

## IDSVA SYLLABUS

### Seminar 703: Hegemonic Fantasms: A History of Philosophy (Quasi-Independent Study Course II)

#### Part 1: New York Intensive

**Course Number:** 703.1  
**Course Name:** Seminar III, Part 1: Virtual intensive  
**Dates:** January 4 – 10, 2021  
**Format:** Online  
**Credits:** ½

**Course Number:** 703.2  
**Course Name:** Seminar III, Part 2: Hegemonic Fantasms: A History of Philosophy  
**Dates:** January 25 – April 17, 2021  
**Format:** Online & Teleconference  
**Instructors:** Prof. Howard Caygill  
**TA**  
**Credits:** 4

#### Course Description

Seminar III begins with a week-long January intensive residency. The online seminar will include a lecture by Visiting Faculty, Professor Jane Taylor (Andrew W. Mellon Chair of Aesthetic Theory and Material Performance at the Centre for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa), “Of Moving and Being Moved: The Subject and the Object In puppetry and AI”; a lecture by Core Faculty, Professor Dejan Lukic, “Deranged Vivarium: Variations on Coexistence”; and a lecture in two parts by Core Faculty, Professor George Smith, “Western Metaphysics and the Future of New Philosophy.” Seminar presentations focus on papers students wrote during the fall semester in the 702 course, *Art in Theory Revisited*, and an additional workshop provides a forum to discuss the IDSVA guidelines of academic writing.

Seminar III, Part 2: *Hegemonic Fantasms: A History of Philosophy* combines a reading of Western Philosophy from the ancient Greeks to the post-modern period with a quasi-Independent Study course. Coursework will focus primarily on one text, Rainer Schürmann’s *Broken Hegemonies*. Close reading of this text will take place over the whole semester with Professor Caygill. Along with it, in the last two weeks students will also read three texts that deal with issues of race and the anthropocene, Achille Mbembe’s *Critique of Black Reason*, Simon and Maslin’s *Human Planet: How We Created the Anthropocene*, and Andreas Weber’s *Enlivenment: Toward a Poetics for the Anthropocene*.

The reading list also includes a recommended text, Solomon and Higgins's *A Short History of Philosophy*, an accessible introduction to the various schools of thoughts in Western Philosophy that provides some background information to engage the complex philosophical positions put forward by Schürmann in his work.

## Learning Objectives

The *Hegemonic Fantasms: A History of Philosophy* seminar is a quasi-independent study course leading to a 12-to-15 page self-directed paper at the end of the semester. This paper is intended to hone students' critical thinking and writing skills, while broadening their engagement with ideas and artworks. The TA will work with students directly on this aspect of the course.

Continuing the work started in the 702 Seminar II: *Art in Theory Revisited*, this quasi-independent study course aims at helping students develop particular scholarly interests and to integrate those interests within the IDSVA curriculum. Unlike the first semester of study, first-year students are now required to conduct outside research. Critical texts for the final paper will be chosen from the readings for the seminar itself, as well from 704: *The Subject and Object of Art*, and outside research (see paper specifications below).

The quasi-Independent Study is meant to foster the skills and attitude necessary for successful scholarship. These include "hard" skills, such as creating an outline, footnotes, and a bibliography, but also "soft" skills, such as the wherewithal to pursue research independently while also seeking advice and counsel from colleagues in the field.

More specifically, over the course of the semester students will learn to:

1. Situate a broad spectrum of philosophical ideas within their historical background and become familiar with key figures and concepts in Western thought.
2. Identify recurrent problems in the history of ideas, and see how they develop in time and relate with our contemporary condition.
3. Formulate questions that aim at gaining deeper understanding of the issues themselves, and ways they relate with one another.
4. Develop critical reading & writing skills and intertextual analysis.
5. Develop student's own research interests and skills based on course material and outside research.

Note: Students will formulate their questions for the final paper already in week 6, and by week 8 they will produce a first rough draft of their papers.

