

ARCH 651 *Architectural History and Theory Seminar 1:*
Phenomenology, Cognitive Science and Hermeneutics

Prerequisites: This course may be taken with permission from the instructor by M.Arch Prof. students with demonstrated interest in the areas of philosophy and theory.

6 credits

INTRODUCTION

Students participating in this seminar are expected to contribute interpretative reports on the assigned readings in about 6 out of 13 weekly meetings. Although the papers need not be fully written out, they will be presented to the class and should be clearly articulated. The assumption is that every week participants will be familiar with the material to carry a meaningful discussion. In addition, all registered students are expected to read the mandatory material marked with asterisks (*). The * refers to the main item in the reading entry. Connections to architecture and its critical problems are always present in our discussions of readings. The duration of each session is about 4 hours, (with a lunch break), and includes time for general discussion. Specific student interests may be accommodated; including the possibility of adding suggested readings for the group.

THEMES AND READINGS

Week 1. Introduction and organization. Distribution of work. Thursday, Sept 10th.

Week 2. A diagnosis of modern culture. Philosophy and public life. An initial approximation. Technology as world-view.

- a) Sennet R., *The Fall of Public Man*. (One or two readers.)
- b) *Husserl E., *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, "Introduction" and "Philosophy and the Crisis of European Man."
- c) Ellul J., *The Technological Society*, chs.I, II, V, VI. (One or two readers.)
- d) *Heidegger M., "The Question concerning Technology" in *Basic Writings*, VII.
- e) "Heidegger's Critique of Science and Technology," in *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy*, Murray M., ed.

For reference only: *Pérez-Gómez A., *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern science*, Intro. & chs. 8, 9; and Pérez-Gómez ed., *Architecture, Ethics, and Technology*, IRHA Symposium papers, Intro. and essay by Vesely D.

Week 3. The origins of Western thought: myth and metaphysics.

- a) *Frankfort H., *Before Philosophy* ch.1. For context see, Dodds E., *The Greeks and the Irrational*, chs.I, II, VII, VIII.
- b) Snell B., *The Discovery of the Mind*, Intro. & chs.1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10 (select for presentation.)
- c) Vernant J.P., *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*, "The Reason of Myth."

- d) *Plato, *Timaeus* (Penguin ed.), with Intro. by Lee H.
- e) Aristotle, *Poetics*, particularly parts I, II, III (mimesis). See also "Introduction" in M. Heath's edition of *Poetics*, and Tatarkiewicz, *History of Aesthetics*, I.
- f) Vernant J.P., *Mythe et pensée chez les grecs*, (English tr. available) 2 vols., vol.I, 3 "L'organisation de l'espace," esp. part 1; & vol.II, 4 "Le travail et la pensée technique," esp. part 4. For context see also Vernant J.P., *The Origins of Greek Thought*.

For reference only: *Pérez-Gómez A., "The Myth of Dedalus," in *AA Files*; and McEwan I., *Socrates' Ancestor*.

Week 4. The scientific revolution.

- a) *Descartes R., *Discourse on Method and Meditations* (Penguin ed.), and Intro. (One or two readers.)
- b) *Koyre A., *Metaphysics and Measurement*, chs.I, II, III.
- c) Koyre A., *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe*, chs.I, II, III, IV, V. For context see Rossi P., *Philosophy, Technology and the Arts in the Early Modern Era*, chs.1, 2, 3.
- d) Koyre A., *Newtonian Studies*, chs.1, 3, 4.
- e) Heisenberg W., *Physics and Philosophy*, Intro. & chs.V, X, XI.
- f) Heller-Roazen, D., *The Inner Touch: Archaeology of a Sensation* (selected chs. on Aristotle, Descartes, Leibniz and the 19th century).
- g) Damasio A., *Descartes' Error*, Intro. & ch. 11.

Week 5. Theory and practice. Introduction to phenomenology.

- a) Lobkowitz, N., *Theory and Practice*, part one.
- b) Ortega y Gasset J., *Some Lessons on Metaphysics*.
- c) Kockelmans J., *Phenomenology. The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl*, part I, chs.I, III, V.
- d) Arendt H., *The Human Condition*, Prologue and parts I, II, V, VI.
- e) *Heidegger M., *Discourse on Thinking*.
- f) Heidegger M., "The Thinker as Poet," "The Thing," "Poetically Man Dwells" and "Language" in *Poetry, Language, Thought*. For context see also Steiner G., *Heidegger*; and Levin, D.M., *The Opening of Vision*. (One or two readers.)
- g) Gadamer H.-G., *The Enigma of Health*, chs. 1-3.

Week 6. The primacy of perception. Radical questioning of gestalt and associationist theories.

- a) Merleau-Ponty M., *The Primacy of Perception*, part I, ch.4.
- b) *Merleau-Ponty M., *The Primacy of Perception*, part I, chs.1, 2, 3.
- c) Merleau-Ponty M., *Phenomenology of Perception*, Intro., chs.1, 2, 3, 4 (One or two readers.) Use preferably the new translation (Routledge, 2012).
- d) Thompson E., *Mind in Life*, chs. 1, 2, 4, 5 (pp. 97-100) and 11 (pp. 312-328).
- e) Van den Berg J.H., *Things: Four Metabletic Reflections*.
- f) Noë, Alva, *Out of our Heads: Why you are not your Brain*. (One or two readers.)

