CL9609B  CSTC9579B: Taxonomy, Analogy, Example, Metaphor: The Problems of Resemblance

(What ties together the four words at the head of this course’s title is that they all have something to do with similarity. As a result, to understand the title of this course – to perceive, in other words, that similarity is the similar feature running through all four words – is already to enter into the course content. How does one know that, despite the many differences among phenomena, one is supposed to look for and extrapolate a feature of similarity? And how does it happen that most people who encounter this course title will extract the very same similarity – that is, the similarity of similarity?)

This course will ask two deceptively simple questions: How do we know when (or that) things are similar, and what is the relation between our perceptions of similarity and our notions of “reality” and/or “meaning”? Our time will be spent in examining the difficulties that arise in trying to formulate acceptable answers to these questions.

For the last few decades, theoreticians and critics have been greatly concerned with questions of difference/différance. This course, however, is much more than a reversal of the difference/similarity equation. It may indeed be true that everything is different from everything else, as has been often put forward, but all human beings live as though this were not the case. Why do people perceive or create similarities, and on what basis (and by means of what strategies) do they establish resemblances? Moreover, what does it mean to say that everything is different from everything else except to imply that at a second level the trait of difference itself becomes the similar feature all phenomena have in common? What, then, does it mean to discover (or construct) similarities? Why do we construct or perceive resemblances? And what does it tell us when we find them meaningful (or not meaningful)?

I propose to look at considerations of what constitutes resemblance and what resemblance means drawn from a wide variety of disciplines and orientations: philosophical writings, literary works, clinical psychology, art history, literary theory, artificial intelligence, etc. Is the ability to construct analogies – which means to perceive similarities – at the very base of what we call human knowledge, as recent studies by clinical psychologists suggest? How do we decide which similarities matter to us, or whether an analogy has “meaning” or not? And what of metaphor which, since Aristotle, has been seen as special kind of analogy? Do any/all/some metaphors actually produce knowledge (Hartman’s “cognitive metaphor”; Ricoeur’s “semantic collision”)? By contrast, what makes some metaphors “dead”? Is all perception of reality fundamentally “metaphorical,” as Nietzsche maintained? Finally, is what we call “analysis” ever anything more than analogical or allegorical discourse, as Northrop Frye suggested?
Approximative Reading Program

NB: Readings are on “Course Readings” on our OWL site unless otherwise noted

WEEK 1 (7 January) Introduction # 1: Similarity vs. Sameness. And the Role of Categorization.
Readings:
1) Laurence de Looze, “Introduction: Why are things similar?” On Resources section of OWL site.
2) W.V. Quine, “Natural Kinds” in Quine, Ontological Relativity and Other Essays 114-38.

WEEK 2 (14 January)
Readings:
3) Aristotle: from Categories and Metaphysics (Aristotle: Introductory Readings, pp.1-8; 143-79; Weldon library online or 2 hr reserve at Weldon)

WEEK 3 (21 January)
Readings:
1) Excerpts from The Pillow Book of Sei Shōnagon (ca. 990 AD)

WEEK 4 (28 January) Professor de Looze is out of the country this week.
Readings:
2) 3) Porphyry, On Aristotle’s Categories, tr. Steven K. Strange, “Introduction” (1-12) and pp. 49-94. Weldon Library, 2 hr reserve.
3) Michel de Montaigne, “De l’Experience” / “On Experience” (Essais / Essays III.13)
Optional: Laurence de Looze, “Chapter 2: from similarity to sameness” on OWL

WEEK 5: (4 February) Universals/Realism vs. Nominalism/Conceptualism/Non-literality/Analogy
Readings:
1) Michael J. Loux, Metaphysics Chapters 1 & 2 (19-89)2)
Optional: Laurence de Looze, “Chapter 3 Analogy” on OWL

WEEK 6: (11 February) Analogy
Readings:
3) Anttila. Analogy (1977.:) Chapters 1, 2, 4.1-4.3


**WEEK 7: (18 February) Reading Week: no class**

**WEEK 8: (25 February): Analogy/Metaphor**

Readings:
3) Black, Max. “Metaphor.” *Models and Metaphors,* chapter 3 (25-47)

Studies in Cognitive Systems 7. Chs. 1, 2, 6. (Weldon Library 2 hr reserve)
5) Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By,* chapters 1-13 (pp. 3-68), chapters 20-27 (pp. 126-222) (Weldon Library 2 hr reserve)

**WEEK 9: (3 March): Metaphor**

Readings:
3) Paul Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive/The Rule of Metaphor,* étude/study 1, 6.

Optional: Laurence de Looze, “Metaphor, Analogy, and Ideology” (on xerox)

**WEEK 10: (10 March) Metaphor**

Readings:


**WEEK 11 (17 March) Metaphor (NB: last day for handing in research paper topic)**

Readings:
1) Paul Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive/The Rule of Metaphor,* 2, 4, 7
5) Baudelaire, “Correspondances”; Rimbaud, “Voyelles”

**WEEK 11: (24 March) Metaphor/FIGURA/Literary Interpretation**

Readings:
4) Erich Auerbach, “FIGURA,” *Studies in the Drama of European Literature* 11-76.
Optional/Recommended:

WEEK 12: (31 March) Maxim/Proverb/Exemplum
Readings:
2) Alexander Gelley, “The Pragmatics of Exemplary Narrative”
3) La Fontaine: *Le Pouvoir des fables - A Monsieur de Barillon*
Optional: Laurence de Looze, “Chapter 4 Exemplum” on OWL

Required Work:
Class Participation 20%: Your primary responsibility is to be well prepared. This means not only being present, but having read and thought about the primary and secondary texts assigned. Graduate students are expected to some of the optional reading (I will be attentive to the extent to which graduate students have familiarized themselves with these readings). Participation grades will be based on the degree of preparation and the nature (quality and quantity) of classroom contributions.

Assignments 20%: These are short (1-2) page, typed discussions to be handed in in class on the day’s readings. They are your opportunity to zero in on some very specific aspect of one of the week’s readings in order to analyze it or draw out its implications. The only requirements are that you provide a concise discussion/analysis of some aspect of the week’s reading, that you choose one of the asterisked readings on the syllabus, and that the discussion not go over two pages, typed. All students will be required to do 6 of these during the term (you can choose your 6 weeks, with the exception of the first). On any given day I may ask some of the students who have done a précis for that class to read theirs aloud as part of our class discussions. Or I may read one aloud myself. A précis is always due at the beginning of the class meeting and none will be accepted later.

Seminar report 20%: You will be expected to report on and analyze the week’s readings once during the term. I will circulate a sign-up sheet on 14 January. You will be held strictly to a 30-minute limit. You can work from notes and you can present items in Powerpoint, but you are not simply to read a written text (!); I will allow for some discussion at the end of each report. Because of the enrolment numbers, there may be more than one presentation in any given week. Your seminar report may well become the nucleus for the research paper, but this is by no means a requirement.

Research Paper 40%: This is a major essay (around 20 typed pages), with full critical apparatus (notes, works cited, etc.-see MLA Style book), which scrutinizes some issue/text/aspect that has come to light during the course. You are strongly encouraged to come talk with me about potential paper topics—and only after you have delineated several in writing. At the very latest, you must inform me of your topic in typewritten form by Week 10. As already noted, the topic can grow out of the seminar discussion you have led. All essays are due on the final day of classes for Winter term (3 April). Late papers will be penalized 3%/day.

It is the student’s responsibility to familiarize him/herself with the Statement on Academic Offences (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}