

Carleton University
Winter 2019
Department of English Language and Literature
and
PhD Program in Cultural Mediations

ENGL 5002W / CLMD 6903W: The Instant of My Death

Time: Wednesdays, 14:35 – 17:35
Location: 201D St. Patrick's Building

Instructor: Professor Stuart J. Murray

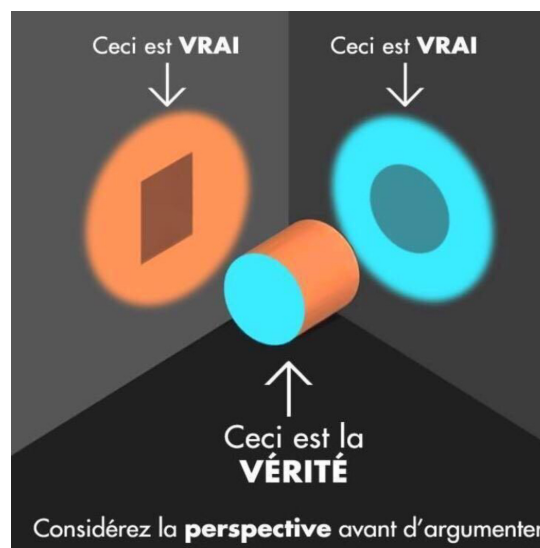
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Office: 1820 DT

Consultation in person and via Zoom: by appointment (please email)



Course Problematic

How might we read the (non)representational practices that surround death today? Aesthetic or anaesthetic, ours is a time when death is quietly cultivated and calculated by neoliberal biopolitics – deaths dismissed (or justified) as collateral damage, opportunity costs, negative externalities. This differential power is summed up by Foucault as the power to “make live and let die.” Crucially, those we “let die” stand in relation to the lives that we “make live”; dying is the bloody secret of life, even as “letting die” is disavowed, refused, silenced. Whether it is “slow death” (Berlant) wrought by austerity, fast death in the digital mediascape, or more coordinated ways of “letting die,” including war and ethnic/racialized violence, these deaths nevertheless speak to belie our pious “culture of life.”

How, then, to approach our topic? It demands interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary engagement; it demands multimodality – a variety of “texts” to be “read” (listened to, seen, across space and time). So, this is not a “literary theory” course in a traditional sense – whatever “literature” is, or “tradition,” for that matter. Let’s not be doctrinaire!

This is *not* a course on memory studies or memorialization or trauma or witnessing or affect theory. And this is for two reasons. First, and practically, our texts are more diverse and less easily (de)coded. We will read from high theory to YouTube and SoundCloud – an eclectic selection from philosophy, political theory, black studies, and cultural studies, among others, alongside select works of literature, a graphic narrative (a “comic” with no comedy), music, social media metastases, and not least, the in-joke that is on us. Second, and more ideologically, this course will argue that the study of (non)representational practices in the relationship between death and speech/writing will permit an oblique but trenchant critique of identity politics, liberalism (including its “human rights” guises), and the hypostatizations of possessive individualism, ego, self, interiority. To what extent are these forms of subjectivity false idols and tools of subordination, all the while packaged as freedom and rational choice? Moreover, to what extent do they foster profound complicity with the differential violence that “makes live and lets die”?

A more speculative question emerges: what is the possibility for community that is not tied to identity categories and to their rituals of representation, be they memory, memorialization, witnessing, or confession? Is there community post-identity? Or, said another way, is there a form of speech/writing that is not tethered to – sanctioned, policed, and in some cases prohibited by – our great idol, our political theology: identity?

Course Texts to Purchase

Nick Drnaso, *Sabrina* (Drawn & Quarterly, 2018).

Niviaq Korneliussen, *Last Night in Nuuk* (Grove Press/Black Cat, 2019) **available after 25 January 2019 in Canada, scheduled for the end of the course**; in the UK as *Crimson* (Virago, 2018); in French as *Homo sapienne* (Chicoutimi, QC: La Peuplade, 2017).

