

**IDSVA SYLLABUS**  
**Seminar V**  
**Toward an Ethico-Aesthetics**

**Part 1: New York Intensive**

**Course Number:** 803.1  
**Course Name:** Seminar V, Part 1: New York Intensive  
**Dates:** January 2 – 9, 2011  
**Format:** Residency: New York City  
**Credits:** 1

**Part 2: The Subject and Object of Art**

**Course Number:** 803.2  
**Course Name:** Seminar V, Part 2: Toward an Ethico-Aesthetics  
**Dates:** Jan 17 – April 30, 2011 (Spring Break: March 7 – 11)  
**Format:** Online/Teleconference  
**Instructor:** Professor Seth Kim-Cohen  
**Credits:** 4

**Course Description:**

Seminar V begins with a seven-day January intensive residency in New York City. Visiting lecturers will deliver presentations concerning ethics within the context of a symposium on “Art, Ethnicity, and Globalization.” Speakers include:

James Elkins  
Simon Critchley  
Avital Ronell  
Julie Mehretu (studio visit)

Museums to be visited include the Harlem Studio Museum, MoMA, the Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum, the Brooklyn Museum and Dia: Beacon. Students will give seminar presentations on fall Independent Studies, with a view toward linking those studies to questions raised in the Symposium Lectures.

The online section of the course will allow us to re-ask the questions: “what is art?” and “what is art’s responsibility to society?” Starting with Heidegger’s use of the problem of time in formulating an ethics of revealing, we move on to consider geographical, cultural, and historical responsibility. This conceptual move will allow us to consider in more depth the philosophical relation of ethics to aesthetics and vice versa as explicit in the term “representation.” This becomes the signal ethico-aesthetic question in the work of Fanon, Said, Arendt, Barthes, Lacan, Foucault, Spivak, Nancy, Blanchot, Agamben, Groys, and Critchley.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- To underscore how key ideas in the aesthetics of Modernism are inseparable from, and in many cases underwritten by, ethical concerns.
- To explore how the three main concepts of Seminar IV (form, being, and ideology) create the foundation upon which an ethico-aesthetics is built.
- To refine and advance students' critical thinking and writing skills, through an intensive engagement with the history of ideas in philosophy, art, and aesthetics.

### **Course Requirements:**

- **Study Questions** - At the end of each reading one student will post a discussion question and moderate the ensuing conversation on Open Class Forum.
- **2 Writing Assignments** - For weeks six and ten, Professor Kim-Cohen will post a 1,500 word writing assignment asking students to analyze the intertextual relations among the texts most recently read.
- **Final Essay** - A final 3,000 word essay will be due May 2.
- **One-on-One Telephone Calls** – The instructor will conduct a 30 minute phone call with each student every other week.
- **Conference Calls:** The seminar will convene for bi-weekly conference calls.
- **Note:** The writing assignments and the final essay should be submitted to the course professor via FirstClass and to IDSV Submission Storage. Late submissions will be accepted but not given credit unless prior arrangements have been made with the professor. Extensions are granted on a case-by-case basis in response to special circumstances.
- Submitted documents must be titled with both the document name and email subject line according to the following format:  
**famlyname, givenname\_803\_assignment #\_yyymmdd**  
(e.g., “Jones, Sally\_803\_assignment 1\_100223”).

### **Assessment:**

Grades will be determined as follows:

- Contributions to Open Class Forum and Conference Calls (20%)
- Posted Study Questions (15%)
- Writing Assignments (25%)
- Final Essay (40%)

### **Recommended Texts:**

*Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Stanford Online. (See especially Plato & Aristotle on ethics & Kant's Moral Philosophy.)

Furrow, Dwight. *Ethics: Key Concepts in Philosophy*. New York: Continuum, 2005.

### **Required Texts:**

1. Agamben, Giorgio. *The Coming Community*. Minneapolis: University of

- Minnesota Press, 1993.
2. Arendt, Hannah. *Responsibility and Judgment*. Ed. Jerome Kohn. New York: Schocken Books, 2005.
  3. Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, & Giroux, 1972.
  4. Blanchot, Maurice *The Unavowable Community*. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press, 1988.
  5. Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality Vol. I*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage, 1990.
  6. Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Trans. Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2008.
  7. Critchley, Simon. *Infinitely Demanding*. Verso, 2007.
  8. Heidegger, Martin. *Basic Writings*. San Francisco: Harper, 2008. (Selected chapters.)
  9. Lacan, Jacques. *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. Dennis Porter. New York: W. W. Norton, 1997.
  10. Nancy, Jean-Luc. *The Inoperative Community*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.
  11. Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.
  12. Ronell, Avital. *The UberReader or Stupidity* (tbd).

### **Reading and Writing Schedule:**

At the end of each reading one student will post a discussion question and moderate the ensuing conversation on Open Class Forum. The assigned student's name appears in bold after the reading assignment.

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| Jan 17     | <b>Heidegger</b> , “ <i>Being and Time</i> : Introduction”; “On the ‘Essence of Truth’”; “Being, Dwelling, Thinking.” |
| Jan 24     | <b>Fanon</b> , <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i> .   |
| Jan 31     | <b>Said</b> , <i>Orientalism</i> .  |
| Feb 7      | <b>Arendt</b> , <i>Responsibility and Judgment</i> .  |
| Feb. 20    | <b>Writing Assignment 1 Due</b>   |
| Feb. 21    | <b>Nancy</b> , <i>The Inoperative Community</i> .   |
| Feb 28     | <b>Blanchot</b> , <i>The Unavowable Community &amp;</i>   |
| March 7-13 | <b>Spring Break</b>   |
| March 14   | <b>Critchley</b> , <i>Infinitely Demanding</i>  |

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| March 27             | <b>Writing Assignment 2 Due</b>                        |              |
| Mar 28               | <b>Barthes</b> , <i>Mythologies</i> .                  |              |
| April 4              | <b>Lacan</b> , <i>The Ethics of Psychoanalysis</i> .   |              |
| April 11             | <b>Foucault</b> , <i>History of Sexuality Vol. I</i> . |              |
| April 18             | <b>Ronell</b> , (tbd)                                  |              |
| April 29             | <b>Final Paper Due</b>                                 |              |
| Writing Assignment 1 |  | Due Feb 20   |
| Writing Assignment 2 |  | Due March 27 |
| Final Essay          |  | Due April 29 |