

It is also one of the most significant. Based on Lacan’s Seminar V (“Les Formations de l’inconscient,” 1957–58), “Subversion” marks a turn in Lacan’s teaching, from his emphasis in the 1950s on orders of the imaginary, the symbolic, and the dependence of
psychic structure on operations of language, to his development in the 1960s of the concepts of the objet petit a, the real, and the fantasy. At the centers of the Seminar and the essay are the famous (or infamous, if you prefer) Graphs of Desire. These strange, compelling loops and sigles represent the most elaborate of Lacan’s early attempts to codify and transmit his teachings via graphic and para-mathematical objects. “Subversion” is arguably the culmination of many of the theoretical trajectories sketched out in Ecrits. We will rely on Van Haute’s lucid and insightful book to guide our way through the fascinating, sometimes baffling defiles of this evocative, essential essay.

Readings for the course will include a selection of essays from Bruce Fink’s 2006 translation of the entire Ecrits; Van Haute’s Against Adaptation, and selections from Peter Gay’s edited collection, The Freud Reader (Norton, 1995). We will end the semester with Russell Grigg’s 2007 translation of Lacan’s Seminar XVII, The Other Side of Psychoanalysis (1969–70), in which Lacan develops the theory of the Four Discourses, which we will consider as an important elaboration/revision of “Subversion” and an extension of its logic into social and political spheres. Dylan Evans’s An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis will serve as an valuable guide to Lacan’s technical idiom.

Graded assignments include one 6–8-page commentary and in-class presentation on an assigned reading and a final research paper (15–20 pages). A research prospectus for the final paper is also required; this assignment is not graded.

**Required texts**

Required printed texts for the course are available at local booksellers, including the UF campus bookstore, or from online vendors and gateways (Amazon.com, Powells.com, Alibris.com, Abebooks.com, etc.) I strongly encourage you to support independent booksellers.

Electronic reserve texts are available on Ares, at UF’s George A. Smathers Libraries WWW site, <https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu/>.

**Printed texts**


**Digital texts**


Other texts may be added to the list of required reading as the semester progresses. I will notify you of these changes and will update the online version of the course syllabus accordingly.

**Attendance, assignments, & grading**

**Attendance & lateness.** The texts we will read are complex, subtle, and challenging. You cannot reasonably expect to master them if you do not keep up with all required reading assignments and come to class prepared and on time. Moreover, our discussions in class will often include review of materials not among the assigned readings. For these reasons, your presence in class is essential and is required. After **two absences**, I reserve the right to lower your final course grade by five points for each additional class that you miss. I treat **excused and unexcused absences alike in this regard**. It is your responsibility to keep track of your absences and to make sure that you complete all required work for the course. If you must miss class, make sure that you turn in any assignments due for that day, and that you are ready if another assignment is due on the day you return to class. In the event of a prolonged illness or other emergency, you should notify me as soon as possible so that we may make provisions to insure that you do not fall behind.

Lateness is disruptive to others in the classroom, and is strongly discouraged. If you are more than 25 minutes late to class, this will be considered an absence.

If you have special classroom access, seating, or other needs because of disability, please do not hesitate to bring those to my attention, so that I may make appropriate accommodations for them.

If you are unable to attend any part of a class meeting, or work on a course assignment because these coincide with the timing of religious observances, you must notify me of this conflict in advance so that we may make appropriate adjustments to relevant assignment deadlines.
The use of computers and other electronic devices in class. Students may use personal laptop computers and other portable electronic devices in class for the purposes of taking notes during class discussion or for in-class presentations. WWW browsing, emailing, chatting, texting, etc., unrelated to class activities is inappropriate and will not be tolerated. In the event of a violation of this policy, I reserve the right to prohibit the use of all personal electronic devices in class by individual students and/or the class as a whole. Cell phones, pagers, and other communication devices may not be used during class meetings, and must be turned off at the start of class.

Assignments & grading. Your final grade will be determined by your performance on four assignments:

- Written commentary: 15%
- In-class presentation: 15%
- Research paper: 70%

Grades are calculated on a numeric scale, as below:

- A: 90–100
- A–: 87–89
- B+: 84–86
- B: 80–83
- B–: 77–79
- C+: 74–76
- C: 70–73

You may turn in an assignment late without penalty only if you have a written medical excuse for the day of the class meeting from a doctor, a signed letter from a judge or law enforcement officer (if you are called for jury duty or to testify in a legal proceeding, for example), or if a death or serious illness or injury occurs in your family.