Celeste Ng, *Everything I Never Told You* (New York: Penguin, 2015).

Jesmyn Ward, *Sing, Unburied, Sing* (New York: Scribner, 2017).

Course Schedule

Week 1 Introduction: The Final Solution 9 January 2019

Jean Baudrillard, “The Final Solution, or The Revenge of the Immortals,” trans. Chris Turner, *Insomnia Essays* (n.d.), http://insomnia.ac/essays/the_final_solution/. Digital reprint of the essay that appeared in Baudrillard, *Impossible Exchange*, trans. Chris Turner (New York: Verso, 2001), 35–51.

Recommended Reading

Giorgio Agamben, “No to Biopolitical Tattooing,” trans. from the French, “Non au tatouage biopolitique” (*Le Monde*, 10 and 11 January 2004), *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 5, no. 2 (2008): 201–202, <https://modernrhetoric.files.wordpress.com/2010/11/agamben.pdf>.

Stuart J. Murray, “Thanatopolitics: Reading in Agamben a Rejoinder to Biopolitical Life” [Response to “No to Biopolitical Tattooing”], *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 5, no. 2 (2008): 203–207, https://modernrhetoric.files.wordpress.com/2010/11/murray_on_agamben.pdf.

Creative Writing Assignment (0% of final mark)

By way of an icebreaker, and in contrast, perhaps, to the seminars that will follow, the first assignment is to write a micro-story. Stories will be read aloud in the first seminar. The prompt for your story is, very simply: “the day after someone dies through medically assisted death.”

Length: Max. 1500 words (2 pages single-spaced)

Content and Form: Anything you choose – be as creative as you like

Week 2 The Instant of My Death 16 January 2019

Maurice Blanchot and Jacques Derrida, *The Instant of My Death / Demeure* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

Optional Reading: Poetry

Donald Hall, “Affirmation,” <https://www.poeticous.com/donald-hall/affirmation>.

Sylvia Plath, “Lady Lazarus,” <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/49000/lady-lazarus>.

Seminar Presentation _____

Week 3 Biopolitics 23 January 2019

Lauren Berlant, “Slow Death (Sovereignty, Obesity, Lateral Agency),” *Critical Inquiry* 33, no. 4 (2007): 754–780.

Giorgio Agamben, “What is an Apparatus?,” in *What is an Apparatus?*, trans. David Kishik and Stefan Padetella (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 1–24.

- Michel Foucault, “*Society Must Be Defended*”: *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*, eds. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), Lecture of 17 March 1976, 239–264.
- Michel Foucault, “Right of Death and Power Over Life,” in *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1978), 135–159.
- Michel Foucault, “The Birth of Biopolitics: Course Summary,” *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, trans. Robert Hurley et al., Vol. 1 of *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984* (New York: New Press, 1997), 73–79.

Recommended Reading

- Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 1–11 and 119–135.
- Stuart J. Murray, “Canada’s Moral Negligence in Jamal Khashoggi’s Murder,” *The Conversation Canada*, 28 November 2018. <http://theconversation.com/canadas-moral-negligence-in-jamal-khashoggis-murder-107782>.

Seminar Presentation _____

Week 4 Death, Unavowable Community 30 January 2019

- Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), Part IV, “The Work and Death’s Space,” 87–159.
- Maurice Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community*, trans. Pierre Joris (Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press, 1988), “The Negative Community,” 1–26.
- Michel Foucault, “The Thought of the Outside,” *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology: Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954–1984, Vol 2*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 1998), 147–170.
- Michel Foucault and Claude Bonnefoy, *Speech Begins After Death*, trans. Robert Bononno (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

Seminar Presentation _____

Guest Lecture Dr. Lisa Guenther 1 February 2019

This guest lecture is meant to be integral to the course content. This week we will be reading a text by Lisa Guenther, so this is a wonderful opportunity to meet her and hear her speak. I strongly encourage you to attend, but because the lecture takes place outside regular class time, attendance is not mandatory. You are also free to write one of your Critical Reader Responses on the lecture itself (due 6 February 2019).

