

PL205 The Gaze

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Office hours: By appointment

This course is an OSUN network online course and will take place via Zoom.

Course description

This course explores a range of ways in which human relationships—with each other, with society at large, with the world in which we live—have been conceived as structured in terms of a “gaze” or “look”. We begin with the idea of the human being as (in part) constituted by a need, or desire, for recognition in the eyes of another. We then turn to consider analyses and critiques of modern Western society as based on a pernicious culture of seeing, drawing from work in philosophy, cultural criticism, feminist theory, psychoanalysis, film, and fiction.

Texts

All readings will be provided during the semester electronically. We will be examining readings closely during class. To make the most of the online format, please print the readings out before class, or have them available on a device different from the one you use to join class. This will help to build a sense of community, because then we’ll all know that you are looking at us, and not a PDF, when you are looking at your screen.

Requirements

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences will not affect the participation grade or require documentation. Any further absences should be discussed with the instructor.

Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

ASSESSMENT

Participation

Each student is expected to join class on time and prepared. Being prepared means: having carefully read the assigned texts in the assigned editions, having a copy at hand during class together with writing materials, and being ready to initiate and to contribute to seminar discussion. Repeated and/or significant lateness will affect the participation grade, as will lack of preparation.

Contributions to seminar discussion should be productive as well as regular, and should engage responsively and respectfully with the contributions of others.

Participation will also include short presentations, comments, and responses, to be posted in advance of class.

Assignments

All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.

Midterm essay (2000-2500 words)

Final essay presentation

Final essay (2500-3000 words)

BCB policy on late submission of papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late.

Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Academic integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Grade breakdown

Participation	30%
Midterm essay	25%
Final essay presentation	10%
Final essay	35%

Provisional Schedule

subject to change during the semester

registered students should consult the syllabus on Google Classrooms

Week 1

Tu Aug 31 Introduction [no assigned reading]

Th Sept 2 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Men* or *Second Discourse*, Part I including Note XV, in *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, pp. 134-160 and p. 218

Week 2

Tu Sept 7 Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, Part II, in *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, pp. 161-188

Th Sept 9 G. W. F. Hegel, from *Phenomenology of Spirit*

Week 3

Tu Sept 14 Sigmund Freud, from "On Narcissism: An Introduction"

Th Sept 16 Jean-Paul Sartre, from *Being and Nothingness*

Week 4

Tu Sept 21 Sartre, from *Being and Nothingness*

Th Sept 23 Sartre, *No Exit*

Week 5

Tu Sept 28 Jacques Lacan, “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience”

Th Sept 30 Simone de Beauvoir, from *The Second Sex*

Week 6

Tu Oct 5 Beauvoir, from *The Second Sex*

Th Oct 7 Beauvoir, from *The Second Sex*

Week 7

Tu Oct 12 John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* video, Parts 1 and 2

Th Oct 14 Berger, *Ways of Seeing* video, Parts 3 and 4

F Oct 15 midterm essay due by midnight

Fall break (Oct 18-24)

Week 8

Tu Oct 26 Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”

Tu Oct 28 Martha Nussbaum, “Objectification”

Week 9

Tu Nov 2 Alfred Hitchcock, *Vertigo*

Th Nov 4 Alfred Hitchcock, *Vertigo*

Week 10

Tu Nov 9 Céline Sciamma, *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*

Th Nov 11 bell hooks, “The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators”

Week 11

Tu Nov 16 no class

Th Nov 18 no class

Week 12

Tu Nov 23 Frantz Fanon, from *Black Skin, White Masks*

Th Nov 25 Fanon, from *Black Skin, White Masks*

Week 13

Tu Nov 30 Guy Debord, from *The Society of the Spectacle*

Th Dec 2 John Berger, “Why Look at Animals?”

Week 14

Tu Dec 7 Final presentations

Th Dec 9 Final presentations

Completion Week

Tu Dec 14 Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind”

Th Dec 16 Iris Murdoch, “The Idea of Perfection”

F Dec 17 final essay due by midnight