

Philosophy 336: CONTEMPORARY FRENCH PHILOSOPHY

Spring, 2002

Professor: Alan Schrift

Office: Steiner 311

Office Hours: MW 1:30-3:00

Topic: "Gift as/and Ethical-Economic Exchange"

Required Texts

Georges Bataille	<i>The Accursed Share, Vol. One</i>
Jacques Derrida	<i>Given Time</i>
Marcel Mauss	<i>The Gift</i>
Alan Schrift, ed.	<i>The Logic of the Gift</i>

In addition to these texts, a xerox packet of required readings is available at the Bookstore.

Course Description

This course will be an advanced interdisciplinary seminar examining recent approaches to libidinal and political economies of gift exchange. Beginning with Mauss's *Essay on the Gift*, we will examine a number of theoretical reflections prompted directly or indirectly by Mauss's work. While questions of gift and exchange will remain central to our inquiries, we will often have occasion to follow a thinker's train of thought well beyond this initial focus, and part of the goal of this course will be to explore and reflect upon the diverse ways that the "logic of the gift" has emerged in recent French theorizing in the human sciences.

Course Requirements

This course is organized as a seminar, which means that active student participation is both expected and required. There will be a good deal of reading, and students will be expected to do all of the assigned reading and to come to class ready to discuss and/or ask questions about what they read. Formal work for the class will include the following:

1. Two Seminar Presentations (15%/20%):

The seminar presentation will consist of a 3-5 page written summary of the reading assigned for class. This summary should be submitted by 5:00pm on the day before class, in time to be duplicated for the members of the class, and will be read in class. In addition to summarizing the assigned reading, the written summary can (and should) raise questions for discussion. These questions can be exegetical (e.g., "what does Derrida mean when he says that the truth of the gift is its annulment?"), critical (e.g., "is Cixous's distinction between masculine and feminine libidinal economies justifiable?"), or associative/comparative (e.g., "is Lévi-Strauss's structuralist reading of Mauss justified?").

2. Term Paper: 18-20 page research paper, due May 11 (35%). No extensions will be granted except for medical emergency. The topic for this paper will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. In connection with this final paper, keep in mind the following requirements/deadlines:

April 4: turn in a one-paragraph description of topic with annotated bibliography.

April 11: turn in detailed outline.

April 18: turn in 2 copies (one anonymous) of a 5-page thesis statement that describes your project in some detail. One copy will be evaluated by the instructor, and one copy will be evaluated by a fellow student.

April 23: turn in comments on one another's thesis statements (xerox final page summary and submit this to the instructor).

May 9: Paper Due. Please submit two copies.

3. Seminar Report: a 15-20 minute summary presentation of your final paper (15%).

4. Position Papers/Class Participation: each week that you don't make a seminar presentation, submit on Thursday a one-page typed comment on some aspect of the reading of that week (15%).

5. Web Discussion Board: once a week, you will be asked to submit a discussion question by 10:00am to the class "Bulletin Board" on the web: <http://web.grinnell.edu/courses/phi/s02/phi336-01/>. These questions will allow all seminar participants to get a sense for what topics and sections are drawing attention and interest from other members of the seminar.

The final grade will be determined on the basis of these writing assignments and general performance in class during the course of the semester.

Tentative Course Outline

Date	Assignment
Jan. 22:	Introduction Olds, "More Blessèd" in Schrift
Jan. 24:	Emerson, "Gifts" in Schrift Mauss, <i>The Gift</i> , Chap. 4
Jan. 29:	Lévi-Strauss, <i>Introduction to the Reading of Marcel Mauss</i> in Schrift * _____
Jan. 31:	Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" * _____
Feb. 5:	Mauss, "Gift-Gift" in Schrift _____
Feb. 7:	Benveniste, "Gift and Exchange in the Indo-European Vocabulary" in Schrift _____ Sahlins, "The Spirit of the Gift" in Schrift _____
Feb. 12:	Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women" (Xerox) _____
Feb. 14:	Bataille, <i>The Accursed Share, Vol. One</i> , pp. 9-77 * _____ (9-41) _____ (45-77)
Feb. 19:	Bataille, "The Notion of Expenditure" _____ Bataille, <i>The Accursed Share, Vol. One</i> , pp. 81-128 * _____
Feb. 21:	Bataille, <i>The Accursed Share, Vol. One</i> , pp. 129-190 * _____
Feb. 26:	Derrida, "From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve" * _____
Feb. 28:	Derrida, <i>Given Time</i> , Chapter One * _____
Mar. 5:	Derrida, <i>Given Time</i> , Chapter Two * _____
Mar. 7:	Derrida, <i>Given Time</i> , Chapter Three * _____
Mar. 12:	Derrida, <i>Given Time</i> , Chapter Four * _____
Mar. 14:	Guest Seminar Director, Michael Naas (DePaul): Derrida, "Khōra"
Mar.15 - Mar. 30 Spring Vacation	
Apr. 2:	Bourdieu, <i>The Logic of Practice</i> in Schrift * _____ (190-204) _____ (204-215)
Apr. 4:	Bourdieu, <i>The Logic of Practice</i> in Schrift * _____ (215-224) Bourdieu, "Marginalia" in Schrift _____ Description and Bibliography Due.
Apr. 9:	Cixous, "Sorties" in Schrift * _____
Apr. 11:	Irigaray, "Women on the Market" in Schrift * _____ Outline Due.
Apr. 16:	Strathern, "Partners and Consumers: Making Relations Visible" in Schrift _____
Apr. 18:	Stoekl, "Bataille, Gift-Giving, and the Cold War" in Schrift _____ Thesis Statement Due
Apr. 23:	Bernasconi, "What Goes Around Comes Around" _____

Apr. 25: Two Student Seminar Presentations
NO CLASS

Apr. 30: Three Student Seminar Presentations
May 2: Three Student Seminar Presentations

May 7: Three Student Seminar Presentations
May 9: Three Student Seminar Presentations
Final Paper Due