

PHYSF382 WAYS OF SEEING, WAYS OF KNOWING

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HUMANITIES

Spring 2017: Thursdays 10h30-12h30, Building 470, Room C115

(To be offered again in Spring 2018. Please contact the [Magistère de Physique Fondamentale](#) for more details.)

Instructor: Dr. Charis QUAY, maître de conférences in physics (charis.quay@u-psud.fr)

Medium of instruction: English

Course Description

Our ways of seeing and of knowing mutually influence each other. By ‘ways of seeing and knowing’ we mean not only our ‘models’ of the world around us – whether these be physical, cultural, political or other – but also the ‘mechanics’ of seeing and knowing, including the relation between the knowing/seeing subject and the known/seen object.

Whether or not one is aware of it, and whether or not one can articulate it, one’s ‘way of seeing’ the world and one’s place in it (including one’s relation to others) is intimately related to what one ‘knows’ and how one knows it. It also has a decisive influence on what one considers to be the proper use of one’s knowledge and one’s self – in particular, who one should be and how one should act in society. This leads naturally to the consideration of ‘ways of being’, including political and ethical issues.

This course will explore these and related ideas through texts by several contemporary, mostly Western, scholars who (re)present a range of ‘ways of seeing’ from antiquity to the modern times. We shall pay particular attention to the evolution of worldviews (over time) – focusing on the transition between the mediaeval and modern conceptions of the universe which occurred at the Renaissance – and the possibility of dialogue between different worldviews.

Format and Pedagogical Goals

This seminar will meet two hours per week throughout the spring semester. Students are expected to come to class having read and understood the reading assignment for the week and ready to discuss it. Among the goals of the class are to introduce students to academic work in the humanities and to develop the ‘rhetorical’ skills of speaking, arguing and writing.

A seminar is ‘a class at university in which a topic is discussed by a teacher and a small group of students’. Class discussions can be thought of as opportunities to refine one’s thoughts in preparation for the essays, which will not be invigilated. There will be no lectures or exams.

Evaluation

Class participation	30%
Mid-term essay I (2-3 pages)	15%
Mid-term essay II (3-5 pages)	20%
Final paper (5-10 pages)	35%

N.B. 1 page ~400 words

Written assignments can be on any course-related topic of the student’s choice. Suggestions will be provided.

Reading and Writing Assignments (subject to change!)

19 January	WS Ch. 1	
26 January	WS Ch.s 3, 7	
2 February	SSR Ch.s 2, 9 and 10	
9 February	TD Ch.s 1-2	
16 February	Break	
23 February	AK, Ch. 3	Mid-term essay I due
2 March	DI, Ch.s 1, 2, 7C, 7D, 7H, 7I, 8 and Epilogue	
9 March	CWIU, Ch.s 2, 4	
16 March	CWIU, Ch.s 7, 11, 12 (excerpts)	
23 March	SS, Ch.s 5-8	
30 March	SS, Ch.s 9-12	
6 April	SS, Ch.s 5-12 + HC, Prologue, Ch.s 35-41	Mid-term essay II due
13 April	Break	
20 April	HC, Prologue, Ch.s 35-41	
27 April	UR, Ch. 6	
15 May		Final paper due

Essays should be turned in to the instructor in hard copy at the beginning of class. The final paper should be turned in to the Magistère de Physique Fondamentale secretariat in hard copy.

Texts

WS	<i>Ways of Seeing</i> , John Berger
SSR	<i>Structures of Scientific Revolutions</i> , Thomas Kuhn.
TD	<i>The Tacit Dimension</i> , Michael Polanyi.
AK	<i>Michael Polanyi: The Art of Knowing</i> , Mark T. Mitchell
DI	<i>The Discarded Image</i> , C. S. Lewis
CWIU	<i>From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe</i> , Alexander Koyré
SS	<i>Sources of the Self</i> , Charles Taylor
HC	<i>The Human Condition</i> , Hannah Arendt
UR	<i>The Unintended Reformation</i> , Brad Gregory

All assigned texts will be available in soft copy (Dokeos) and in hard copy (Magistère de Physique Fondamentale secretariat) at least a week ahead of time. In addition, most of the books used in this course are in the MPF library (Building 470, 3rd floor, see Mme. Carli for the key).

The Ways of Seeing documentaries can be found at the following links:

Episode 1 (<http://goo.gl/tV9p7X>), Episode 2 (<http://goo.gl/nGdp8W>),

Episode 3 (<http://goo.gl/UuyCo5>), Episode 4 (<http://goo.gl/PYQHf2>).

Please come to class with a hard copy of the reading assignment for that day.

Further Reading (during the summer or later in life)

<i>Personal Knowledge</i> , Michael Polanyi	<i>The Life of the Mind</i> , Hannah Arendt
<i>I and Thou</i> , Martin Buber.	<i>Orientalism</i> , Edward Said
<i>Truth and Method</i> , Hans-Georg Gadamer	<i>Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics</i> , J. Grondin.
<i>Language, Truth and Logic</i> , A. J. Ayer.	<i>On Certainty</i> , Ludwig Wittgenstein.
<i>Soi-même Comme Un Autre</i> , Paul Ricoeur. (See especially Etudes 5-6.)	
<i>Love's Knowledge</i> , Martha Nussbaum (On knowing through literature.)	
<i>A Defence of Common Sense</i> (http://goo.gl/ZHPDhs), <i>A Refutation of Idealism</i> (http://goo.gl/4NIWIs) and <i>A Proof of the External World</i> (http://goo.gl/luV8bY), G. E. Moore.	