

**Carleton University
Department of English Language and Literature
Fall 2013**

**ENGL 4005A [4th year undergraduate]
Studies in Literary Theory
Special Topic: Judith Butler and her Interlocutors**

**Tuesdays 14:30 – 17:30
Location: 1006 DT**

**Professor Stuart J. Murray
Office: 1820 DT**

Office hours: Tuesdays 13:30 – 14:30 and by appointment, including Skype

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Skype: sjmurray67

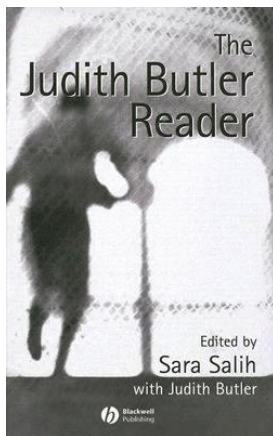
Twitter: @sjmurray67

Brief Course Description

This seminar will offer an in-depth study of Judith Butler's work to advanced undergraduate students. Topics will include Butler's theory of gender performativity and queer theory, embodiment and subject formation, speech and rhetoric, biopolitics, grievable and precarious life, religious and ethical subjectivity, as well as her political activism. We will have occasion to engage some of her major influences.

Required Text

The Judith Butler Reader, ed. Sara Salih with Judith Butler (Wiley-Blackwell, 2004).



Amazon.ca, <http://www.amazon.ca/Judith-Butler-Reader-Sara-Salih/dp/0631225943>

Chapters.ca, <http://www.chapters.indigo.ca/books/the-judith-butler-reader/9780631225942-item.html>

Wiley.com, <http://ca.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0631225943.html>

Other required course texts will be made available in class

Useful Online Resources

Johns Hopkins University Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism

<http://litguide.press.jhu.edu.proxy.library.carleton.ca/index.html>

Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL)

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/722/01/>

Books by or about Judith Butler (WorldCat)

<http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n99-35460>

Bibliography, European Graduate School

<http://www.egs.edu/faculty/judith-butler/bibliography/>

Recommended Supplementary Texts

These texts are not required for the course but may be helpful to you as you work through Butler's texts and develop your own research.

By Judith Butler:

1. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge, [1990] 1999).
2. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (Routledge, 1993).
3. *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford, 1997).
4. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (Routledge, 1997).
5. *Undoing Gender* (Routledge, 2004).
6. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (Verso, 2004).
7. *Giving an Account of Oneself* (Fordham, 2005).
8. *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (Verso, 2010).
9. *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism* (Columbia, 2012).

By others:

1. Anita Brady and Tony Schirato, *Understanding Judith Butler* (Sage Publications, 2011).
2. Vicki Kirby, *Judith Butler: Live Theory* (Continuum, 2007).
3. Moya Lloyd, *Judith Butler: From Norms to Politics* (Polity Press, 2008).
4. Annika Thiem, *Unbecoming Subjects: Judith Butler, Moral Philosophy, and Critical Responsibility* (Fordham, 2008).
5. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (Vintage Books, 1990).
6. Sarah Salih, *Judith Butler* (Routledge Critical Thinkers) (Routledge, 2002).

Course Requirements and Evaluation¹

1. Seminar Presentation: 20%

The critical presentation of a text or texts from the assigned weekly readings), comprising:

¹ Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

- a. 20-minute presentation: Make a high quality, carefully prepared presentation (PowerPoint, hand-outs, props, etc. are optional). Come prepared with a text, aim for 2,500 words but practice and time it out. Avoid reading your text; this is not an academic conference presentation, but intended to generate discussion.
 - b. Assume your audience has carefully read the text. Present an overview of the author's *purpose*: the claim(s), the controversies, the style of the text, the literary and/or rhetorical (persuasive) devices that are used, etc. Evaluate the "evidence" for the author's claim(s); you may also engage the author's critics. Then focus! Take time to analyse—perform a close reading of—one or two issues or passages that you find especially significant, revealing, suggestive, i.e., not just *what* the text is saying, but *how*. I encourage you to be creative.
 - c. 15-30 minute discussion: Engage class questions and prompt discussion. The spirit of the seminar presentations is *collaborative, not competitive*.
2. **Research Presentation: 20%**
 To be presented on **26 November or 3 December 2013** (a Judith Butler text or selected texts and theme chosen by you, as an opportunity to "workshop" your emergent Research Paper). It will be a critical engagement with or an application of Butler's work. I encourage you to locate a "site" (object, text, controversy) in the world, however you wish to define this:
 - a. Based on your research for the final Research Paper, select one short text or object (maximum of one chapter or journal article, or just a selection – aim for 10-15 pages). **Distribute this text at least one week before your Research Presentation, through email or DropBox.** Please note, your text can be visual, filmic, a social movement, etc., so you might have to be creative in how to share this, either in PDF format, as web link, etc.
 - b. The presentation itself is meant to facilitate the collaborative space of the classroom and to help with the production of a better final Research Paper for each participant. You will have 15 minutes to present. At the very least, you should bring to class an outline of your presentation to share with co-participants in the seminar, but the more you write down and can share with the class the better. To be clear, you should aim for roughly 2,000 words of *written prose* per presentation, though you may present this prose in less or more formal ways during the presentation. The goal is to move your research along and, for better or worse, words on a page is more important than words spoken in class. In your presentation, do not summarise the text you have selected; rather, develop your thesis and support this with textual evidence. Argument = Claim + Textual Evidence.
 - c. 15 minutes discussion/collaboration: encourage participation and an open exchange of ideas and constructive criticism.
3. **Research Paper (12-15 pp.): 50%**
 Due in the final week of class but automatic extension granted to **10 December 2013**, submitted via email to stuart.murray@carleton.ca.

