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

Professor Samuele Collu
Office Hours: T 3.00-4.30 PM (Zoom)
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Class Schedule T 10.30-1.30PM
Location Remote Teaching
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

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/](http://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](http://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

Recommended

Week 2 – The Emotional Tie

Tuesday, January 19

Recommended

Week 3 – Gendered Transmission

Tuesday, January 26
Recommended

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).

Recommended

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)

Recommended
Week 6 – Late Modern Spirits

Tuesday, February 16
Favret-Saada, Jeanne. 2015 “Being Affected,” in the Anti-Witch (97-107)

Recommended

Week 7 – The In/Visible

Tuesday, February 23

Recommended

Week 8 – Study Break (March 1-5)
Week 9 – Aesthetic Experience

Tuesday, March 9

**Recommended**

**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**
**Week 11 – Homo Addictus**

Tuesday, March 23

Recommended

**Week 12 – Psychic (de)Territorialization**

Tuesday, March 30
Han, Byung-Chul. 2017. *Psychopolitics: Neoliberalism and New Technologies of Power* (Ch 1-2, 9-10, 13)

Recommended

**Week 13 – Affective Availability (The work of Dispositifs)**

Tuesday, April 6
Week 14 – Class Review

Tuesday, April 13
Therapeutic Dispositifs, Affects, Psychic Life

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