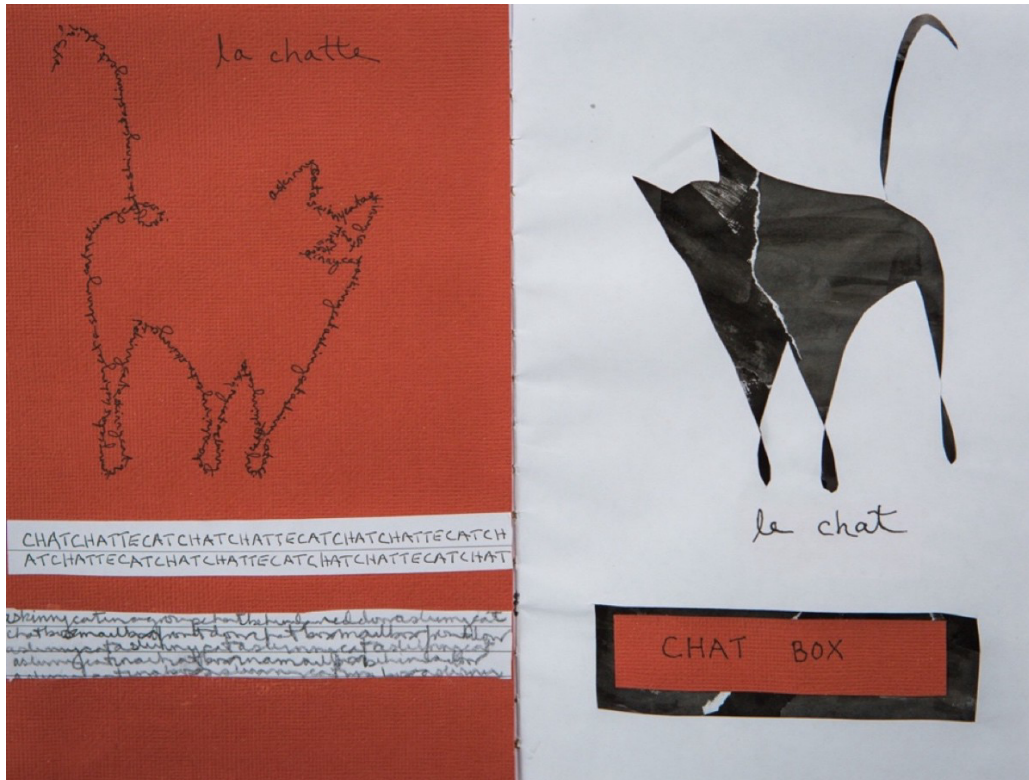


Introduction to Philosophy and Literature (Phil130)

REVISED

Department of Philosophy
Emory University
Fall 2024



Class Time
Tuesdays and
Thursdays
2:30-3:45 PM
Bowden 116

Professor Lynne Huffer
lhuffer@emory.edu
Bowden 315

Office Hours
Tuesdays 4-5 PM
and by appointment

Course Description

What is philosophy? What is literature? How can we think the relation between them? We will frame our inquiry through the lens of intertextuality, a term coined in the 1960s by literary critic Julia Kristeva. Intertextuality sees every text as a mosaic composed of other texts. To speak, sing, or write is to borrow the words of others. In regarding poems, songs, novels, fables, stories, speeches, or philosophical writings as amalgams or mixtures derived from other sources, intertextuality puts into question assumptions about authorial intention and originality. We will hone our inquiry to explore the tensions and possibilities that arise from such a view. On the one hand, to conceive of a text as a collage of other texts opens up exciting new ways to approach epistemology, ethics, ontology, and politics, or familiar dualisms such as logic versus poetry or reason versus feeling. Intertextuality also exposes, in language, longstanding asymmetries of power. As bell hooks once put it, “This is the oppressor’s language yet I need it to talk to you.” We will pay particular attention to how gender, race, sexuality, and colonialism have informed philosophical and literary writings. We will sample a wide range of readings from within and against the Western tradition. A major focus of the course will be writings that experiment with form to challenge traditional modes of thought. In-class and out-of-class exercises will allow course participants to practice and develop their own experiments in writing and speaking as philosopher-poets.

Course Goals

The course has three primary aims:

- to learn about and unsettle the categories we call philosophy and literature,
- to allow that learning and unsettling to open new ways of thinking,
- to experiment with form in order to cultivate our capacities for ethical living.

