This seminar will present works from across Derrida’s career, from seminal early works such as *Of Grammatology*, *Writing and Difference*, and *Dissemination* to the very late and even posthumous works, such as *Rogues*, *The Animal that Therefore I Am*, and the seminar on the death penalty. While we will take into account some of the narratives that have been constructed around Derrida’s career (the suggestion of a political turn, for example), our main concern will be to read Derrida as carefully as possible in order to come to an understanding of how his thought works—and thus whether there is a change in how he thinks and writes as he approaches new themes and motifs—if indeed he does. In order to read Derrida thus, we will read him alongside those upon whom he comments, as well as exploring some of the thinkers and movements most clearly informed by Derrida’s thought.

**Texts**

While I encourage you to obtain the complete book form of the texts we will read (whether *Of Grammatology*, *Dissemination*, …), I recognize that the cost of doing so can be prohibitive. An electronic copy of the texts under discussion will be made available in the first class.

**Assignments**

*Position Paper (15%)*

4-5 pages on a specific aspect, section, etc., of one of the texts we will read.

*Seminar (25%)*

25-30 minutes. The seminar will take up a text assigned for that class. The point of the seminar is not to rehearse the argument of the text (although some tracing and explanation of the argument will of course be necessary) but rather to engage with it critically, to explore its context, for example (in the author’s work, in its relation to broader trends in theory). How, for example, does Derrida’s conception of différance take up and respond to the writers he evokes in his essay? The seminar might also explore blind spots in the text under discussion, probe its possibilities and limitations . . .

Though I say 25-30 minutes for the seminar, I would like you to field questions during subsequent discussion.

One week after the seminar, you are to submit a written version of the seminar. This
should not merely be a transcript of the seminar, but rather its rewriting into a short essay, complete with proper documentation.

**Final paper: (50%)**

Your paper does not necessarily have to take up one of the texts on the course. It should, however, deal with Derrida or deconstruction more broadly, and might, for example, put Derrida in conversation with other thinkers, movements, and so forth. I encourage you to explore fields, texts, authors you have *not* taken up in your seminar; should you remain with work from your seminar, the final paper must not only expand upon, but diverge substantially from, the seminar. The essay should be thoroughly researched and refer to the relevant literature on the topic you cover.

Discuss your topic with me well in advance of handing in your paper (3-4 weeks in advance). Approximately 20-25pp.

**Participation (10%)**

The participation grade will assess the quality of your engagement in and contribution to the seminar. As such, it is not a measure of loquacity but rather of preparation, thoughtful and helpful interventions in class, attention to and engagement with the seminars and to class discussion more generally. Should you miss **more than 2 classes** without documented illness or compassionate grounds, you will forfeit this portion of the course grade.

**Scholastic Offenses**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf.
Schedule of Classes
QUITE TENTATIVE

September 12: Introductions

September 19: “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences”
“Différance”
Also: Gasché, “Deconstruction as Criticism”

September 26: from Of Grammatology
from Dissemination

October 3: “The White Mythology”
“Signature, Even, Context”

October 10: Thanksgiving, No Class

October 17: “The Law of Genre”
“Living On”
Also: Blanchot, “La Folie du jour”
Butler, from Bodies that Matter

October 24: “Force of Law”
“Before the Law”
Also: Kafka, “Before the Law”
Benjamin, “Critique of Violence

October 31: On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness
Monolingualism of the Other

Also: Sade, “Yet Another Effort, Frenchmen, If You Would Become Republicans”
Bhabha, “DissemiNation”

November 7: from Spectres of Marx
Also: Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*
      Spivak, “Ghostwriting”

November 14:    “Mochlos”
                “Punctuations: The Time of a Thesis”
                “The University Without Condition”

November 21:    from *The Animal that Therefore I Am*

November 28:    from *The Death Penalty*

December 5:    *On Learning How to Live Finally*

December 2:    