

The Community to Come

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This course will trace a number of different conceptions of community, principally from the Enlightenment to contemporary theory, taking up questions such as the relation of community to the subject, the ontology of community, the community of those who have nothing in common, and literary communities. It will approach these and other questions by grouping works with common concerns (nation and nationalism, the gender of community, etc.) but taken from a number of approaches in order to examine how the concept is constructed in different disciplines. Examining the long shadow cast by Heidegger, for instance, how Hegel or Irigaray read *Antigone*, or how *Star Trek* can be read as a revisiting of Rousseau, the course will attempt to come to an understanding of what might be called a community of writing.

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 Nancy take up Heidegger's conception of community? 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 the concept of community and might, for example, put some of the theorists on the course 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 17-22pp.

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.

Policy on Incompletes:

Grades of incomplete will only be granted in consultation with the Director and must be requested at least 2 weeks before the end of classes.

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

January 10: Introductions
Star Trek episode (“I, Borg”).

“The First Theorist of Community”: Rousseau and Other “Enlightened Communities”

January 17: Rousseau, *The Social Contract*

Seminar:

January 24: Rousseau, cont’d
 Kant, “Perpetual Peace,” “Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View,”

Seminar:

“The Eternal Irony of Community”

January 31: Sophocles, *Antigone*;
 Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (selections);

Seminar:

February 7: Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (selections);
 Butler, *Antigone’s Claim*

Seminar:

“Unite!”

February 14: Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, *The German Ideology*, *Political and Economic Manuscripts* (selections);

Seminar:

February 21: **Reading Week, No Class**

“Imagined Communities”

February 28: Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (selections)
 Bhabha, “DissemiNation”

Seminar:

Being-With

March 7: Heidegger, *Being and Time* (selections)

Seminar:

March 14: Nancy, *The Inoperative Community* (selections)
Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community* (selections)

Seminar:

March 21: Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* (selections)

Seminar:

March 28: Agamben, *The Coming Community* (selections)

Seminar:

April 4: Esposito, *Communitas* (selections)

Seminar:
