

ENG6077 Theory After 2008

Section 1PB2 Class 28965



In 2008-2009 one of the biggest economic crises of the latest decades hit the global world, reshaping the balance between global powers and opening up a new phase of multi-polar hegemonies. In the same year Mark Fisher, a blogger at the margins of academia, published in London “Capitalism Realism,” a pamphlet that will be enormously influential in the next decade, where he claims that in this phase not only capitalism has become the only viable political and economic system with no credible alternative, but that it has now become even impossible to imagine a coherent alternative to it. Faced with a new mood of hopelessness that at times reached dystopic and apocalyptic tones, Theory after 2008 changed its language and forms: it blurred theory and fiction; it started to be influenced by personal storytelling and worldbuilding; it exploded in a myriad of niches and jargons.

During this semester we will map some of the current trends of Theory that appeared after 2008 (even though in few cases we will need to trace back their origin as back as in 90s). We will traverse a multiplicity of languages, approaches, ideological positions, modes of expression.

Instructor Name: Pietro Bianchi

Course meeting times: W Period 9-11 (4:05 PM – 7:05 PM) Turlington 4112

Office Hours: Tuesday (2:30 – 4:00) or by appointment at Turlington 4342 or on Zoom (personal ID: 561 851 9876). (NB: Zoom appointments have to be scheduled in advance by email, even during office hours).

Course website: elearning.ufl.edu

Instructor Email: pietrobianchi@ufl.edu

Structure of the Course

As a general structure, every session of the seminar will be divided as follow:

At the beginning of the class I will make a short introduction about the topic of the day (5-10minutes)

Then the person in charge of introducing the reading of the day will open up the discussion, reflecting on the assignment and individuating some questions or set of topics worth to be further analyzed collectively, in no more than 15 minutes. This does NOT have to be structured as a formal presentation like in a conference (it does not have to be read!): it rather has to be a general reflection on the content of the assigned texts in order to contribute to a collective conversation. I cannot emphasize enough how NOT formal this assignment has to be intended (which does not mean lack of precision, rigor, and clarity). The schedule of the presentations will be decided during the first session of the seminar.

Then a discussion (30-35 min) will follow where everyone is expected to share with the class a question or a brief comment on the reading and contribute to the discussion.

Then after a short break we will resume our discussion and I will use the last 20 minutes of the class for some concluding remarks.

Attendance and Participation

Participation in a graduate seminar is obviously vital. A seminar is not a traditional class where knowledge is provided top-down and work is carried on individually, but a collective endeavor based on sharing, discussion and confrontation and where everyone has to do its part. That means that intervening in the seminar is not optional: even when you are not responsible for the introduction, sharing your thoughts/reflections with the class is a fundamental part of the work.

Attendance is also equally crucial, and you should make any effort to avoid miss any class. However, I do know that sometimes things happen and there is nothing we can do about it. If you miss one class (due to extraordinary circumstances) there will be no penalty. Every other unexcused absence will result in a lowered grade. Five or more absences will result in a failure of the course.

Course Requirement and Grade Distribution

The requirements for this course fall under three categories:

In-class Presentation of the Reading (15%) Once in the semester you will be required to open the discussion for the chosen texts or film of the day (15 minutes)

Weekly Posts on Canvas (15%) Every week you will be asked to post on Canvas a short reflection and/or a few questions (a couple of paragraph and not more than a page!) regarding the readings assigned for the day. The deadline for this assignment is **Tuesday at midnight**.

Final Paper (70%) Your final seminar paper (15-20 pages) will be due Monday, **April 30** at noon.

Schedule of classes

I. The 2008 Moment

Jan 10

Mark Fisher, *Capital Realism*

Jan 17

Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia*

II. Nature

Jan 24

Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble* (Introduction; Playing String Figures with Companion Species; Sympoiesis; Making Kin)

Jan 31

Graham Harman, *Prince of Networks. Bruno Latour and Metaphysics* (Preface; Irreductions; Object-Oriented Philosophy)

Feb 7

Eduardo Viveiros De Castro, *Cosmological Perspectivism in Amazonia and Elsewhere* (Cosmologies: perspectivism; Culture: the universal animal; Nature: the world as affect and perspective; Supernature: under the gaze of the other)

III. Bodies and Technologies

Feb 14

The Xenofeminist Manifesto https://www.laboriacuboniks.net/20150612-xf_layout_web.pdf
Helen Hester, *Xenofeminism* (Introduction; What is Xenofeminism?; Xenofeminist Futurities)

Luciana Parisi, *Automate Sex: Xenofeminism, Hyperstition and Alienation*

Annie Goh, *Appropriating the Alien: a Critique of*

Xenofeminism <https://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/appropriating-alien-critique-xenofeminism>

Feb 21

Yuk Hui, *The Question Concerning Technology in China: An Essay in Cosmotronics*

IV. Accelerationism and its discontents

Feb 28

Nick Land, *Fanged Noumena (Introduction; Kant, Capital and the Prohibition of Incest: a Polemical Introduction to the Configuration of Philosophy and Modernity; Meat; No Future; Machinic Desire; Meltdown)*

Nick Land, *Dark Enlightenment*

Ray Brassier, *On Nick Land* <https://moskvax.wordpress.com/2010/09/30/accelerationism-ray-brassier/>

Mar 6

Alex Williams and Nick Srnicek, *Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics*

Benjamin Noys, *Malign Velocities*

Toni Negri, *Reflections on the “Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics”*

—Spring break—

V. Politics

Mar 20

Toni Negri, Michael Hardt, *Assembly*

Mar 27

The Invisible Committee, *Now* (<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/the-invisible-committee-now>)

Apr 3

Endnotes, *What are we to do?*

Théorie Communiste, *Communization in the Present Tense*

Benjamin Noys, *The Fabric of Struggles*

(Optional) Evan Calder Williams, *Fire to the Commons*

(Optional) Anthony Iles and Marina Vishmidt, *Work, Work Your Thoughts, and Therein See a Siege*

Apr 10

Anna Kornbluh, *Immediacy*

VI. Subjectivities

Apr 17

Frank B. Wilderson III, *Blacks and the Master/Slave Relation*

Frank B. Wilderson III, *Afropessimism* (Ch. For Halloween I Washed My Face; Juice from a Neck Bone)

Frank B. Wilderson III, Samira Spatzek and Paula von Gleich, *‘The Inside-Outside of Civil Society’: An Interview with Frank B. Wilderson, III*

Loic Waquant, *Afropessimism's Radical Abdication*

Apr 24

Slavoj Žižek, *Less Than Nothing* (Ch: Correlationism and Its Discontents)

Alenka Zupančič, *What IS Sex?* (Ch: Realism in Psychoanalysis)