

Affect, Temporality, Becoming
Psychological Anthropology Graduate Seminar
ANTH 640 (Winter 2021)



Class Schedule T 10.30-1.30PM
Location Remote Teaching

Professor **Samuele Collu**
Office Hours: T 3.00-4.30 PM (Zoom)
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Course Description

This seminar turns to the making and unmaking of “psychic life” as a way to address the contemporary condition. Through readings in critical theory, anthropology, and philosophy, the seminar moves away from a personological understanding of the psyche and considers psychic life as a social and collective space that absorbs, hosts, and refracts the passage of historical forces. We engage with affect theory, queer theory, phenomenology, and psychoanalysis to develop psycho-political inquiries about late modern affective attachments, libidinal economies, psycho-cybernetic infrastructures, aesthetic experience, compulsive repetition, visual perception, and psychic (de)territorialization. In parallel, the seminar explores the ethico-political dimensions of the “work of theory” within anthropological regimes of the empirical.

Among others, we will read the work of Brian Massumi, Sigmund Freud, Lauren Berlant, Eve Sedgwick, Silvan Tomkins, Teresa Brennan, Sara Ahmed, Bifo Berardi, Natasha Schüll, Han Byung-Chul, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

Recommended Books

Gregg, Melissa, and Gregory J. Seigworth, eds. 2010. *The Affect Theory Reader*. Duke University Press.
Brennan, Teresa. 2004. *The Transmission of Affect*. Cornell University Press.
Schüll, Natasha Dow. 2012. *Addiction by Design: Machine Gambling in Las Vegas*. Princeton University Press.

Course Materials

Articles and book chapters will be found on MyCourses.

Course Structure and Requirements

We will have our seminar discussion every Tuesday (on Zoom). **Every Monday (by 6 PM)** participants will submit a **one/two-page response** to the week’s readings. The genre of the response is open. It can be a critical summary but also a creative writing piece in conversation with the week’s topics. The aim of the responses is to prepare the participants of the seminars for our collective inquiry. The responses will have to be uploaded to the Discussion forum on myCourses. Late responses will not be accepted. Your weekly responses will constitute the **30% of the grade**. Each week we will select two students to discuss and present the submitted responses.

Attendance at all seminars is required, as is close reading of all assigned course material by the class date in question. Regular attendance and participants’ contributions to the class discussions are extremely important and will constitute **20% of the grade**.

Your final paper will constitute the **50% of your grade**. As this is a graduate seminar there will be no prompts and you are encouraged to develop your own thinking in relation to the readings and in relation

to your own research project. Before the “study break” (March 1-5) you are required to check in with me to discuss your ideas regarding the final paper.

Grade Evaluation:

Seminar Participation	20%
Weekly Responses	30%
Final Paper	50%

Due Dates

Weekly Responses: **Mondays 6PM (online)**

Midterm Check-in regarding your final paper: **before March 1st**

Final Paper: **Monday April 19 at 9 PM**

General Information

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offenses under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

If you have a disability, please contact the instructor to arrange a time to discuss the situation. It would be helpful if you contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at 398-6009 (online at www.mcgill.ca/osd) before you do this.

Acknowledgment

McGill University is located on unceded indigenous territory. The Kanien’kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of territory and waters on which McGill stands. Tiotiá:ke/Montreal is historically a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population and we respect the continued connections with the past, present, and future in our ongoing relationship with the Indigenous and diverse populations that live here.

Week 1 – The Autonomy of Affect

Tuesday, January 12

Massumi, Brian. 2002. "The Autonomy of Affect," *Parables for the Virtual* (pp. 23-45)

Seigworth, Gregg and Gregg, Melissa. 2010. "An Inventory of Shimmers," *The Affect Theory Reader* (pp.1-28).

White, Daniel. 2017. "Affect: An Introduction." *Cultural Anthropology* 32, no. 2: 175–180.

Recommended

Elbow, Peter. 1998. *Writing Without Teachers*. Oxford University Press.

Leys, Ruth. 2011. "The Turn to Affect: A Critique." *Critical Inquiry* 37: 434–72.