The presentations & commentaries

Shortly after the start of the semester, I will post a sign-up sheet on which you may indicate your ranked preferences with regard to two of the seven presentation/commentary slots noted in the course calendar, below. I will collate student preferences, and will attempt to assign each student her or his first choice from among the slots, using the student’s second choice as a fallback position in the event of conflicting preferences. As many as two students may give presentations on the same text. Please note that, barring emergencies or unexpected class cancellations, a presentation and commentary assigned to you must be given on that date. Late commentaries will not be accepted; changes of date for a presentation and commentary may be difficult or impossible to arrange after the first several weeks of the semester.

On the class meeting dates corresponding to the presentation/commentary slots assigned to you, you will be responsible for:
– an 6–8 page written commentary on the assigned text for that slot. This text must be distributed to the class 24 hours prior to the class meeting time, either in printed form or (preferably), electronically. The commentary should be designed as a guide and response to the primary text for that class meeting for other students in the course. (Early in the semester, I will review in detail the format and content requirements of these commentaries.)

– an in-class presentation (20–30 minutes) on the assigned text for that slot. You will, in effect, lead the initial class discussion on that date.

In the event that one of your presentation/commentary assignments overlaps with that of another student – that is, you are assigned to successive classes in which the same text is our focus of attention – I will request that you collaborate with the other student to design the emphasis of your presentations so as to overlap minimally, while still covering the text with appropriate conciseness and rigor.

Research papers. A 3–5 page research prospectus for the final paper, outlining your projected paper’s methods and subject, is due on March 15. I will return a marked-up copy of the prospectus to you within two weeks, with my comments and suggestions. Completed final papers are due a week after the final meeting of the course, on April 26, by 5 PM.

Policy on academic honesty

The University community’s policies and methods regarding academic honesty are clearly spelled out in the Academic Honesty Guidelines. The Guidelines are printed in full in the current Undergraduate Catalog, and are available online from the Dean of Students Office WWW site, at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/publications/>.

Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated in this course. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- Possessing, using, or exchanging improperly acquired written or oral information in the preparation of graded assignments submitted for this course.
- Substitution of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another individual or individuals.
- False claims of performance or work submitted by a student for requirements of this course.

I am obliged to act on any suspected act of academic misconduct. This may include a reduced or failing grade for the course as a whole or other disciplinary proceedings, as per the recommendation of the Dean of Students. If you have any concern that you may not have made appropriate use of the work of others in your research or writing for this
course, please confer with me before you submit the assignment. You should retain all graded materials that you receive from me until you receive your final course grade.

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**Course calendar**

**S1 → S2**

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<th>Date</th>
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| Jan 11     | Course introduction  
Van Haute, *Against Adaptation*, “Introduction” & ch. 1           |
| Jan 18     | **No class meeting (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)**                    |
“Presentation of the Suite,” “Introduction,” and “Parenthesis of parentheses”  
Fink, “The Nature of Unconscious Thought” |
| Feb 1      | Freud, excerpts from “On Beginning the Treatment,”  
“Observations on Transference-Love” (*The Freud Reader*)  
Lacan, “The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of Its Power” |
| Feb 8      | Freud, excerpts from *The Ego and the Id* (*The Freud Reader*)  
Lacan, “The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of Its Power”  
**Presentations/commentaries 1** |
| Feb 15     | Freud, excerpts from *The Interpretation of Dreams*,  
“Repression,” “The Unconscious” (*The Freud Reader*)  
Lacan, “The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis”  
**Presentations/commentaries 2** |
| Feb 22     | Lacan, “The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud” |
Lacan, “Metaphor of the Subject”

**Presentations/commentaries 3**

Mar 1
Freud, “Negation” (*The Freud Reader*)
Lacan, “Introduction to Jean Hyppolite’s Commentary on Freud’s ‘Verneinung’”
Hyppolite, “A Spoken Commentary on Freud’s ‘Verneinung’”
Lacan, “Response to Jean Hyppolite’s Commentary on Freud’s ‘Verneinung’”

**Presentations/commentaries 4**

Mar 8
No class meeting (Spring Break)

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Mar 15
Research paper prospectus due
Freud, “Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes” (*The Freud Reader*)
Lacan, “The Signification of the Phallus”

**Presentations/commentaries 5**

Mar 22
Van Haute, *Against Adaptation*
Lacan, “The Subversion of the Subject”

**Presentations/commentaries 6**

Mar 29
Van Haute, *Against Adaptation*
Lacan, “The Subversion of the Subject”

**Presentations/commentaries 7**

$S2 → S1$

April 5
Lacan, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*

April 12
Lacan, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*

April 19
Final class meeting
No assigned reading
April 26  

Research paper due