

ENG6016 Psychological Approaches to Literature
Class #27059 Section 013F

FIGURES OF DESIRE

Fall 2022



“Desire is not a simple thing” Sigmund Freud used to say. Still, sometimes our empirical experience seems to be the opposite. It would not be difficult to list all the material objects, things and experiences that would fulfill the phrase: “make a wish”. Yet, psychoanalysis teaches us not to confuse “desire” with “will”. If it is true that we live in a society that has monumentalized self-confidence and “knowing what you want”, the place of desire, as separate from will, seems to remain elusive. Beyond all the material goods and at the bottom of all the commodities that surround us and that we would like to have, there is something about ourselves that remain opaque and cannot be expressed. This is what psychoanalysis calls “desire” and that philosophy have been struggling with for centuries: a question about our own identity; a blank spot in our own subjectivity.

Instructor Name: Pietro Bianchi

Course meeting times: T Period 9-11 (4:05 PM – 7:05 PM) Turlington 2305

Office Hours: Wednesday (1:00 – 2:30) 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/film 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/films 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). There are 14 slots for the presentations that will be assigned during the first week of class.

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 **Monday at midnight**.

Final Paper (70%) Your final seminar paper (15-20 pages) will be due Monday, **December 12** at noon.

Schedule of classes

*= films

August 30

Introduction of the Seminar

*Alfred Hitchcock, *Vertigo*

September 6

*Alfred Hitchcock *Vertigo*

Bruce Fink, *Desire and Psychoanalytic Technique* (from *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, pp. 1-71)

September 13

Plato, *Symposium*

September 20

Bruce Fink, *Lacan's Reading of Plato's Symposium* (from *Lacan on Love*, pp. 33-54)

Bruce Fink, *Reading Plato with Lacan: Further Commentary on Plato's Symposium* (from *Lacan on Love*, pp. 163-199)

*Luca Guadagnino, *Call Me By Your Name* (optional)

September 27

St. Augustine, *The Confessions* (Book One, ch. VI, VII, VIII, pp. 6-10; Book Two I-X, pp. 25-34; Book Three, ch. I-V, pp. 37-42; Book Seven, ch. III-V, pp. 119-122 and ch. XII-XVII, pp. 130-137; Book Eight (all), pp. 141-160)

Roert R. Edwards, *Desire in Saint Augustine's Confessions* (optional)

As an Introduction to St. Augustine, read the entry on [Augustine](#) in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy and listen to the podcast "[Life and Time: Augustine's Confessions](#)" in *History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps*

October 4

Alenka Zupančič, *What IS Sex?* (Chapter 1-3, pp. 1-71; conclusion, pp. 141-145)

October 11

Slavoj Žižek, *The Non-All, or, the Ontology of Sexual Difference* (from *Less Than Nothing*, 739-802)

October 18

*Alfred Hitchcock, *The Wrong Man*

*George Steven, *A Place in the Sun*

October 25

Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, *The Desiring Machines* (from *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 1-51)

Gilles Deleuze, [*D as Desire*](#)

Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, *What is Desire?*

*Harmony Korine, *Spring Breakers*

November 1

Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality vol. 1: An Introduction*, Part I-III, pp. 1-71.

November 8

Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power* (Ch. 1, pp. 31-62; Ch. 3, pp. 83-105, Ch. 6, pp. 167-198).

Slavoj Žižek, *Passionate (Dis)Attachments, or, Judith Butler as a Reader of Freud* (from *The Ticklish Subject*, pp. 247-312. (optional)

November 15

*John M. Stahl, *The Imitation of Life*

Lauren Berlant, *Desire/Love*

November 22 (TO BE RESCHEDULED)

Audre Lorde, *Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power*

TBA

November 29

Marguerite Duras, *The Ravishing of Lol Stein*

Jacques Lacan, *Homage to Marguerite Duras, on 'Le ravissement de Lol V. Stein'*

December 6

Philippe Garrel, *L'Enfant Secret*

Philippe Garrel, *Sauvage Innocence*