Eric Shouse, [Feeling, Emotions, Affect](#) (2005)

Week 2 – The Emotional Tie

Tuesday, January 19

Freud, Sigmund. 2010. *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (I, IV-IX).

Ellenberger, Henri. 1994. "Sigmund Freud and Psychoanalysis" in *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, (Ch7, pp. 510-518).

Pandolfo, Stefania. 2018. "The Jinn and the Pictogram" in *Knot of The Soul* (89-99).

Recommended

Borch-Jacobsen, Mikkel. 1993. "The Primal Band" in *The Emotional Tie: Psychoanalysis, Mimesis, and Affect*. Stanford University Press (pp. 1-14)

Borch-Jacobsen, Mikkel, Eric Michaud, and Jean-Luc Nancy. 1984. *Hypnoses*. Paris: Editions Galilee.

Lacan, Jacques. 2006. "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function" in *Ecrits: The First Complete Edition in English*. Edited by Bruce Fink. W. W. Norton (75-81).

Week 3 – Gendered Transmission

Tuesday, January 26

Brennan, Teresa. 2004. "The Transmission of Affects in the Clinic" in *The Transmission of Affects* (pp. 24-50).

Oliver, Kelly. 2012. "Living a Tension" in *Living Attention: On Teresa Brennan* (pp. 13-22).

Brennan, Teresa. 2004. "Introduction" in *The Transmission of Affects* (pp. 1-23).

Recommended

- Brennan, Teresa. 2004. "The Sealing of The Heart" in *The Transmission of Affects* (pp. 97-115).
- Butler, Judith. 1997. "Melancholy Gender / Refused Identification" in *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (132-150).
- Oliver, Kelly. 2004. *The Colonization of Psychic Space: A Psychoanalytic Social Theory of Oppression*. University of Minnesota Press.

Week 4 – Reparative Paranoia

Tuesday, February 2

- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. 2003. "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading; or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Introduction Is About You," *Touching Feeling* (pp. 123-152).
- Stewart, Kathleen. 2017. "In the World that Affect Proposed." *Cultural Anthropology* 32, no. 2: 192–198

Recommended

- Ricoeur, Paul. 1970. *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*. Yale University Press (pp. 3-56).
- Heidegger, Martin. 1977. "Science and Reflection" in *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*. HarperCollins.
- Bateson, Gregory. 1941. "Experiments in Thinking about Observed Ethnological Material." *Philosophy of Science* 8 (1): 53–68.

Week 5 – Cybernetic Affects

Tuesday, February 9

- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, and Adam Frank. 1995. "Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins." In *Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader* (pp. 1-28)
- Tomkins, Silvan. 1995. "What are Affects," "Interest-Excitement," "Shame-Humiliation and Contempt Disgust," *Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader* (pp. 33-80; 133-178).

Recommended

- Berlant, Lauren. 2019. *Reading Sedgwick*. Duke University Press.

Week 6 – Late Modern Spirits

Tuesday, February 16

- Collu, Samuele. 2019. "[Refracting Affects: Affect, Psychotherapy, and Spirit Dis-Possession.](#)" *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 43 (2): 290–314.
- Favret-Saada, Jeanne. 2015 "[Being Affected](#)," in the *Anti-Witch* (97-107)
- Freud, Sigmund and Joseph Breuer. 1985. "Case Histories: Fraulein Anna O." in *Studies on Hysteria* (pp. 21-47)

Recommended

- Ellenberger, Henri. 1994. "Sigmund Freud and Psychoanalysis" in *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, (Ch7, pp. 480-489)
- Dow, James. 1986. "Universal Aspects of Symbolic Healing: A Theoretical Synthesis." *American Anthropologist* 88 (1): 56–69.
- Scheff, Thomas. 2001. *Catharsis in Healing, Ritual, and Drama*. Lincoln, NE: Universe.