Seeing Like a Cop: A Critical Phenomenology of Whiteness as Property

Lisa Guenther (Queen’s University)

Friday, 1 February 2019, 15:00 – 17:00
Dunton Tower 2017

Abstract

In her landmark essay, “Whiteness as Property,” Cheryl Harris shows how whiteness functions as a kind of property that protects those who pass as white from occupying the very bottom of a social hierarchy. This talk explores the perceptual practices and sociogenic structure of whiteness as property through an engagement with Fanon’s account of the lived experience of blackness in a white world, which is structured by the corporeal schema, the historico-racial schema, and the racial epidermal schema. Drawing on Darren Wilson’s grand jury testimony, as well as critical literature on race and policing, I argue that a possessive investment in whiteness produces and intensifies the investment in security apparatuses that serve and protect some people while exposing others to both mundane and spectacular forms of state violence. This double investment in property and security drives the perceptual practice of suspicious surveillance, or “seeing like a cop,” as well as the spatial politics of gentrification.

Bio

Lisa Guenther is Queen’s National Scholar in Political Philosophy and Critical Prison Studies at Queen’s University in Canada. She is the author of *Solitary Confinement: Social Death and its Afterlives* (2013) and co-editor of *Death and Other Penalties: Philosophy in a Time of Mass Incarceration* (2015). From 2012-17, she facilitated a discussion group with men on death row in Tennessee called REACH Coalition. She is currently working on two projects: 1) a critical phenomenology of carceral space, and 2) a feminist analysis of the relation between incarceration, reproductive politics, and settler colonialism in Canada, Australia, and the United States.

Week 5 Black Lives, Matter 6 February 2019

Viewing **[Warning: Extremely Disturbing]**

“Disabled Man Pleating For Help Drowns As Teens Laugh And Mock,” 20 July 2017, YouTube.com, 20 July 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3zD_Y2sGqY.

*Read as many of the YouTube viewer comments as you can

Mainstream Media (below is just the first instance: a Google News search will offer up others) Ariel Zilber, ““Oh, He Just Died!”: Horrifying Video Shows Group of Teens Laughing While Watching a Disabled Man Drown in a Pond,” *The Daily Mail* online, 21 July 2017. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4716516/Teens-filmed-laughing-watching-disabled-man-drown.html#video>.

Required Reading

Colin Dayan, “With Law at the Edge of Life,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 113, no. 3 (2014): 629–639.

- Avery Gordon and Christopher Newfield, "White Philosophy," *Critical Inquiry* 20, no. 4 (1994): 737–757.
- Lisa Guenther, *Solitary Confinement: Social Death and its Afterlives* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), Chapter 3, "The Racialization of Criminality and the Criminalization of Race," 39–61.
- Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), "Imperial Racism," 190–195.
- Stephen Matthias Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia/Minor Compositions, 2013), Chapter 2, "The University and the Undercommons," 25–43.
- Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1–14.
- Fred Moten, *Stolen Life* (Durham: Duke University Press), Chapter 4, "The New International of Decent Feelings," 140–151.

Recommended Reading

- Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 1986), "Introduction," 9–16.
- Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (1993): 1707–1791.

Optional Reading (from a "humanitarian"/"human rights" perspective)

- Hannah Arendt, "The Perplexities of the Rights of Man," in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego, London, and New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1948), 290–302.
- Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York and London: Verso, 2004), Chapter 2: "Violence, Mourning, Politics," 19–49.
- Didier Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present*, trans. Rachel Gomme (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), "Introduction: Humanitarian Government"; Chapter 9, "Hierarchies of Humanity"; and "Conclusion: Critique of Humanitarian Reason," 1–17 and 223–257.
- Eyal Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils: Humanitarian Violence from Arendt to Gaza* (London and New York: Verso, 2011), Chapter 1, "The Humanitarian Present," and Chapter 3, "The Best of All Possible Walls." [Read e-book PDF pp. 7–22 and 54–79].