Week 7. Embodied experience, spatiality and the world as perceived. Space. The socio-cultural root of meaning: symbolization.

- a) *Merleau-Ponty M., *Phenomenology of Perception*, part I, ch.3 & part II, chs. 1, 2, 3, & 4a (One or two readers.)
- b) *Merleau-Ponty M., *The World of Perception*.

- c) Crossley, N. *The Social Body*, chs. 2-5 and 7-8 (One or two readers).
- d) Varela F., Thompson E. and Rosch E. *The Embodied Mind*, chs. 1, 2, 10 and 11.
- e) *Steiner G., *Real Presences*. (See also lecture with the same title in Alberto's office.)

Week 8. Temporality and the Living Present: Merleau-Ponty VS Poststructuralism.

- a) Abrams, D., *The Spell of the Sensuous*. (One or two readers.)
- b) Dillon M.C., *Merleau-Ponty Vivant*, preface, chs.5 & 8.
- c) Johnson, M., *The Meaning of the Body* chs. 3, 4, 11 and 12.
- d) Dillon M.C., *Écart et différence, Merleau-Ponty and Derrida*, Intro., chs.1, 6 & 11.

Week 9. Phenomenology and art. *Techné* as *poiesis*.

- a) Merleau-Ponty M., *The Primacy of Perception*, part II, ch.5. "Eye & Mind."
- b) Merleau-Ponty M., *Sense and Non-Sense*, "Author's preface," and part I, chs.1, 4.
- c) *Heidegger M., "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" and "The End of Philosophy," in *Basic Writings*; "On the Origin of the Work of Art," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*; and "Art and Space," in *Man and World*, vol.VI, 1973 (One or two readers.)
- d) *Gadamer H.G., *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, part I & part II, chs.2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. For context see Pérez-Gómez, "Chora: The Space of Architectural Representation," in *CHORA*, vol.1, 1994. (One or two readers.)

For reference only: Perez-Gomez, A. and Pelletier L., *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge*, esp. "Variation Three."

Note: All Merleau-Ponty essays on aesthetics, accompanied by commentary, can also be found in Johnson G., ed. *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader* (Northwestern University Press).

Week 10.

- a) Benjamin W., "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," and Intro. by Hannah Arendt in *Illuminations*.
- b) Paz O., *The Bow and the Lyre*, chs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 13. (One or two readers.)
- c) Vattimo G., *The Transparent Society*, chs.1, 3, 4, 5 & 8.
- d) *Kearney R., *The Wake of Imagination*, esp. Intro. and conclusion. For context see also *Poetics of Imagining*, chs.4, 5, 6 & afterword.
- e) Dreyfus H., and Kelly, S.D., *All Things Shining*, chs. 1,2,3,6,7. (One or two readers.)

Week 11. The historicity of modernity. Introduction.

- a) Rousseau J.J., *First and Second Discourse* (1750, 1755).
- b) *Nietzsche F., "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," in *Untimely Meditations* and aphorisms from *The Gay Science*.
- c) *Arendt H., "Tradition and the Modern Age" and "The Concept of History," in *Between Past and Future* (chs.1 & 2).
- d) Gadamer H.G., *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, chs.1, 2, 3, 4, 7. (One or two readers.)
- e) *Gadamer H.G., *Reason in the Age of Science*, chs.1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. (One or two readers.)

Week 12. Hermeneutics. Interpretation in architectural history and criticism. Narrative.

- a) Ricoeur P., "The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality," in *Man and World* 12, 1979.
- b) Ricoeur P., *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, parts I, II (all chapters), & ch.11 of part III. Editors's Intro is also useful (One or two readers.)
- c) *Ricoeur P., "Life: a Story in Search of a Narrator," in *Facts and Values* (1986), and "Towards a Hermeneutics of Historical Consciousness," in *Time and Narrative*, vol.3.
- e) *Grassi E., *Rhetoric as Philosophy* (One or two readers.)

Week 13. The end of the traditional fine arts. Modernity and postmodernity.

- a) Steiner G., *After Babel*, chs.1, 2, & Afterword.
- b) Giorgio Agamben, *What is an Apparatus?* (three essays).
- c) Paz O., *Children of the Mire*, chs. 1, 2 and 6 pp. 102-114.
- d) Flusser, V., *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, chs. 1, 2 and 3.
- e) *Vattimo G., *The End of Modernity*. (One or two readers.)
- f) *Shattuck R., *The Banquet Years*, esp. Part One.

ASSESSMENT OF CANDIDATES

No examination will be given in this course. The mark will be based on the six formal presentations of students to the seminar group and on the participation in discussions around the course material.

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

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity>).

A. Pérez-Gómez
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