## Course Requirements

### 1. Seminar participation, including Videoconferences, Open Class Forum, and Individual Calls:

a. **Videoconference.** Students will participate in a once-every-three weeks (roughly) 2-hour videoconference. Each videoconference will be recorded and archived in Canvas (archiving will take a couple of hours after the end of the session).

a.1. Attendance policy: students are expected to attend *every* class. Video recordings are available as a make-up resource for missed classes, but they should not be considered equivalent to attending the class in person. More than two missed conferences will lower the final grade of 0.25 points per missed conference.

b. **Open Class Forum:** Students can initiate optional written discussion in Canvas (“Discussions” area) every week. However, in designated OCF weeks the discussion will be more structured and will require students to answer specific questions formulated by the TA. OCF should be considered as a focused conversation with the readings and one another (not a social-media style forum for scattered musings). The primary goal for the OCF is to guide students in the task of “formulating the question”; the TA will model the questions to facilitate the learning process.

- At the start of each OCF week, the TA will post a couple of intertextual questions based on the assigned readings (these questions will be ‘pinned’ by the TA). Each student is required to answer/address a question at least once in the discussion thread, and for each OCF-designated week. Students are encouraged to pose their own questions as well, as part of their answers.
- These responses should be posted preferably by the middle of the week, to allow for the discussion to take place with other members of the class. The forum will be left open after the end of the week to allow for more discussion to take place; please take advantage of it!
- Replies to questions should be **thoughtful and succinct (under 200 words)** in order to keep the conversation lively and to the point.
- Replies should (i) address at least one of the questions, and (ii) engage productively with other student comments.
- The TA will act as a mediator and step in whenever necessary to provide feedback or refocus the conversation if it goes out of track.

In addition to serving our immediate learning and engagement with the material, Open Class Forum discussions should also lay the groundwork for the seminar essay assignments. Cohort OCF discussion is archived for this purpose. Moreover, if you have a good solid OCF trail, oral exam prep is very doable. Without that, orals prep can be very difficult.

c. **Individual Calls.** Roughly every three weeks each student will engage in a

telephone or Skype/Google Hangouts discussion with the faculty. Calls will last approximately 30 minutes and will be scheduled close to the date. Students should come to the calls prepared to discuss the readings for that week, and with a couple of questions for the instructor.

## 2. Final paper

- a. The final paper (twelve to fifteen-page – or 3600-4500 words – excluding bibliography, footnotes and images) should make a careful argument that intertextually relates topics explored in the seminar with issues researched by the student, and with course material from the 704 seminar when applicable. The topic and thesis statement should be discussed with Professor Caygill and the TA beginning in week 5 and a paper statement submitted by March 8. Please limit your final paper to between 3 and 5 main selected texts to put in intertextual relation, following the guidelines that will be posted with the assignment.
- b. Papers should include *a minimum* of six and a maximum of twelve bibliographic entries. Students are encouraged to include texts from other seminar courses in their bibliographies (including past seminars).
- c. Please refer to the **IDSVA Writing Guide** for detailed explanation of paper requirements (see Section VIII, for some tips on writing style and mechanics). All papers must include an outline as developed according to Guide specifications. Please use **MLA style**<sup>1</sup> in your papers.
- d. Papers (including preliminary statements) should be uploaded to Assignments in Canvas as a Word document (.doc or .docx; no pdf). Please use a Times New Roman font, point 12, double-spaced, leaving a 1” margin on top/bottom and 1” on right and left sides. No other fonts or formats are acceptable. Clearly mark your name, seminar and assignment on the front page of your document, and number your pages. Files should be named according to the following format:  
  
**Familyname, givenname\_702.2\_assignmentname\_ymmdd**  
(e.g. “Spade,Sam\_702.2\_final draft\_160411”)
- e. Late submissions will not be graded unless prior arrangements have been made with Professor Caygill for a brief extension (made on a case-by-case basis in response to special circumstances). For extensions exceeding two weeks after the due date at the end of the semester, students should request an Incomplete (see Student Handbook).

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<sup>1</sup> For a quick online reference, see: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

## Assessment and Grading

The final grade for 703 Seminar will be based on class participation in Videoconferences, Open Class Forum, and individual calls (40% total), and the grade received on the twelve-to-fifteen-page paper (60%).

Students are required to familiarize themselves with the [Rubric for Long Papers Evaluation](#) (available in Canvas), which will be used as a meter to assess final papers.

## Required Texts

- Reiner Schürmann. *Broken Hegemonies*. \* Translated by Reginald Lilly, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003. ISBN: 0-253-21547-1  
\* **Read the General Introduction, pp. 1-48, before the start of the semester.**
- Achille Mbembe. *Critique of Black Reason*. Wits University Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-1-77614-050-3
- Lewis, Simon and Mark A. Maslin. *Human Planet: How We Created the Anthropocene*. Yale University Press, 2018.
- Andreas Weber, *Enlivenment: Toward a Poetics for the Anthropocene*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2019.
- IDSVA Research and Writing Guide (pdf, Canvas homepage)

## Recommended Texts

- Robert C. Solomon & Kathleen M. Higgins. *A Short History of Philosophy*\*. Oxford University Press, 1996. ISBN: 978-0-19-510196-6

## Course Structure

10 weeks of instruction, with Spring Break after week 5 and with final paper due one week after the end of the semester (Reading Period). Average of 100 pages of readings per week.

**Note:** The semester begins on **January 25<sup>th</sup>**, so please plan on starting the readings before then. Ideally, you should be *at least* one week ahead with the readings. You are strongly advised to create a reading schedule for yourself, and to block in times to complete *x* amount of pages every day (we indicated the number of pages for each week to facilitate this task).

## Reading & Writing Schedule

Please note: This schedule is provided as a guideline for students and faculty. It may be modified on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the faculty. Weeks follow a Monday-Sunday structure.

### **Week 1 (Jan 25-31) VC: Saturday, 1/30, 5-7pm EST. Hegemonic Fantasms and their Foundation**

Reiner Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, General Introduction,, Part I Chapter 1, 1-71.

(Background Reading: Solomon & Higgins, “I. The Search for World Order: Ancient Philosophy”, 1-77).

### **Week 2 (Feb 1-7) VC: Saturday, 2/6, 5-7pm EST. Parmenides and the One**

Reiner Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, Part I, I, Chapters 2-5 71-135.

(**Background Reading:** Solomon/Higgins: “I. The Search for World Order: Ancient Philosophy”, 1-77).

### **Week 3 (Feb 8-14) Calls: time TBD The Movement of Destitution**

Reiner Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, Part I, I, Chapters 6&7, 137-188.

(Background Reading: Solomon/Higgins:” I. The Search for World Order: Ancient Philosophy”, 1-77

### **Week 4 (Feb 15-21) OCF Nature as Hegemonic Fantasm**

Reiner Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, Part I, I, Chapters 8-10, 189-269.

(Background Reading: Solomon/Higgins “II God and the Philosophers” 79-175)

### **Week 5 (Feb 22-28) VC: Saturday, 2/27, 5-7pm EST. The Invention of Radical Freedom:**

Reiner Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, Part II, I, Chapters 11-13, 271-340.

(Background Reading: Solomon/Higgins “II God and the Philosophers” 79-175)

(Note: all-school lecture part of the series “On the Anthropocene” by Natalie Loveless, on February 27, 12-2pm EST)

**Week 6 (March 1-7): Spring break**

**Week 7 (March 8-14) VC: Saturday, 3/13, 5-7pm EST.  
Freedom and the Conscious Subject**

Reiner Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, Part III, I, Chapters 11,12 &13, 343-510.

(Background Reading: Solomon/Higgins “III Between Science and Religion” 175-243)  
**Formulate main question/topic/thesis for paper (submit to Canvas by 3/8)**

**Week 8 (March 15-21) Calls (TBD)  
The Diremption**

Reiner Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, Part III, II, 511-574.

(Background Reading: Solomon/Higgins “IV “Modernism to Postmodernism” 243-307)

**Week 9 (March 22-28) OCF  
The Singularisation to Come?**

Reiner Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, Part III, Chapter 7 & Conclusion , 575-632.  
**First draft due 3/22**

(Note: all-school lecture part of the series “On the Anthropocene” by Andreas Weber, on March 20, 12-2pm EST)

**Week 10 (March 29-April 4) VC: Saturday, 4/3, 5-7pm EST.  
Race as Hegemonic Fantasm?**

Achille Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason*.

**Week 11 (April 5-11) Calls (TBD)  
The Anthropocene as Hegemonic Fantasm?**

Simon and Maslin, *Human Planet*.  
Weber, *Enlivenment*.

**Second draft due 4/5**

**Week 12 (April 12-17) Reading Period (no class)****Final paper due: April 17**

(Note: all-school lecture part of the series “On the Anthropocene” by Gianbattista Tusa, on April 17, 12-2pm EST)

**Key assignment due dates (summary):**

- **March 8:** Formulate main question/topic/thesis for paper
- **March 22:** First draft final paper due
- **April 5:** Second draft final paper due
- **April 17:** Final paper due