You are expected to

- attend all classes,
- prepare for class by reading the texts in advance each week,
- participate actively in each week's discussion and in-class and out-of-class activities,
- prepare for and complete all the assessment tasks.

Texts

Two books are available for purchase from the campus bookstore:

- M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!*
- Anne Carson, *If Not, Winter: Fragments of Sappho*

All other readings are available on our course site on Canvas.

Schedule and Readings

Week 1 // Hybrid

Thursday/August 29

Watch [Stranger Things and Intertextuality](#) (9:24 minutes)

Read Rundell "Giraffe"

Read Carson "Bittersweet"

Listen [Dove "Eurydice, Turning"](#)

Week 2 // Talking Back

Tuesday/September 3

Read Skeets "Anthropocene: A Dictionary"

OUT of class exercise Choose a brief passage (30 words or less) from either Rich or hooks (below) to close read in Thursday's class.

Wednesday/September 4

Voicethread 1 due before midnight (add your individual slide to the gallery)

Thursday/September 5

Read Rich "The Burning of Paper Instead of Children"

Read bell hooks "Teaching New Worlds/New Words"

Read Prof Huffer's Close Reading Guidelines

IN class exercise Close reading



Week 3 // What Is Philosophy?

Tuesday/September 10

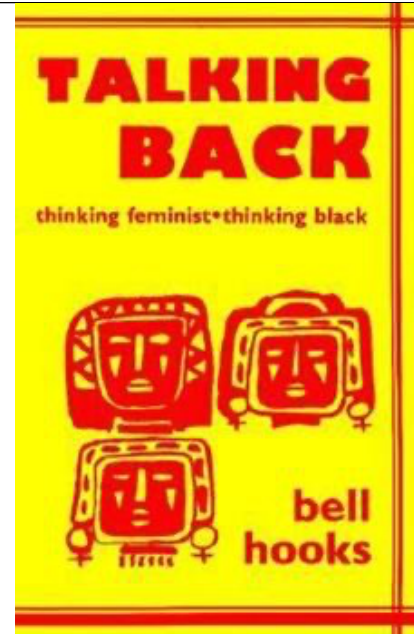
Read Deleuze + Guattari "What Is Philosophy?"

Wednesday/September 11

Voicethread 2 due before midnight (add your individual slide to the gallery)

Thursday/September 12

Read Guha "Introduction" to *History at the Limit of World-History*



Week 4 // History's Blackouts

No class

Professor Huffer out of town

Read Justin Torres novel, *Blackouts*



Week 5 // Archives of Violence 1

Tuesday/September 24

Discuss Torres, *Blackouts*

Out of class Gather materials for in-class blackouts

Wednesday/September 25

Voicethread 3 due before midnight (add your slide to group thread)

Thursday/September 26

IN class exercise Erasure/blackout poem using newspaper article, historical text, or legal document.

Week 6 // Archives of Violence 2

Tuesday/October 1

Read Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts"

Wednesday/October 2

Voicethread 4 due before midnight (add your slide to group thread)

Thursday/October 3

Read Phillip, *Zong*



Week 7 // Poem Lives

Tuesday/October 8

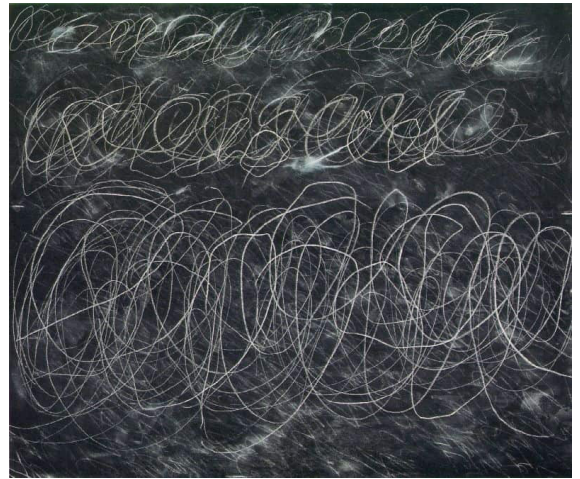
Read Lorde, "Poetry is not a Luxury"

Read Sedgwick, "A Poem Is Being Written"

Thursday/October 10

Read Foucault, "Lives of Infamous Men"