Seminar Presentation

Week 6	Wounded Identity, Mass Mediatized	13 February 2019
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| Lauren Berlant, "The Subject of True Feeling: Pain, Privacy, and Politics," <i>Cultural Pluralism, Identity Politics, and the Law</i> , eds. Austin Sarat and Thomas R. Kearns (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 49–84. | | |
| Wendy Brown, <i>States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity</i> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), Chapter 3, "Wounded Attachments," 52–76. | | |

- Kara Keeling, "I = Another: Digital Identity Politics," in *Strange Affinities: The Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Racialization*, eds. Grace Kyungwon Hong and Roderick A. Ferguson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 53–75.
- Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), Chapter 1, "The Wake" and Chapter 2, "The Ship, 1–24 and 25–67. [Read e-book PDF pp. 10–52].
- Alexander G. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), Chapter 4, "Racism: Biopolitics," 53–73.

Recommended Reading

- Simon Strick, *American Dolorologies: Pain, Sentimentalism, Biopolitics* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2014), Chapter 1, "What is Dolorology?" and Chapter 5, "Late Modern Pain," 1–18 and 147–168. [Read e-book PDF pp. 8–16 and 109–123].
- Miriam Ticktin, "How Biology Travels: A Humanitarian Trip," *Body and Society* 12, nos. 2/3 (2011): 139–158.
- João Costa Vargas and Joy A. James, "Refusing Blackness-as-Victimization: Trayvon Martin and the Black Cyborgs" in *Pursuing Trayvon Martin: Historical Contexts and Contemporary Manifestations of Racial Dynamics*, eds. George Yancy and Janine Jones (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 193–204.

Seminar Presentation _____

[Reading Week]

Week 7	<i>Sing, Unburied, Sing</i>	27 February 2019
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Jesmyn Ward, *Sing, Unburied, Sing* (New York: Scribner, 2017).

Seminar Presentation _____

Week 8	Tad Lemieux Guest Lecture: Online Mnemosyne?	6 March 2019
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Tad Lemieux is an advanced PhD Candidate in the Department of English Language and Literature.

Required Reading

"To keep a secret — to refrain from saying some particular thing — pre-supposes that one could say it. This is nothing remarkable: it is merely a rather unpleasant kind of restraint. — Even so, it does relate to the question of the secret in general: to the fact (it is no fact) of wondering whether the secret is not linked to there being still something left

*to say when all is said; it does suggest Saying (with its glorious capital), always in excess of everything said. — The not-apparent in the whole when it is totally manifest; that which withdraws, hides in the demand that all be disclosed: the dark clearing or the error of truth itself. — The un-knowledge after absolute knowledge which does not, precisely, allow us to conceive of any ‘after.’ — Except as introduced by the imperative of the return, which ‘designifies’ every before, as well as every afterward, by untying them from the present, rendering them foreign to every tense. — The secret escapes: it is never circumscribed; it makes itself boundless. What is hidden in it is the necessity of being hidden. — There is nothing secret, anywhere; this is what the secret always says. — All the while not saying it. For, with the words ‘there is’ and ‘nothing,’ the enigma continues to rule, preventing installation and repose. — The stratagem of the secret is either to show itself, to make itself so visible that it isn’t seen (to disappear, that is, as a secret), or to hint that the secret is only secret where there is no secret, or no appearance of any secret. — The secret is not linked to an ‘I,’ but to the curve of the space which cannot be called intersubjective, for the I-subject is related to the Other inasmuch as the Other is not a subject, and in the inequality of difference, in the absence of community, by virtue of the un-common of communication. — ‘He will live henceforth in the secret’: has this disquieting sentence been elucidated? — It is as though it were said that for him death would occur in life. — Let us leave to silence this sentence which only means, perhaps, silence.” (Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, 137–138).*

Read through the online comments and reviews below on YouTube and Bandcamp. There are many comments on YouTube but make a good faith effort to get a picture of what has been said and when – ideally while listening to the music – and be prepared to discuss. *Listen to all the music with headphones on.* Hover your cursor over the icons of those who have purchased the two albums on Bandcamp and read the images. Click to expand the album art. Read the device/s you read it on. Read the browser or app you read them in. Read the dates of their release. Some of these readings will have happened retrospectively, some concurrently, some instantaneously. We will think about all of this.