Week 7 – The In/Visible

Tuesday, February 23

- Al-Saji, Alia. 2014. "A Phenomenology of Hesitation: Interrupting Racializing Habits of Seeing" in *Living Alterities* Emily Lee (ed), 133–172. University of New York Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 1968. "The Intertwining – The Chiasm" in *The Visible and the Invisible* (pp. 130-155)

Recommended

- Bergson, Henri. 1991. *Matter and Memory*. New York: Zone Books.
- Kelly, Dorrance Sean. 2004. "Seeing Things in Merleau-Ponty." In *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*, Taylor Carman and Mark Hansen (ed) 74–110. Cambridge University Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 2010. *Institution and Passivity: Course Notes from the Collège de France (1954-1955)*. Northwestern University Press.
- Sullivan, Shannon. 2006. *Revealing Whiteness: The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege*. Indiana University Press.

Week 8 – Study Break (March 1-5)

Week 9 – Aesthetic Experience

Tuesday, March 9

Largier, Niklaus. 2013. “Divine Suffering – Divine Pleasure: Martyrdom, Sensuality, and the Art of Delay.’ *Figurationen* 12/1 (2011), 67-79.”

Avila, Teresa of. 1988. *The Life of Saint Teresa of Avila by Herself* (Introduction, Ch. 1-5, 8, 10-18, 20, 29, 30, 38).

Recommended

Certeau, Michel de. 1995. *The Mystic Fable Vol.1*. University of Chicago Press.

Hollywood, Amy. 2002. *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History*. University of Chicago Press.

James, William. 2008. *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*. Routledge.

Luhmann, Tanya M. 2012. *When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God*. Vintage Books.

Largier, Niklaus. 2009. “Mysticism, Modernity, and the Invention of Aesthetic Experience.” *Representations* 105 (1): 37–60.

FINAL PAPER CHECK-IN BY MARCH 1st

Week 10 – Cruel Optimism: Happy Objects

Tuesday, March 16

Ahmed, Sara. 2010. “Happy Objects,” in *The Affect Theory Reader* (pp. 29-51)

Berlant, Lauren. 2010. “Cruel Optimism,” in *The Affect Theory Reader* (pp. 93-117)

Recommended

Raymond Williams. 1978. “Structures of Feeling in *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford University Press (pp. 128-135).

Freud, Sigmund. 2006. “Mourning and Melancholia” in the *Penguin Freud Reader*. Penguin Books.

Ahmed, Sara. 2006. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Duke University Press.

Week 11 – Homo Addictus

Tuesday, March 23

Schüll, Natasha Dow. 2012. *Addiction by Design: Machine Gambling in Las Vegas* (Part I, Part III).
Bombay, Jean-Philippe, and Samuele Collu. (in press) “A Scroll Through the Present,” *Stasis Collective*, “Soigner La Technologie”

Recommended

Bateson, Gregory. 2000. “The Cybernetics of ‘Self:’ a Theory of Alcoholism” in *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (pp. 309-337)
Clough, Patricia Ticineto. 2018. *The User Unconscious: On Affect, Media, and Measure*. University of Minnesota Press.
Deleuze, Gilles. 1992. “Postscript on the Societies of Control.” *October* 59: 3–7.

Week 12 – Psychic (de)Territorialization

Tuesday, March 30

Berardi, Franco “Bifo.” 2009. *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy* (Intro, Ch-1-2, 4)
Han, Byung-Chul. 2017. *Psychopolitics: Neoliberalism and New Technologies of Power* (Ch 1-2, 9-10, 13)

Recommended

Han, Byung-Chul. 2015. *The Burnout Society*. Stanford University Press.
Cvetkovich, Ann. 2012. *Depression: A Public Feeling*. Duke University Press.
Stiegler, Bernard. 2018. *Automatic Society: The Future of Work*. John Wiley & Sons.

Week 13 – Affective Availability (The work of Dispositifs)

Tuesday, April 6

Agamben, Giorgio. 2009. “What Is an Apparatus?” in *What Is an Apparatus?* (pp. 1-24)
Deleuze, Gilles. 1992. “What Is a Dispositif?” In *Michel Foucault, Philosopher: Essays*, (159–66)
Collu, Samuele. in press. “A Therapy of Screens. Psychotherapy and the Visual Apparatus” *Anthropological Quarterly*, Winter 2021.

Week 14 – Class Review

Tuesday, April 13

Therapeutic Dispositifs, Affects, Psychic Life

Final Paper Due Monday April 19 at 9 PM (online submission)