

## Theory and Criticism 9500A

Instructor: John Vanderheide

Office: A203 (Huron University College)

Office Hours Thursdays 11:30-12:30 or by appt

Classes Fridays 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

### Course Description:

This course focuses upon the critical and theoretical revival in modernity of the ancient idea of mimesis (and its various cognates imitation, copy, reproduction, representation, realism, becoming similar, becoming other, etc.).

We will study a variety of writers from distinct schools and periods of modern intellectual history who have all made their own autonomous or semiautonomous uses of the idea. These figures represent groups such as The Frankfurt School, and cultural periods such as The Harlem Renaissance in the U.S. and May '68 in France. And their writings span the discourses of Marxism, psychoanalysis, critical race theory, gender and sexuality studies, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, philosophical anthropology and speculative realism.

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## Policy on Incompletes

A grade of Incomplete will be granted only in consultation with the director of the Centre.  
Class Schedule

### Week 1 (Sept 7): Walter Benjamin

1. "On Language as Such and On The Language of Man" (Benjamin, pdf)
2. "Fate and Character" (Benjamin, pdf)
3. "On Astrology" (Benjamin, pdf)
4. "Doctrine of the Similar" (Benjamin, pdf)
5. "On The Mimetic Faculty" (Benjamin, pdf)
6. "Problems in the Sociology of Language" (Benjamin, pdf)
7. "Consciousness-Raising or Redemptive Criticism: The Contemporaneity of Walter Benjamin" (Habermas, pdf)
8. "Benjamin, Wittgenstein, and Philosophical Anthropology: A Reevaluation of the Mimetic Faculty" (Ogden, pdf)

### Week 2 (Sept 14): Walter Benjamin

2. "The Mirror Stage as Formative of The Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience" (Lacan pdf)
3. "What is a Picture?" (Lacan pdf)
4. "Artist—Sorcerers: Mimicry, Magic and Hysteria" (Lomas)
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Week 13 (Dec. 7): Rey Chow

1. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, "Keeping Them in Their Place: Coercive Mimeticism and Ethical Representation" (Chow)