In class review in preparation for class test



Week 8 // FALL BREAK + CLASS TEST

Tuesday/October 15

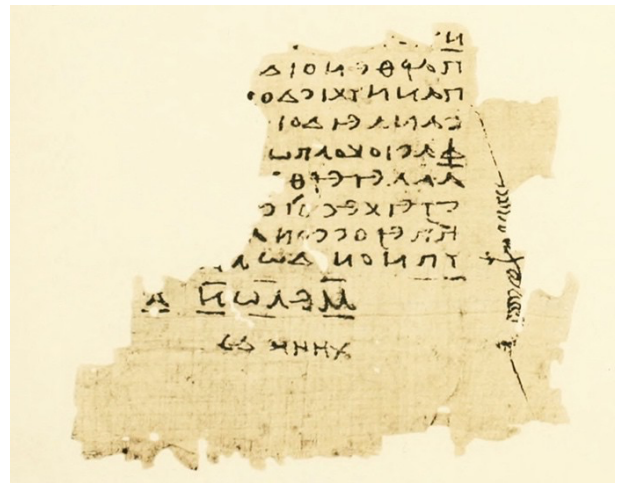
No class

FALL BREAK

Thursday/October 17

No class

ONLINE CLASS TEST (open book)



Week 9 // Strange Eros

Tuesday/October 22

Read Irigaray "When Our Lips Speak Together"

Thursday/October 24

Read Carson *If Not, Winter: Translations of Sappho*

Read Carson "The Gender of Sound"

Index card 1 due in class

Week 10 // Mimesis**Tuesday/October 29****Read** Plato *The Republic*, Book VII 514-518**Thursday/October 31****Read** Irigaray "Plato's *Hystera*" (excerpts)**Index card 2 due in class****Week 11 // Ethics****Tuesday/November 5****Read** Le Guin "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas"**Thursday/November 7****Read** Nietzsche *Daybreak* (excerpts)**Index card 3 due in class****Week 12 // Text as Image****Tuesday/November 12****Read** O'Grady interview**IN class exercise** COLLAGE!**Thursday/November 14****IN class exercise** COLLAGE!**Week 13//****Tuesday/November 19****No class****Thursday/November 21****No class****Sign up for one-on-one consultations
on final project (Zoom)****Sign up at [this Google doc link](#)****Week 14// Thanksgiving break****No class this week****Week 15// The Other's Body****Tuesday/December 3****Read** Barthes,
"The Other's Body"**Thursday/December 5****Read** Carson, *The Albertine Workout***Week 16// Wrap up****Tuesday/December 10****Exercises/notebooks and final projects
due Wednesday December 11 by 5 pm**

Assessment

Your final grade will be assessed in four (4) parts:

(1) **Class test** (on terms and concepts in Weeks 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, + 7). This short-answer test will assess your understanding of basic literary terms and philosophical themes discussed in weeks 2 -7. It is worth 25% of your final grade. The test will be open book and online on Wednesday, October 16, 10AM to Friday, October 18, 10AM. Submit completed test via Canvas.

(2) **Weekly image-text posts.** You will complete 4 weekly Voicethread posts and 3 weekly index card posts for a total of 7 posts that combine an image with text. Your posts will reflect material covered during the week the post is due. In Weeks 2, 3, 5, and 6 you will use Voicethread to post an image with written commentary before midnight on Wednesday. In Weeks 9 through 11 you will create an image-text composition using an index card with an image glued to one side and comment written out on the other. For the index card posts, you may write your comments *legibly* by hand or type up your comments, print them out, and glue them to the flip side of your index card. I will provide index cards and glue sticks. Your index card posts are due *in class* on Thursday of each week. Each post should include comments of between 50 and 100 words. Your image-text posts in total are worth 25% of your final grade.

Your weekly image-text posts will be graded with the usual letter grade system and posted weekly on Canvas.

(3) **Exercises (IN and OUT of class) + participation.**

- **Exercises.** Over the course of the semester you will complete experimental writing exercises both in and out of class. I suggest buying a notebook or folder where you can gather together what you've done. At the end of the semester you will photograph all your completed exercises and put them into a PDF document. Submit the document via Canvas no later than Wednesday, December 11, 5 pm. Alternatively, you can choose to submit a hard copy of your notebook by leaving it at my office, Bowden 315.
- **Participation.** You are expected to contribute actively and thoughtfully to the class discussions. What is good class participation? It is promoting dialogue and collaboration within the class: asking questions, making space for different opinions, robust tolerance of different points of view, talking with each other and not just the instructor, actively engaging in experimental practices in class.

