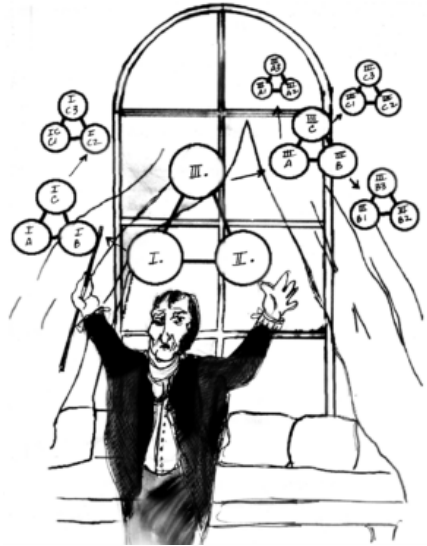


**ENG 6077, SECTION 27848  
LITERARY THEORY: FORMS**

**BEING DIALECTICAL; OR,  
HOW TO READ CREATIVELY**



**Professor Phillip Wegner**  
**Wednesday 6-8 (12:50-3:50 p.m.)**  
**Turlington 4112**

**Office: Turlington 4115**  
**Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:30-3:30 p.m.**  
**and by appointment**

**Phone: 294-2813;**  
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**<http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/pwegner/home.htm>**

The premise of our seminar is that the dialectic remains the most creative and dynamic mode of reading and thinking currently available to us. This course thus should be of great interest to any student in all of our graduate programs who, despite all the political and institutional pressures to contrary, hopes to take up the untimely vocations of the intellectual and creative reader (and writer). One its most influential contemporary practitioners, Fredric Jameson, describes the dialectic as “a speculative account of some thinking of the future which has not yet been realized: an unfinished project, as Habermas

might put it; a way of grasping situations and events that does not yet exist as a collective habit because the concrete form of social life to which it corresponds has not yet come into being.” Our goal in this seminar will be to assist your passage into such a future by “diving in” to the work of some of the most important thinkers and readers of the last two centuries. Following a too brief engagement with the work of the founder of modern dialectics, G. W. F. Hegel, the first part of our seminar will take up the writings of some of the most significant practitioners of dialectical thinking and writing from the nineteenth and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We will then turn to a group of more contemporary intellectuals who advance the claim that it is time to (re)turn to the dialectic in our present, and especially in the aftermath of the great revolution that was structuralist critical theory. Such a movement, as Slavoj Žižek would have it, involves no simple *return* to a past practice, but a far more significant effort to *repeat* it, “to distinguish between what the dialectic actually did and the field of possibilities it opened up.”

### **Texts**

Max Weber, *Charisma and Disenchantment: The Vocation Lectures*  
 G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Preface to the Phenomenology of Spirit*, translation and running commentary by Yirmiyahu Yovel  
 Karl Marx, *Capital*, Volume One  
 Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*  
 C.L.R. James, *Notes on Dialectics: Hegel, Marx, Lenin*  
 Theodor Adorno, *An Introduction to Dialectics*  
 Fredric Jameson, *Valences of the Dialectic*  
 Fredric Jameson, *The Hegel Variations: On the Phenomenology of Spirit*  
 Fredric Jameson, *Representing Capital: A Reading of Volume One*  
 Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology*  
 Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*  
 Catherine Malabou, *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic*  
 George Ciccariello-Maher, *Decolonizing Dialectics*  
 Rebecca Comay and Frank Ruda, *The Dash—The Other Side of Absolute Knowing*

Students will be responsible for procuring copies of all the readily available readings for the semester. Harder to find, out-of-print, and shorter texts will be made available on our Canvas site as the semester progresses.

