ES 414, 
Seminar on the Work of Jacques 
Lacan

Every other Saturday from 10:45 to 12:45
February 3 – May 12, 2007
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Course Description:
This course is conceived of as an introduction to the work ofJacques Lacan. Lacan, who introduced Freudian psychoanalysis to French psychiatry, insisted upon a “return to Freud,” to correct what he saw as a derailment of Freud’s intent by his followers. Through the medium of his own genius he extended Freud’s thought by making use of the linguistic science and the structuralist point of view, that Freud did not have access to, but which - Lacan asserts - were immanent in his work.

Lacan developed his own concepts based on an exhaustive study of Freud’s works. Its public face was a seminar-consistently attended by the Parisian intelligentsia – that lasted for 20 years. Lacan shared with Freud a wide breadth of knowledge, an open-ended turning over of concepts and a persistently inquisitive attitude.

Neither Freud nor Lacan presents us with a “closed system” – yet Lacan – as he himself admits – “did not want to make the way in easy.” Thus an American readership is presented with a daunting challenge in accessing his alternately murky, allusive and impenetrable writings. These were mostly lectures delivered extemporaneously, after Lacan had immersed himself in a particular subject. Thus they consist of transcriptions of verbal presentations made from notes taken by those in attendance.

Course Objectives:
Introduce participants to basic Lacanian concepts.
Animate these concepts through group discussions of assigned readings, presentations and lectures.
Understand the relevance of these concepts to what is at stake in the treatment of neurosis, perversion and psychosis.

Course Requirements:

- This seminar is elective, so grading will be on a pass-fail basis.
- Participants should have access to the three texts listed below – they are central to the discussions.
- Participants will have studied assigned readings and will form small groups to prepare brief presentations as will be discussed in the initial meeting.
- One paper will be due by the end of the seminar. Topic is how your view of the field and your own work has been affected by your encounter with Lacan. Optimally it should be approached as a “work in progress,” to be worked on throughout the seminar.
- This paper is to be emailed to me by May 11, 2006 so that we may discuss your ideas in our last meeting.

Texts:

Texts available on-line:
Course Format:

The course is taught in a lecture/presentation/discussion format. The central text is After Lacan.

At our first meeting we will discuss the feasibility of organizing yourselves into study groups for the purpose of directly engaging a selection of Lacan’s texts. Each working group would make brief presentations of salient features of each of these texts to enhance discussion.

Attendance is required for all meetings. Excused absences will be granted on an individual basis.

Grades will be based on the following – each being given equal weight:
1 – Attendance and quality of seminar participation
2 - Presentations by working groups
3 – Final paper

An incomplete grade will be given in cases of personal contingency at the discretion of the dean.

Seminar schedule:

Meetings to be held every other Saturday from 10:45 to 12:45 at the Institute.

#1. Feb-3 – “Bonjour, M. Lacan! Whatever is missing?”
Reading: Introduction to After Lacan

#2. Feb 17 – The centrality of language
Reading: After Lacan - Chap. 1 – The trauma of language:

Presentations:
Seminar of J.Lacan – Book I
Chap.10- The two narcissisms
Chap 11 – Ego-ideal and ideal ego

# 3. March-3 – The symbolic, the imaginary and the real:
Reading: After Lacan - Chap 3 – The signifier:

Presentations:
Ecrits – Chap.1 – The mirror stage
Chap.2 - On aggressivity
#4. March 17 – Jouissance, Dream and Delusion
Readings: *After Lacan* – Chap. 4 - The work of the Dream and Jouissance in the treatment of the psychotic; Chap. 5 - From Delusion to Dream

Presentations:
Bergeron: “The stakes in the cure of the psychotic”

#5. March 31 – Otherness: the “Grand Autre”
Readings: *After Lacan* - Chap 2 – The jouissance of the Other and sexual division in psychoanalysis; Chap 6 - The letter of the body

#6. April 14 – Inscriptions
Readings: *After Lacan* – Chap. 7 – The symptom Chap. 8 – From symptom to fantasy

Presentations:
*Seminar of J.Lacan – Book I* - Chaps 16-18 “Michael Balint’s blind alleys”

#7. April 28 – The Graph of Desire
Readings: *After Lacan* - Chap. 9 – Perverse features and the future of the drive in obsessional neurosis

Presentations:
*Ecrits* Chap 9 - The subversion of the subject and the dialectic of desire.

May 5 - Final paper (5-7 pages) due – to be emailed to seminar leader.

#8. May 12 – Perversion – and Summing up:
Readings: *After Lacan* - Chap 10 – Perversion and hysteria; Chap 11 – The fate of jouissance in the pervert-hysteric couple

Discussion – with reference to your own papers

This syllabus is subject to minor alterations as the seminar progresses.