Required Texts

Chris††† – *No Lives Matter* (2016). <https://christtt.bandcamp.com/album/no-lives-matter>

Chris††† – *Social Justice Whatever (VHS)* (2017).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scUe6mWKQgY>

death’s dynamic shroud – *Classroom Sexxtape* (2016).

<https://deathsdynamicshroud.bandcamp.com/album/classroom-sexxtape>,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0ALkNKQzmA>

N O S T A L G I C (2017). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQyzEyIf7P0>

Recommended Texts

Web 2.0 is Us/ing Us: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gmP4nk0EOE>

Casually Explained Memes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJTSxRBbCQA>

“VR Chat Was a Mistake”: <https://youtu.be/y7E92IdraxQ>,

<https://twitter.com/hashtag/nuwrlid>

AOL Chat: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxVQ9rhjyTY>

MSN Messenger: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z30oQIEzzvo>

Playstation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zh7V8BUk_20
 Windows 95: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=miZHa7ZC6Z0>
 Windows 98: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tajDxBaPBBM>
 iPhone: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3x8CPo5GBY>
 Rebecca Black vine compilation (0:23): <https://youtu.be/NE0RScQp3Sk?t=23s>

Optional Reading

Stuart J. Murray and Tad Lemieux, “*Combat — Débat: Parataxis and the Unavowable Community; or, The Joke,*” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 52, no. 1 (forthcoming 2019).

Seminar Presentation _____

Week 9 *Sabrina* 13 March 2019

Nick Drnaso, *Sabrina* (Drawn & Quarterly, 2018).
 Kate Polak, “Affective Power of Graphic Narratives,” in *Ethics in the Gutter: Empathy and Historical Fiction in Comics* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2017), 1–36.

<https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/npc-wojak>

Seminar Presentation _____

Week 10 Master Class: New Materialisms 20 March 2019
Drs. Hyo Yoon Kang and Sara Kendall

A Master Class with Dr. Hyo Yoon Kang and Dr. Sara Kendall, Kent Law School, University of Kent, United Kingdom

Materiality might evoke visions of solidity, physicality and the ‘real’, yet it is an amorphous and contested concept, and it is often used in conflicting ways within contemporary legal scholarship. Often a thing will not matter to law unless it is framed or reconstituted as being material (in the meaning of relevance) to a specific legal matter of concern. Even the human dead body has to be figured in different ways in order to matter to law (Trabsky, 2017).

As nouns, the terms ‘material’ and ‘matter’ denote different things: a material is a medium or an instrument serving a purpose, whereas a matter is a physical thing or an immaterial concern, issue, or problem. As an adjective, ‘material’ denotes an association rather than a fixed relation to a physical object. By contrast, ‘materialist’ refers to a way of understanding causality or a world-view. There are considerable diverging premises underlying materialism and materiality. Materialism is often understood as a theoretical claim about ‘real’ and ‘factual’ matters that determine ideologies and superstructures, and by extension, legal phenomena and consciousness. The Marxist strand of historical materialism takes ‘real’ economic processes as causes of ‘unreal’ forms of consciousness,

such as law (Marx, *German Ideology*, 1845). ‘New materialism’ is less mono-causal and determinist, and its proponents argue for a more nuanced understanding of inherent material agencies as an ethical axiom (for an overview see, for example, Coole & Frost, 2010).

In this Master Class, we will present the different meanings and uses of ‘materiality’ within legal practice and language. We will present and open up to discussion a distinctive legal materialist position (Kang, 2018; Kang & Kendall, 2019) which approaches law by deconstructing and recomposing a legal matter as a Foucauldian problematization (1988) or as an unstable ‘matter of concern’, in Latourian terminology, that is enlisted in the legal ‘game’ (2004). This approach observes how things mobilize and condition legal meaning by simultaneously serving as law’s material conditions and as the embodiments of legal matters themselves. It investigates the properties of those legal materials. Legal materiality is better described as a mode of understanding law’s composition and relationality.