- a. This will normally be the workshopped and refined version of your Research Presentation, in polished essay format.
- b. I am available to discuss your ideas throughout the course.
- c. I will send a return email confirming that I have received your essay and can open it.

4. Attendance and Active Participation: 5 Weekly Response/Reaction Papers = 10%

- a. Attendance and participation are required and expected throughout the course; three or more unexcused absences will result in failing the course.
- b. The 10% grade will be based on the submission of very brief Weekly Response/Reaction Papers (except for the week when you present). I will take the grade of your 5 *best* papers. You can submit 5 or more (up to 8).
- c. A Response Paper is 1-2 double-spaced pages in which you respond/react critically to one particular, very focused, aspect of one of the week's readings or to a significant theme that emerges from more than one of the readings. The purpose is for you to learn what you are reading through writing. It is not an opinion paper (avoid "I feel" or "I believe"; instead you may say, "I suggest," "I contend," "I argue," "I claim"). Here are more specific instructions:
 - i. The first half of the paper should be a summary of the text. Do not worry about being exhaustive in your summary but do be as clear and detailed as possible. Convey an understanding of the major concepts, concerns, and nuances in the text. Start with the main claim or argument of the text and then show how the author moves through that argument. Use quotations sparingly; paraphrase to highlight the main points.
 - ii. The second half of the paper should be a response/reaction to the text, in which you interrogate/analyse some aspect or concept in the reading—perhaps a specific claim that was made in a particular passage or a general concept or sentiment conveyed. You might also analyse the article/chapter in relation to other readings for our class. You might consider: What is the text's main problem or issue? What is the author's central claim? What assumptions does the author make? What evidence is presented? What are the strengths or weaknesses? What are possible counter-arguments to the claims? Why are the problems or arguments interesting or significant?
 - iii. Finally, you should conclude with a brief list of questions that you would like the class to consider for discussion.
[adapted from Summary/Response Paper, Purdue University, English 203, and from Duke University,
<http://twp.duke.edu/uploads/assets/response%20paper.pdf>]
- d. Late Response/Reaction Papers will not be accepted for credit (the point is to have read and responded to the text *before* class, so as to facilitate class discussion).

[1] 10 September 2013
Introduction and Course Overview

[2] 17 September 2013
Gender and Performativity

[3] 24 September 2013
Foucault, Power, Discourse

[4] 1 October 2013
Subjectivity and Psychoanalysis

[5] 8 October 2013
Rhetoric and the Imaginary

[6] 15 October 2013
Feminist Rhetoric and Pornography

[7] 22 October 2013
Queer Theory, Justice, and Undoing Gender

29 October 2013
Fall Reading Week

[8] 5 November 2013
Precarity and Butler's "Biopolitics"

[9] 12 November 2013
Ethics and Critique

[10] 19 November 2013
Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism

[11] 26 November 2013
TBA / Research Presentations

[12] 3 December 2013
TBA / Research Presentations

Assignment Lateness Policy

Submit all assignments on or before the due date unless special arrangements have been made with me prior to the deadline. Late assignments will be reduced by one grade per day (including Saturdays and Sundays). E.g., from B+ to B for one day, B+ to B- for two days, etc. Over

weekends, email the paper and present a hard copy to the department essay drop-box on Monday.

Academic Integrity and Academic Offences (e.g., plagiarism)

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” Carleton University’s Academic Integrity Policy can be accessed at <http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity>.

Academic Accommodation (official University blurb below, but please come see me or email me for any concerns you may have throughout the semester)

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, medical considerations or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by Nov. 8, 2013 for the Fall term and March 7, 2014 for the Winter term.

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation>.