Together the experimental exercises/notebooks and class participation are worth 20% of your final grade.

(4) Final project. This is a media project that you will submit on Canvas by Wednesday, December 11, 5 pm. This is worth 30% of your final grade. You may choose one of four media to produce: a social media post; a video essay; a podcast; or a multi-page collage or zine. Requirement for all options: at least 1000 words of writing, and direct engagement with at least three texts from either the set readings or the bibliography at the end of the syllabus (or other texts approved by Professor Huffer).

Whichever modality you choose, you must also write a 250-500 word reflection or commentary on your submission. In this reflection, you could address some of the following issues. Why did you make the creative choices that you did? What modality did you choose and why was that important for getting across your ideas? Did you encounter any obstacles in the creation of your project? What were they and how did you problem solve? What aspect of your project do you think is strongest, most interesting, and/or most creative? Do you see your project as more literary than philosophical, or vice versa, or a balance between the two? Or does your project destabilize those categories altogether? Explain how or why. How does your method of engagement with the texts in our course impact your engagement with the course material?

Here are the four (4) modalities to choose from:

- **Social media account.** Create a social media account that reflects in some way some the material we have covered in class (eg what would Foucault's Instagram account look like? How might bell hooks use social media to talk back? How might Nietzsche appear on Instagram?) You can create a new social media account, or you can create a "fake" account that mimics what a social media account would look like. Reminder: you must include at least 1000 words of your own writing posted to this account.
- **Video essay.** Film, narrate, and edit a video essay about some aspect of the material we have covered in class. You can focus on any topic relating to this material. I encourage you to use your creative and intellectual talents as you imagine how to approach this option. The [Stranger Things and Intertextuality](#) video we watched this semester is a great example of a video essay. [Vox](#) also makes excellent video essays like [Rapping, deconstructed](#). Reminder: for this option you will also need to turn in a "script" (at least 1000 words) for your video essay as well as the video essay itself.
- **Podcast.** Record, narrate, and edit a podcast episode about some aspect of the material we have covered this semester. You can focus on any topic relating to this material. I encourage you to use your creative and intellectual talents as you imagine how to approach this option. Might this be a poetry-as-philosophy podcast in the style of [Poetry Unbound](#)? Is it part

of a feminist series on how gendered language influences philosophy? See [Overthink](#) for an example of an excellent philosophy podcast (hosted by two Emory Philosophy PhDs, Ellie Anderson and David Peña-Guzmán). Reminder: for this option you will also need to turn in a "script" (at least 1000 words) for your podcast as well as the podcast itself. PLEASE NOTE: your podcast must include at least one other voice (other than your own) and must be scripted. (It has to be more than just a spontaneous chat with a friend or your musings about something.)

- **Zine.** Create a multi-page collage or [zine](#) that addresses some aspect of the material we have covered this semester. What would an antiracist literature as philosophy collage-book look like? a zine about eros? a zine that dramatizes the intertextuality we've been exploring all semester? Zines and booklets are an excellent opportunity to use your collaging skills and to work creatively with text-as-image and/or text-image relations. If you are a fan of pop-ups or other moveable book elements, you may want to incorporate those into your project as well. The zine or collage-book can be on paper or digital. Here is an example of a [group zine](#) from a class Professor Huffer taught on Angela Davis. Reminder: there need to be at least 1000 words of your own text published in the zine.

[Emory Center for Digital Scholarship](#) (ECDS) will be able to assist you with parts of your media project. Contact them early in the semester to consult about your final project as it is taking shape.

Policies and guidelines

Electronic devices. Computers and other electronic devices are allowed in class, but I want you to use them sparingly if at all. I encourage you to print out the readings and mark them up by hand before coming to class. I also encourage you to take notes in a notebook during class. I will monitor students for inappropriate use of electronic devices during class (emails, social media, other classes). Any such use will be noted and counted against your final participation grade. Conversely, students who demonstrate effective incorporation of handwritten notes and marked up readings will receive bonus credits in the final participation grade.

Attendance. You may miss up to 2 classes without penalty. Additional absences will *each* incur a half-letter grade penalty (e.g., from A to A-, from A- to B+ etc.) from the *final* course grade. Religious holidays are excluded from this policy. Please notify me in advance if you are unable to be in class. If you are going to be away from class for an extended period, please fill out the [OUE student self-service absence form](#).

Late work. Assessment handed in after the due date will incur a half-letter grade penalty (e.g., from A to A-, from A- to B+ etc.) for each day it is late, including weekends and holidays.