### **Aims and Methods**

1. Full presence in every spatial, ontological, existential, and intellectual sense of the word, as well as active and engaged participation in the seminar discussions. Given your presence here, I assume that all of you are looking forward as much as I am to have the opportunity for a serious and careful engagement with these texts. Thus, the most general expectation that I have for this semester is that all of you intend to

read these works, and to do so in a responsible and rigorous fashion, and in a spirit of good faith and intellectual camaraderie. I would ask then that you make every effort to engage in, to use a much abused term, a *dialogue* with these works, being attentive to their respective voices, acknowledging their particular historical and otherwise contingent beings in the world, and finally working to imagine how we today might best retool the insights and modes of analysis of their various “unfinished projects.” In this way, I hope that we will develop a much more complex and profitable understanding of both the power and originality of these arguments and traditions.

2. In order to facilitate and enrich our discussion of these works, I will ask each of you to be responsible for introducing and situating each week’s readings. As I imagine all of our work fundamentally to be a collective project, you will do this in groups of two with each group being responsible for the readings on two different occasions. Each group will be asked both to provide a brief introduction to the material and to serve as general “experts” on the readings for that week. Your group can take a variety of approaches to this task: you may want to highlight some of the central issues the readings address; briefly outline their main arguments; note the ways they engage with what has come before; place them in historical, intellectual, and political contexts; note connections to other practices; give overviews of some of the secondary readings on these works; offer some questions for discussion; provide creative illustrations and applications of the thesis; and so forth. I only ask that you keep the opening comments brief (15 minutes maximum total) so that we can begin our general discussion as soon as possible. I also hope that your groups will continue to work together throughout the semester, sharing ideas, giving support, discussing research projects, enjoying cocktail hours (in person or online as the world may allow), and other important tasks. I will be very happy to meet with your group beforehand to suggest some secondary readings and discuss approaches and tactics.

3. For the major written component of the course, I will ask each of you to develop an independent research program, which will take one of two forms: either a) two shorter essays of 10-15 pages in length examining the questions or issues raised by the material in more depth, or drawing connections between these works and other areas of interest; *or*, b) a major critical research project of some 25-30 pages in length. Innovative or multi-media projects will also be welcome (let’s chat!). The aim of the longer project will be to produce: 1) a sustained engagement with some of the works we discuss in class; 2) a further independent examination of the issues raised by the work we have looked at; 3) a discussion drawing upon some of the recommended secondary or additional readings; or 4) an original reading of another other work –be it literary, theoretical, filmic, architectural, cultural, digital, virtual, or otherwise— deploying the concepts and models we elaborate during the course of the semester. I would also like to ask that all 3<sup>rd</sup> year PhD students plan to pursue option b, with the goal of producing an essay that will serve either as the basis of a dissertation chapter or a publishable essay (or even both). I ask each of you who choose this second option to turn in a detailed paper proposal, complete with

bibliography, about a month before the paper is due. If you require additional time to work on this project, I am happy to allow you to do so. However, in order to avoid extending the course indefinitely, I expect that the project will be completed by the end of the spring term; work turned in after that time should not expect to receive extensive (if any) comments.

## **Grading Criteria**

Attendance and Participation: 25%

Group presentations: 25%

Seminar paper: 50%

## **UF Policy Statements**

### Accommodations for Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor. Students needing accommodations should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

### Academic Honesty Policy

Students are required to review the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>. Plagiarism or any other violation of the Student Honor and Conduct Code will result in an automatic failure of the assignment. A report will be filed with the Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution Office.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions, and can be accessed at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>

### Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be

notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>

### In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student.

## **Campus Resources**

### **Health and Wellness**

*U Matter, We Care:* If you or a friend are in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

*Counseling and Wellness Center:* <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc>, and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

*Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS):* Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

*University Police Department* at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

### **Academic Resources**

*E-learning technical support:* 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu) / <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

*Career Resource Center:* Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. <https://www.crc.ufl.edu/> (Links to an external site.)