Required Readings

- Lauren Berlant, “The Commons: Infrastructures for Troubling Times,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 34, no. 3 (2016): 393–419.
- Hyo Yoon Kang, “Law’s Materiality: Between Concrete Matters and Abstract Forms, or How Matter Becomes Material,” in *Routledge Handbook of Law and Theory* (London: Routledge, 2018), 453–474.
- Sara Kendall, “Beyond the Restorative Turn: The Limits of Legal Humanitarianism,” in *Contested Justice: The Politics and Practice of International Criminal Court Interventions*, eds. Christian De Vos, Sara Kendall and Carsten Stahn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 352–376.
- Marc Trabsky, “Walking with the Dead: Colonial Law and Spatial Justice in the Necropolis,” in *Spaces of Justice*, eds. Chris Butler and Edward Mussawir (London: Taylor and Francis, 2017).

Recommended Reading

- Osman Balkan, “*Charlie Hebdo* and the Politics of Mourning,” *Contemporary French Civilization* 41, no. 2 (2016): 253–271.
- Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (eds.), *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 5–9.
- Michel Foucault, “The Concern for Truth” (Interview with Francois Ewald), in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984*, ed. Laurence Kritzmann (New York: Routledge, 1988), 255–267.
- Hyo Yoon Kang and Sara Kendall, “Legal Materiality,” in *Oxford Handbook for Law and Humanities*, eds. M. Del Mar, B. Meyler and S. Stern (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2019).
- Bruno Latour, “Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern,” *Critical Inquiry* 30 (winter 2004): 225–248.

N.B. This seminar might take place elsewhere on campus. I will keep you posted.

[No Seminar Presentation this week]

Week 11 “Enough of this Postcolonial Shit” 27 March 2019

Niviaq Korneliussen, *Last Night in Nuuk* (forthcoming 2019).

“‘Enough of this postcolonial sh#%’: An interview with Greenlandic author Niviaq Korneliussen,” Eye on the Arctic, rcinet.ca, 1 December 2017, <http://www.rcinet.ca/eye-on-the-arctic/2017/12/01/enough-of-this-postcolonial-sh-an-interview-with-greenlandic-author-niviaq-korneliussen/>.

Niviaq Korneliussen’s Instagram account, <https://www.instagram.com/niviaqkorneliussen/>.

Seminar Presentation _____

Week 12 Research Presentations 3 April 2019

Meet at Mike’s Place (to be confirmed)

Late Guest Lecture Dr. Brian Macaskill 26 April 2019

This guest lecture was intended to be part of the course, but unfortunately this was not possible due to scheduling conflicts. The lecture will take place at the end of the semester, and you are cordially invited.

Lapidary Practice: The Twentieth Century’s First Death Camp, William Kentridge, and the World’s Last Northern White Rhinoceros Male

Brian Macaskill (John Carroll University)

Friday, 26 April 2019, from 15:00 – 17:00
Dunton Tower 1811

Abstract

Macaskill’s presentation circles and cycles around the insufficiently known genocide committed against the Herero nation in German Southwest Africa, locus of the first death camp in twentieth-century history. It celebrates the artistic response to that disaster by internationally renowned South African artist William Kentridge, who memorializes the catastrophe in *Black Box / Chambre Noire* (2005), a beautifully and sympathetically nuanced multimedia reaction to this genocidal atrocity. Glimpsing rhinoceri now and then along its also intermedial trajectory (voice,

image, music, text, genealogy too), the presentation pauses – with a sideways glance at the Shoah – over some difficulties confronting memorial commemoration in lapidary practice.

Bio

Brian Macaskill was born to musical parents on a modest pumpkin farm: in a farmhouse full of seeds, a farmhouse full of sounds bequeathed by J.S. Bach; a farmhouse in the middle of South Africa's Orange Free State, farmhouse whence Macaskill circuitously traces his African heritage back to the mid-seventeenth century, a heritage he joyfully passes on to his many children, most of whom play music, and to his – so far – fewer grandchildren.

(Genealogy it is – yes.)

Macaskill is currently Professor of English at John Carroll University in Ohio, where he offers seminars in literary theory, modernism, and contemporary Anglophone literatures. The 2018 winner of an Ohio Arts Council Award for Individual Excellence in Criticism, he has widely published – performed – on and in the arts, almost all the arts: literary, operatic, graphic, and cinematographic, to name the most germane.

(All writing, all artistry, all performance, is autobiographically rooted in the body from which it emerges – this has always been so – yes, yes.)

Much of this body of work has concerned itself with the writing practice of J.M. Coetzee and related subjects. Macaskill's early work on the linguistics of the middle voice in Coetzee (*Contemporary Literature* and elsewhere) is generally credited as having changed the direction of inquiry into Coetzee's oeuvre. His most recent and most intermedial work – essays that are themselves self-consciously graphic and / or musical in character – pursues as contrapuntal set of relationships points of contact among literary, pictorial, musical, architectural, mathematical, and ethical imbrications. This recent work has appeared in *Narrative*, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, *Word and Text*, *Postmedieval*, *MediaTropes*, *Matatu*, *Mise-en-scène*, *Studies in Visual Arts and Communication*, *Reconstruction*, and other journals. In these more overtly intermedial essays, the pursuit is sometimes driven by consideration of intermediality in and around William Kentridge and J.M. Coetzee, both of whom perform what Kentridge calls a political art that is not political: “that is to say,” using Kentridge's words, “an art of ambiguity, contradiction, uncompleted gestures and uncertain endings.” Sometimes the pursuit or hunt – lodged in the derivation of *fuga* or “fugue” from *fugere* and *fugare* (to flee and to pursue) – is conducted through the compositional medium of an unorthodox writing that resembles (albeit only roughly) fugal composition in music.

(J.S. Bach – yes, yes, yes.)

Course Requirements and Evaluation¹

All assignments (except the first) will be discussed in seminar.

1. **Creative Writing Assignment (Week 1): 0%**
2. **Critical Reader Responses (a total of 3 x 10% each): 30%**

These assignments are intended to make you more critical readers and writers.

N.B. You may submit up to 5, the best 3 marks will count.

NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED. Due (hard copy) at the beginning of each class. [Hint: consider writing one of these in conjunction with your Seminar Presentation!]

- a. **Assignment Overview:** A critical reading of a text from the week's readings (theory, literature, whatever). Answer the question: What is the text's purpose? In other words, what claim does it make on the reader, and more importantly, *how*? [Hint: you might engage one of the course themes, such as death/life, identity (politics), community, representation, etc. – these themes will morph and develop based on our in-class discussions.]
 - b. **Method:** This is *not* a personal response, an opinion, or feelings – though this might be where you begin, your motivation. A critical reading means more than just being moved, affected, informed, persuaded, etc., by a text; it means analyzing and understanding how the text achieves its effects. In other words, *critique* means paying attention to the conditions of possibility for a reader's response, opinion, or feeling: what would the reader need to think, believe, or feel in order for the text to be persuasive and to make a claim (on us and/or about its subject)? How does the text marshal, invoke, or “curate” these thoughts, beliefs, or feelings? (You won't evaluate the text's success or failure for this assignment).
 - c. **Analysis:** Demonstrate through a critical reading (analysis/interpretation) of the text *how* it makes its claim.
 - d. **Details:** 1000–1250 words, double-spaced Times New Roman 12 pt font, no secondary sources (although a good dictionary is permitted, e.g., *OED* <https://proxy.library.carleton.ca/login?url=http://www.oed.com>).
3. **Seminar Presentation: 20%**
The critical presentation of a text or texts (i.e., one or more, the choice is yours) from the assigned weekly readings, comprising:
 - 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.

¹ [Required fine print here—SJM] “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.”

- b. Assume your audience has carefully read the text(s). Present an overview of the author's *purpose*: the claim(s), the controversies, the style of the text(s), the literary and/or rhetorical (persuasive) devices that are used, etc.
 - c. Evaluate the "evidence" for the author's claim(s). You may also engage the author's critics (secondary sources). Then focus! Take time to analyze – 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.
 - d. 15–30-minute discussion: Engage class questions and prompt discussion. The spirit of the seminar presentations is *collaborative, not competitive*.
- 4. Research Presentation: 0%**
***Given time limitations, please respect a maximum of 15 minutes total per presentation.**
 To be presented on **3 April 2019**, usually somewhat convivially at Mike's Place (nachos provided), this is an opportunity to briefly present and "workshop" your emergent Argumentative Research Paper. For this, I encourage you to locate a "site" (object, text, social/political movement, controversy) in the world, however you wish to define this, whether real, political, literary, filmic, etc. At this stage, you will typically be honing your thesis statement (claim). Here are some guiding questions:
- a. The texts that I will analyze in my essay is/are:
 - b. To craft an argument, I will also use (e.g., theoretico-methodological texts):
 - c. The theme that most interests me is:
 - d. Bearing in mind this theme, specifically, I will address:
 - e. I am studying _____ because I want to find out (what/whether/how) _____.
 - f. Why is this topic significant, or in other words, "so what?" (a "statement of significance" that accompanies a thesis statement).
 - g. Finally, think back to your Critical Reader Responses and question your own text from this vantage, as a critical reader:
 - i. What is your essay's purpose? In other words, what claim will it make on the reader, and more importantly, *how*?
 - ii. What would your readers need to think, believe, or feel in order for your essay to be persuasive and to make a claim (on them and/or about your essay's subject)?
 - iii. How will your essay marshal, invoke, or "curate" these thoughts, beliefs, or feelings – without appearing jejune?
- 5. Argumentative Research Paper* (20 pp. double-spaced Times New Roman 12 pt font): 50%**
 Due **12 April 2019**, submitted via email to stuart.murray@carleton.ca:

- a. This will normally be the workshopped and refined iteration of your Research Presentation, in polished essay format, in MLA, APA, or Chicago format (I don't care a bit which but choose one, be consistent and accurate: no RefWorks-generated nonsense please!).
- b. Again, I encourage you to locate a "site" (object, text, social/political movement, controversy) in the world, however you wish to define this, whether real, political, literary, filmic, etc. (For PhD students, this might be related to your eventual dissertation topic and I hope that some of our course work will be incorporated into a dissertation chapter).
- c. I always get asked about the "minimum" number of secondary sources and my answer is always: as many as you need. Read widely but wisely, work smart (I will offer tips in class), but only employ secondary sources to the extent that they advance *your* argument and serve *your* essay (i.e., keep the literature review/summary to a minimum).
- d. I am available and keen to discuss your ideas throughout the course.
- e. I will send a return email confirming that I have received your essay and can open it. I typically respond with detailed written comments by email, but I am always happy to meet in person or virtually to discuss your work.

***Critical Research-Creation Option:** By now you will know me and know that I read literary texts as arguments (claims supported by evidence). Though cultural texts (poems, works of art, music, etc.) are not in the traditional format of a research paper, they can be effective in many different ways. Contact me if you would like to explore a more creative format for the final assignment or would like to pair a critical analysis with a research-creation component.

6. Attendance and Active Participation

Attendance and participation are required and expected throughout the course; three or more *unexcused* absences will result in failing the course. That said, if you're ill please (and thank you!) stay home, take care of yourself, and send a brief email to let me know.

Carleton University Policies

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

[I am required to paste the official University text below, and it pleases me to include all typos and syntactical infelicities (some might include these among the performative contradictions of neoliberal-bureaucratic care). Most importantly, however, I hope that you will please feel free to contact me in confidence for any concerns you may have throughout the semester. —SJM]

Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation

Please contact your instructor 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. For more details, visit the Equity Services website:

<http://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf>

Religious obligation

Please contact your instructor 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. For more details, visit the Equity Services website:

<http://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf>

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. <http://carleton.ca/pmc>

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and is

survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit:

<http://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support>

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor 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.

<https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: <http://students.carleton.ca/course-outline>