Emory College Honor Code. The [Honor Code](#) is in effect throughout the semester. By taking this course, you affirm that it is a violation of the code to cheat on exams, to plagiarize, to deviate from the teacher's instructions about collaboration on work that is submitted for grades, to give false information to a faculty member, and to undertake any other form of academic misconduct. You agree that the instructor is entitled to move you to another seat during examinations, without explanation. You also affirm that if you witness others violating the code you have a duty to report them to the honor council.

Department of Accessibility Services. If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that disability related accommodations are necessary, you may register with Emory University's [Department of Accessibility Services](#) (DAS). To register with DAS, students must self-identify and initiate contact with the DAS office.

Other reading

Agamben, Giorgio. *What Is Philosophy?* (2016/2018).
Allison, Jane. *Meander, Spiral, Explode: Design and Pattern in Narrative* (2019).
Austin, J.L. *How to Do Things with Words* (1962).
Barthes, Roland. *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* (1977/1978).
Blanchot, Maurice. *The Space of Literature* (1955/1982).
Carson, Anne. *Eros the Bittersweet* (1986); *Glass, Irony, and God* (1992);
Autobiography of Red: A Novel in Verse (1998); *An Oreisteia* (2009); *Nox*
(2010); *Antigonick* (2012); *red doc* (2013) *H of H Playbook* (2021);
Carter, Angela. *The Bloody Chamber* (1979).
Comitta, Tom. *The Nature Book: A Novel* (2023). A novel written entirely
through a process of collage and constraint with gathered nature
descriptions from over three hundred novels.
Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Short Introduction* (1997).
Dällenbach, Lucien. *The Mirror in the Text* (1977/1989).
Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *What Is Philosophy?* (1991/1994).
Derrida, Jacques. *Clang* (1974/2021).
Dickmann, Iddo. *The Little Crystalline Seed: The Ontological Significance of Mise
en Abyme in Post-Heideggerian Thought* (2019).
Foucault, Michel. *History of Madness* (1961/2006).
Foucault, Michel. *Speech Begins After Death* (1968/2013).
Gilbert, Annette. *Literature's Elsewheres: On the Necessity of Radical Literary
Practices* (2022).
Guha, Ranajit. *History at the Limit of World-History* (2002).
Gumbs, Alexis Pauline and Susan Howe. *Who Is Queen?* (2021).
Hartman, Saidiya. *Scenes of Subjection* (1997/2022).

Homer, *The Odyssey* and *The Illiad* (8th or 7th c BCE).

hooks, bell. *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (1989).

Irigaray, Luce. *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974/1988).

Jaarsma, Ada S. and Kit Dobson, eds. *Dissonant Methods: Undoing Discipline in the Humanities Classroom* (2020).

Kristeva, Julia. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (1977/1980).

LeGuin, Ursula. *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969). Science fiction novel that questions gender norms.

Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (1984).

Moore, Dinty W. *A Field Guide to Writing Flash Nonfiction* (2012).

Muller, Lauren and the Poetry for the People Collective. *June Jordan's Poetry for the People: A Revolutionary Blueprint* (1995).

Nelson, Maggie. *The Argonauts* (2015).

Preciado, Paul. *Testo Junkie* (2008/2013).

Plato, *The Symposium* (circa 385 BCE); *The Republic* (circa 380 BCE); *The Phaedrus* (circa 370 BCE).

Rancière, Jacques. *The Politics of Literature* (2006/2011).

Readings, Bill. *The University in Ruins* (1996).

Robson, Mark. *What Is Literature? A Critical Anthology* (2020).

Ross, Leslie. *Language in the Visual Arts: The Interplay of Text and Imagery* (2014).

Sartre, Jean-Paul. "What Is Literature" (1948/1988) and "Black Orpheus" (1949/1988), both in *"What Is Literature" and Other Essays* (1988).

Scott, Charles E. *The Question of Ethics: Nietzsche, Foucault, Heidegger* (1990).

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Tendencies* (1993).

Sharpe, Christina. *Ordinary Notes* (2023).

Tronzo, William. *The Fragment: An Incomplete History* (2009).

Wiseman, Boris and Anthony Paul. *Chiasmus and Culture* (2014).

Wolf, Christa. *Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays* (1988). A feminist retelling of the story of Troy through the eyes of Cassandra.

Wright, Richard. *Haiku: The Last Poems of an American Icon* (1988).