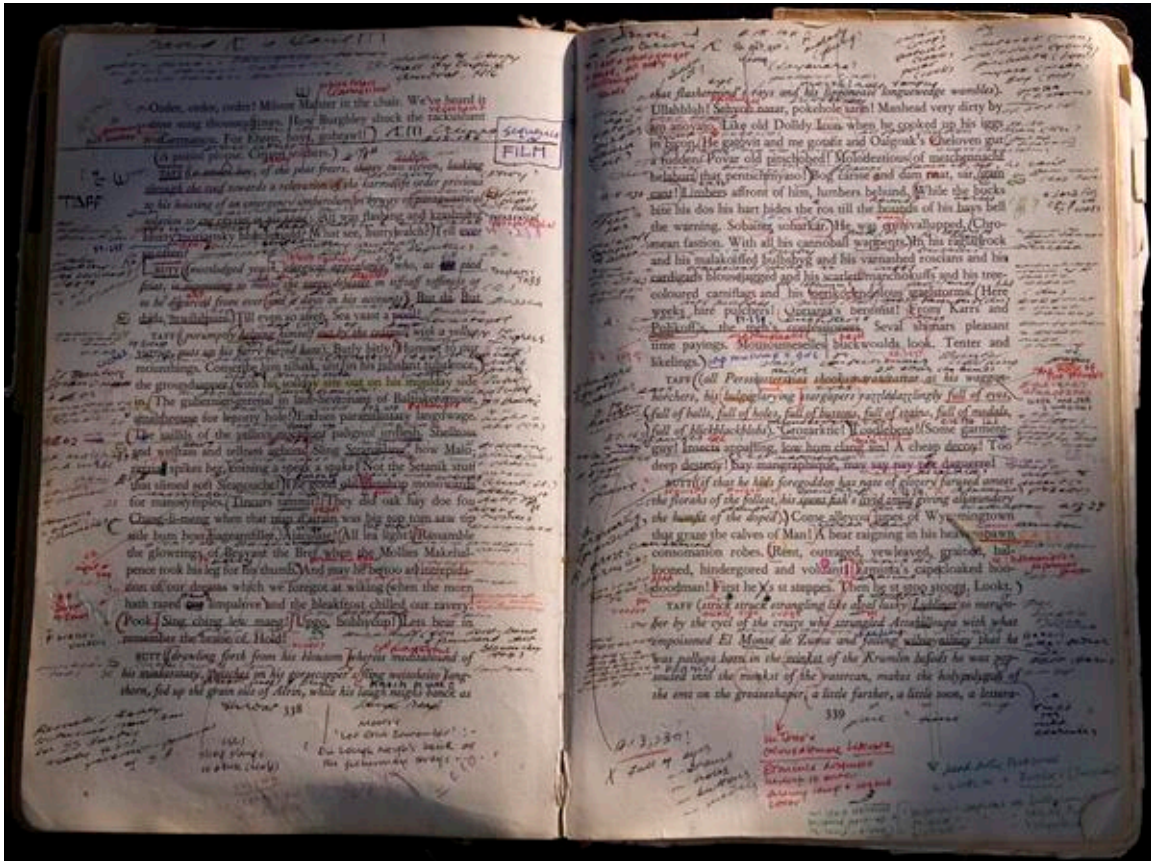


LTTH250 THEORY AND WRITING
Fall 2014
Dr. Rivera-Garza

Th 1:00-3:50 LIT 437
Office Hours: W 11:00-12:00 and W 1:00-2:00pm or by appointment
Office: Literature Building 432
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We write with others. A plural practice from the start, writing connects, subverts, provokes, disrupts. In this seminar, we will engage some of the most vibrant contemporary discussions on the cultural and political role of writing in our communities: from the production of subjectivity to the social nature of enunciation, from the biopolitics of gendered bodies to the genesis of the post-human experience. Based on theoretical readings from a range of traditions, we will privilege a dialogue about the economic, aesthetic and ethical aspects of our practice. While some of our readings will explore literatures from the English-speaking world, the list of the

required books for this class importantly includes texts generated by men and women working in different disciplines and languages throughout the world.

A seminar is, above all, a conversation. If we want to have the best conversation possible, we need to read carefully (see image above) and participate actively. While I will be lecturing from time to time, I expect each student to become a main discussant at least once in our quarter (see discussion guidelines at the end of this document). In addition to organize at least one presentation/discussion, I expect each student to write and turn in a related 3 to 5 page essay in a timely manner. Students will be preparing a final research paper on a topic of their choosing but including an in depth analysis of at least three contemporary artistic works from different regions/traditions in our contemporary world.

REQUIRED WORK:

Attendance and participation

1 Discussion-presentation

1 Discussion-presentation paper (3-5 pages long; e-mail final version at least one day before class and bring hard copies to your presentation)

1 Final paper (8-14 pages long; including the analysis of at least three works of contemporary writing from different traditions/areas of the world/languages critically employing theoretical approaches analyzed in class)

REQUIERED READINGS:

Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, *Ch'ixinakax utxiwa: A Reflection on the Practices and Discourses of Decolonization*

Karl Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*

Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*

Charles Bernstein, *A Poetics*

Ron Silliman, *The New Sentence*

Lyn Hejinian, *The Language of Inquiry*

Christian Marazzi, *Capital and Language. From the New Economy to the War Economy*

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*

Franco Berardi Bifo, *The Uprising. Poetry and Finance*

Maurizio Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines. Capitalism and the Production of Subjectivity*

Vanessa Place and Robert Fitterman, *Notes on Conceptualism*

Kenneth Goldsmith, *Uncreative Writing. Managing Text in the Digital Era*

Beatriz Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmapornographic Era*

Edward Kohn, *How Forests Think. Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human*

SCHEDULE

October 2

WEEK ONE: Introduction: Writing in Communalty

Lecture based on *Los muertos indóciles. Necroescritura y desapropiación* (I can provide you with a link to this book, in case you are interested in reading it). Notions of communalty explored here are based on Benedict, Agamben, Blanchot, Nancy, and fundamentally on mixe anthropologist Floriberto Díaz, Gómez, *Escrito. Comunalidad. Energía viva del pensamiento mixe*, which you can find here: <http://books.google.com/books/about/Escrito.html?id=uPnYEI5nesEC>

Read: *Ch'ixinakax utxiwa: A Reflection on the Practices and Discourses of Decolonization*: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/143240998/cusicanqui-criticaModernity-coloniality>

Watch:

Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, Interviews:

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pGlCIJpcc4>

TASK:

Select your book for discussion/presentation

October 9

WEEK TWO: What do we talk about when we talk about citing? Labor and the poetics of appropriation

[I will be in Santiago, Chile, this week. Please, read the following].

Read:

Marx, Karl. "Estranged Labor" in *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Economic-Philosophic-Manuscripts-1844.pdf> (p. 28-35)

Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project* (read as much as you can; you will be responsible for the reading/discussion of one chapter)

Suggested readings:

I am assuming that all of you have already read Benjamin's famous essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" as well as "The Storyteller." In case you have not, please, take a look at the following links:

http://www.udel.edu/History/suisman/611_S05_webpage/benjamin-work-of-

[art.pdf](#),

<http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/fms/Colleges/College%20of%20Humanities%20and%20Social%20Sciences/EMS/Readings/139.105/Additional/The%20Storyteller%20-%20Walter%20Benjamin.pdf>

Margorie Perloff, "Phantasmagorias of the Marketplace: Citational Poetics in Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project*", in *Unoriginal Genius*, p.24

TASK:

Select one of the chapters conforming Benjamin's *Arcades Project*. While I expect you to read the whole book, you will be responsible for the discussion/presentation of the selected chapter.

October 16

WEEK THREE: Labor and the Poetics of Appropriation

Writing as labor in Capitalist Contexts: Analysis of "Estranged Labor."

Collective presentation/discussion of the *Arcades Project*

Name of discussant

Arcades Project's Chapter

1 _____	_____
2 _____	_____
3 _____	_____
4 _____	_____
5 _____	_____
6 _____	_____
7 _____	_____
8 _____	_____
9 _____	_____
10 _____	_____

October 23

WEEK FOUR: Language Poetries

Read:

Charles Bernstein, "The Artifice of Absorption," in *A Poetics*; Ron Silliman, "The New Sentence", in *The New Sentence*; Lyn Hejinian, "The Rejection of Closure," in *The Language of Inquiry*

[<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/learning/essay/237870?page=1>]

Discussant 1 (Bernstein): _____

Discussant 2 (Silliman): _____
Discussant 3 (Hejinian): _____

Suggested Readings:

S/N New World Poetics Magazine: <http://epc.buffalo.edu/presses/SN/>

October 30

WEEK FIVE: Immaterial labor and material writing

Read:

Christian Marazzi, *Capital and Language. From the New Economy to the War Economy*; Franco Berardi Bifo, *The Uprising. Poetry and Finance*

Discussant 1 (Marazzi): _____
Discussant 2 (Bifo): _____

Suggested readings:

Andre Gorz, *The Immaterial*

Christian Marazzi, *The Violence of Financial Capitalism*

November 6

WEEK SIX: The Social Character of Enunciation

Read:

Delueze and Guattari, "Rhizome" and "Postulates on Linguistics," in *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.

Discussant 1 (Rhizome): _____
Discussant 2 (Linguistics): _____

November 13

WEEK SEVEN: The Non-Human Turn: Machines

[I will be touring three campuses of the ITESM University system in Mexico this week]

Read:

Maurizio Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines. Capitalism and the Production of Subjectivity*

Discussant 1 _____

Suggested reading:

Sarah Brouillette, *Literature and the Creative Economy*

November 20

WEEK EIGHT

Read:

Vanessa Place, *Notes on Conceptualism*; Kenneth Goldsmith, *Uncreative Writing*

Discussant 1 (Place): _____

Discussant 2 (Goldsmith): _____

Suggested readings:

Goldsmith and Dworkin, *Against Expression. An Anthology of Conceptual Writing*

Bergvall, Browne, Carmody, Place, *I'll Drown My Book. Conceptual Writing by Women*

Ron Silliman, On Notes on Conceptualism:

https://files.nyu.edu/rmf1/public/reviews/review_silliman_on_notes.pdf

November 27

THANKSGIVING

December 4

WEEK NINE: The Non-Human Turn: Bodies Altered

[I will be at the Guadalajara International Book Fair, in Mexico]

Read:

Beatriz Preciado, *Testo Junkie. Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmapornographic Era.*

Discussant 1: _____

Suggested readings:

Beatriz Preciado, Contra-Sexual Manifesto:

<http://totalartjournal.com/archives/1402/the-contra-sexual-manifesto/>

December 11

WEEK TEN: The Non-Human Turn: Mutants

Read:

Edward Kohn, *How Forest Think. Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human*

Suggested readings:

César Calvo, *The Three Halves of Ino Moxo: Teachings of the Wizard of the Upper Amazon*

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER
DUE DATE TBA

Guidelines for discussion/presentation

1. Read selected work carefully and actively. Underline, mark, scribble, jot, in a word, generate your own marginalia.
2. After your first reading, it would be wise to select a couple of themes/concepts that especially interest or intrigue you. You may want to attempt to give us your general interpretation of the selected piece, and this will be fine, but it will be way more interesting for both you and the seminar to highlight and analyze in depth those topics that truly engage your critical imagination. We are aiming here for something beyond the summary of the piece or the proverbial “what the author meant by,” and instead we will be privileging a focused and critical take on the book under analysis. Remember that you do not have to like the piece or be in agreement with it. You do have, however, to read it carefully and critically, providing specific evidence from the book to substantiate your claims.
3. All books are written in context, and they usually partake of a series of ongoing conversations. Do some research on the author of your piece and the ways in which your book has been received by readers (contemporary or otherwise). Try to figure out the larger dialogue your book is participating in and contributing to. Keep in mind that this information may be of great use to you as a discussant, but you do not have to use it all in your presentation.
4. Writing your 3-5 page presentation essay will help you to identify major issues in your discussion as well as to organize your material. While this text is meant as a working tool for your presentation, try to write in complete paragraphs as you develop your main argument. Be mindful of the allotted time.
5. Please, feel free to refer to other books, whether academic, theoretical or creative, as you develop your arguments. Make sure you include appropriate bibliographical information in your essay.
6. Remember that you will have to email a final version of this essay at least one day before your presentation is due. You will have to make copies for all members of the seminar (including myself, especially if you altered the piece you emailed to me earlier). You will be receiving these copies back, with comments, at the end of the session.
7. Feel free to prepare a Power Point/Keynote presentation or to employ appropriate visual or sound aids for your discussion. If you are planning to use the screen or your computer, please, arrive early and make sure all the equipment is in working condition before class starts.
8. You will receive your essay(s) back, with my written comments, the day of your presentation.

9. Do come to my office in case you need more help to prepare your presentation/discussion. We can arrange an appointment at a different time in case your schedule conflicts with my office hours.

Dear All—

Most of you have already started your final papers for our LTWR255 Theory and Writing Seminar. What follows are but suggestions to better prepare and organize said document.

1. As I stated at the start of the quarter, I'd like for you to use at least one of the theoretical readings we explored over the last 10 weeks. "Using" here does not necessarily imply "agreeing with." You may use a theory to demonstrate why, in your opinion, it is either limited or wrong. In either case, what really matters is that you understand what the arguments of said theory are about and, even more importantly, that you are able and willing to use both arguments and concepts as heuristic or critical tools in your own inquiry. At times, it becomes necessary, or useful, to combine categories originated in different theoretical sources, of course. And you are more than welcome to do so, in case your study will benefit from this approach.
2. I did say that I am requiring you to analyze at least three sources from different literary traditions. These sources may be as long as the longest of novels or one single relevant poem. You may include works of fiction or non-fiction as well. What really matters to me in any case is that you are able to compare and contrast work generated in different languages (I understand, though, that some of you will use English translations) and, more importantly, in different literary traditions. I am not aiming for some form of abstract political correctness or enforced diversity, but for a fertile ground to explore how our writing strategies work depending on reading practices and, even more, living practices.
3. While I am not opposed at all to creative essays (I am the one who assigned Preciado's *Testo Junkie* after all) I do ask you, however, to honor some of the most basic elements of academic writing (or appropriation, for that matter): include information about your sources. This may be in the form of a bibliography at the end of your paper—a list of books—or a more dialogical format, such as in brief bibliographical essays that may be relevant throughout the body of your text. When relevant, please, include information about these sources, whether as footnotes (Chicago style) or parenthetical notes (MLA style).

4. I do believe that 15 pages will be plenty for you to develop a meaningful argument. Please, feel free to write as many as 15 pages of text (not including bibliography or any other attachments), but no more than that. Double-spaced texts in double-sided, stapled copies are very much appreciated.
5. I know I had said that the deadline for this paper would be finals week—which would mean that I should receive your paper by Thursday, December 18th, at 1:00 pm. This will give me only a couple of days to turn in final grades, due the 22nd. So, feel free to turn your paper in earlier if you can. Just let me know you are placing it in my mailbox, and I will pick it up asap.
6. I am looking forward to reading each one of these papers. Truly curious. Do not hesitate to contact me with questions and/or suggestions meanwhile.