

CSTC Course Proposal 2020

Teasing the dainty rods of vision: Imaginary/Imagination/Semblance

Prof. Allan Pero

This course will explore the ways in which the concept of the image informs how we conceive of thought and creation. Images have a tendency to recede into their contexts, becoming utterly obscured over time or otherwise devolving into assumption or cliché. If, as Walter Benjamin claims, images are “dialectics at a standstill,” then our task will be to consider how to interrupt the image prior to its ossification into the vanishing mediator of fantasy, or, if you prefer, the imaginary. With this problematic in mind, we will then turn to the imaginary itself, in its philosophical, phenomenological, and psychoanalytic registers, to think about how they shape both perception and its discontents. Obviously, such a turn to the imaginary gives us the opportunity to think the imagination itself, and the semblances it produces (and fail to produce). We will work to situate these questions in the work of thinkers like Benjamin, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Arthur Schopenhauer, Henri Bergson, Gaston Bachelard, Jacques Lacan, Edward Casey, and Michèle Le Doeuff.

Course Texts:

S. T. Coleridge – *Biographia Literaria* (selection)
Arthur Schopenhauer – *The World As Will and Representation* (selection from Third Book, Volume 1)
Walter Benjamin – *The Origin of German Tragic Drama; Arcades Project* (selections)
Henri Bergson – *Matter and Memory; The Creative Mind* (selections)
Gaston Bachelard -- *On Poetic Imagination and Reverie*
Gaston Bachelard – *The Poetics of Reverie*
Jacques Lacan – *Seminar XVIII: On A Discourse that Might Not Be A Semblance* (selection)
Edward Casey – *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study* (selection)
Michèle Le Doeuff – *The Philosophical Imaginary*

Method of Evaluation:

Class Contribution: 10%
Response Paper: 10%
Seminar: 35%
Respondent to the Seminar: 10%
Research Paper: 35%