*Library Support:* <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>  
Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

*Teaching Center:* Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>

*Writing Studio:* 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help with brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

## **Tentative Discussion Schedule**

**1. August 23 – Introduction: Dialectics, ‘...not merely an intellectual event but a living experience and a mode of life.’**

Readings: Fredric Jameson, from *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature* (1971), Ch. 5, 306-326.  
Jameson, “The Vanishing Mediator; or, Max Weber as Storyteller” in *Ideologies of Theory*, 309-343

**2. August 30– The Vocation of Reading**

Readings: Max Weber, *Charisma and Disenchantment: The Vocation Lectures* (1917-1918)

**3. September 6 – The Event of Dialectics**

Readings: G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel’s Preface to the Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), translation and running commentary by Yirmiyahu Yovel



**4. September 13 – Marx and the Historical Dialectic**

Readings: Marx, *Capital*, Volume 1 (1867) Prefaces, Postfaces, Parts 1 & 2

**5. September 20 – Nietzsche and the Critique of Ethics**

Readings: Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887)

**6. September 27 – 20<sup>th</sup> Century Traditions, Part 1**

Readings: C.L.R. James, *Notes on Dialectics: Hegel, Marx, Lenin* (1948)

**7. October 4 – 20<sup>th</sup> Century Traditions, Part 2**

Readings: Theodor Adorno, *An Introduction to Dialectics* (1958)



**8. October 11 – The Valences Project, Part 1**

Readings: Fredric Jameson, *Valences of the Dialectic* (2009), Ch. 1-3  
Jameson, *The Hegel Variations: On the Phenomenology of Spirit* (2010)

**9. October 18 – The Valences Project, Part 2**

Readings: Jameson, *Representing Capital: A Reading of Volume One* (2011)  
Jameson, *Valences of the Dialectic*, Chs. 4-15

**10. October 25 – The Valences Project, Part 3**

Readings: Jameson, *Valences of the Dialectic*, Chs. 16-19

**11. November 1 – The 1990s,  
Part 1: The Dialectic of  
Globalization**

Readings: Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying  
with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the  
Critique of Ideology* (1993)



**12. November 15 – The 1990s, Part 2: The Dialectic of Gender**

Readings: Judith Butler, “Gender is Burning” (1993)  
Butler, *Antigone’s Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death* (2000)

**Final Project Proposals Due November 17**

**13. November 22– THANKSGIVING BREAK (No meeting)**

**14. November 29 – The 1990s, Part 3: Dialectics and Reading, Part 1**

Readings: Catherine Malabou, *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and  
Dialectic* (1996)



**15. November 29 – Today, Part 1: Dialectics and the Global Peripheries**

Readings: George Ciccariello-Maher, *Decolonizing Dialectics* (2017)



**16. December 6 – Today, Part 2: Dialectics and Reading, Part 2**

Readings: Rebecca Comay and Frank Ruda, *The Dash—The Other Side of Absolute Knowing* (2018)

**17. December 14 – FINAL PROJECTS DUE** by 10 a.m. (in order to receive a fall grade)



Renee Magritte,  
*Les vacances de Hegel* (1958)

(sold for \$10,162,500, Nov. 1, 2011)

**Past and Future Readings**

Theodor Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*

Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France*

Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter*

Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender*

Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History*

Andrew Cole, *The Birth of Theory*

Rebecca Comay, *Mourning Sickness: Hegel and the French Revolution*

Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form: Twentieth Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*

Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopian and Other Science Fictions*

Fredric Jameson, *Allegory and Ideology*

Dennis King Keenan, *Hegel and Contemporary Continental Philosophy*  
Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*  
Stathis Kouvelakis, *Philosophy and Revolution: From Kant to Marx*  
Henri Lefebvre, *Dialectical Materialism*  
Catherine Malabou, *What Should We Do With Our Brain*  
Fred Mosely and Tony Smith, eds., *Marx's Capital and Hegel's Logic: A Reexamination*  
Bertell Ollman, *Dance of the Dialectic: Steps in Marx's Method*  
Slavoj Žižek, *Revolution at the Gates: Selected Writings of Lenin from 1917*  
Slavoj Žižek, *Violence*  
Slavoj Žižek, *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*  
Slavoj Žižek, *Absolute Recoil: Towards a New Foundation of Dialectical Materialism*