**LITERATE TECHNOLOGIES:**

**LANGUAGE, WRITING, THEORY, LITERATURE**

**(Spring 2022)**

**David Vichnar, PhD** **(****david.vichnar@ff.cuni.cz****)**

**Office Hours: Mon & Wed 4-4.45 pm (Room 219b)**

**Optional M.A. Course, Compulsory PhD Course – Programme in Critical & Cultural Theory**

**Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures (Thu 14.10-15.40, Room 34)**

**DESCRIPTION**

It is the aim of this seminar to introduce students from a broad range of backgrounds, and with diverse interests within the philologies, to a set of theoretical and practical issues that accompany any deeper study of language, literature and literacy, and which bear significance beyond the academic domain of literary studies.

Through a selective reading of encounters between “theory” and “literature”, a number of key questions will be addressed: what is language; how does language happen; how does language define the contours of thought; what are the technological and cultural predeterminations of literacy; what is writing; what can writing do? following from that will be such questions as, what is literature and what is theory; what makes their encounter possible; what are the boundaries *between* theoretical and literary discourse; what are the limits of “applied” theory; how does literature theorise *itself*?

The purpose of the seminar is to explore how different thinkers and writers address the question of literacy—within the domain of literature and literary studies, and in accord with changing historical/ technological conditions, esp. since the advent of (post-)print media.

**SYLLABUS**

**Feb 24 Introduction: What is Writing? What is Literature?**

**Mar 3 Jacques Derrida,** “This Strange Institution Called Literature”; “The Law of Genre”

(*Acts of Literature,* pp. 33-75; pp. 221-252)

**Mar 10 Jacques Derrida,** “Before the Law”;“*Ulysses* Gramophone”

(*Acts of Literature,* pp. 181-220; pp. 253-309)

**Mar 17 Michel Foucault**, from *Death and the Labyrinth* (1963), esp. Ch. 1-3 & 6-8

(pp. 3-50; 99-170)

**Mar 24 Gilles Deleuze,** from *Proust and Signs* (1964), esp. Ch. 1-3 & 8-10

 (pp. 3-39; 105-45)

**Mar 31 Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari**, from *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1975)

esp. Ch. 1-3, 5-6 & 8-9 (pp. 3-28; 43-63; 72-90)

**Apr 7 Marshall McLuhan,** *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962);

from*Understanding Media* (1964)

**Apr 14 Theodor Nelson,** *Computer Lib Dream Machines* (1974);

*Literary Machines* (1980)

 **Walter Ong,** *Orality & Literacy: the Technologizing of the Word* (1982)

**Apr 21   Julia Kristeva,** from *The Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974);

**Hélène Cixous,** “The Laugh of the Medusa” (1975);

 “Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing” (1993)

**Apr 28** **Donna Harraway,** *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1985)

               **N. Katherine Hayles,** *How We Became Posthuman* (1999)

**May 5 George P. Landow,** from *Hypertext: the Convergence of Contemporary Critical*

 *Theory and Technology* (1991)

 **J.D. Bolter & R. Grusin,** from *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (2000)

**May 12 N. Katherine Hayles,** from*Writing Machines* (2002);

 from *How We Think* (2012)

**May 19 Mark Amerika,** *Meta/Data: A Digital Poetics* (2007)

 **Kenneth Goldsmith**, *Uncreative Writing* (2011)

**COURSE READER**

All of the primary reading will be **available from the faculty Moodle** **system** for the students to study as part of their weekly readings. Recommended readings to accompany the primary texts are Louis Armand, *LITERATE TECHNOLOGIES* (2006), and David Vichnar, JOYCE AGAINST THEORY (2010), available on demand in printed form.

**MAILING LIST POSTING**

A mandatory part of every student’s active participation in the course will be a weekly email posting of every student’s individual critical response concerning the week’s primary reading. The students’ **email responses (around 200 words)** need to be sent to the lecturer’s email no later than **Tuesday noon**, in order to allow some time for their processing before next class. These postings will serve as basis for in-class Q&A’s following each week’s presentations.

**PRESENTATION**

**A mandatory part of PhD students’ participation** in the course will be TWO IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS on a chosen week’s topic. Book-length presenters need to email the class ahead (by **Sunday** previous) with chapter/page selections (roughly 50 pp.) if they wish to focus on any parts of text in particular. Presentations need to have the scope of a regular **conference paper (20 mins)** and need to attempt a critical reading of the week’s key text(s) with some engagement with the week’s students’ postings in the ensuing Q&A.

**FINAL PAPER**

The final seminar paper shall have the scope of 2,500 words (for a non-graded paper), or 4,000 words (for a graded paper) and will be due by **the end of June 2022**. N.B. Students need to discuss their final paper topics, bibliography, etc. with the lecturer ahead of the end of the course, i.e. by mid-May. **A mandatory part of PhD students’ final credit** will be submission of their final paper to an ACADEMIC JOURNAL of their choice/field of interest, and a note of confirmation from the journal that their work has been received for consideration (and ideally, though this is not necessary, accepted for publication).

**CREDIT**MA Students will be given their credit for presence at minimum **10 sessions** (of 12 total) and active participation in at least **10 email postings** (33%), as well as their **final paper** (33%). PhD students will additionally be given credit for **two in-class presentations** (33%) on a given week’s topic and will submit their final paper to an academic journal of their choice/field.