

English 773
The Affects of Modernity
Spring 2004
Bennett 321 Tuesdays 12-3

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This course will serve as an introduction to the concept of modernity and to recent work on affect and subjectivity. Critics have spent a lot of time trying to describe "the experience of modernity"; in this class, we will take up this tradition of thought and push it a bit further, asking whether it makes sense to understand modernity as a number of characteristic *ways of feeling*. The course is interdisciplinary in aim: we will consider literary and philosophical texts as well a range of writing on affect and modernity in history, sociology, biology, psychoanalysis, and cultural studies. We will consider topics including: the relation between modernism and modernity; the uses of sentiment; technology and the history of the senses; the physiology of affect; mass culture and mass feeling; stigma and the (re)constitution of the subject; intimacy and distance; and historical and racial melancholy.

At the Penn Book Center:

Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (1918)
Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757)
Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848)
Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852)
Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872)
Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872)
Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw* (1898)
W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903)
Rebecca West, *The Return of the Soldier* (1918)
Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny* (1919) and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920)
Franz Kafka, *The Trial* (1925)
Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness* (1928)
Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*
Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader, eds. Sedgwick and Frank

There will be two course packs for the course, both at Wharton Reprographics. Books for the course are on reserve at Rosengarten.

Course requirements include:

- A seminar paper of at least 20 pages, due **May 7**. I will ask you to turn in a one-page abstract for this paper by **April 16**.
- A substantial presentation to the class on a book beyond the required reading for the course.
- One supplementary course meeting.

Course Schedule

* course pack reading

† available online

Week 1: Introduction

January 13

Affects, Feelings, Emotions, Passions, Sentiment, Structures of Feeling
Modernism, Modernity, Modernization

Raymond Williams, “Structures of Feeling” from *Marxism and Literature* (handout)

Week 2: The Modernity of Affect

January 20

Marshall Berman, “Modernity—Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow” from *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (handout)

Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*

Max Weber, “Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism” from *The Protestant Ethic* (handout)

Frederic Jameson, “Culture” from *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (handout)

Week 3: The Ontology of Affect

January 27

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank, “Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins” (Introduction to *Shame and Its Sisters*)

Tomkins, “What are Affects?” (*Sisters*)

Excerpt from Charles Darwin, Chapters I-III (“General Principles of Expression”) from *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*

William James, “On the Emotions” from *Principles of Psychology*, vol II*

Report: Rei Terada, *Feeling in Theory: Emotion after the “Death of the Subject”*

Week 4: Shock I: Damage

February 3

Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*

Rebecca West, *The Return of the Soldier*

Darwin, “Surprise-Astonishment-Fear-Horror” (*Expression*)

Report: Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century*

Week 5: Shock II: Experience

February 10

Charles Baudelaire, “The Painter of Modern Life” and selected poems*

Walter Benjamin, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire” and “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” in *Illuminations*

Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life"*
William James, "Habit" from *Principles of Psychology*, vol. I*

Report: Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*

Week 6: Feeling for Others I: Uses of Affect
February 17

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
Lauren Berlant, "Poor Eliza"†

Report: Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*

Week 7: Feeling for Others II: Sentimental Modernism
Week of February 23 (this class will need to be rescheduled)

Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*
Jay Prosser, "'Some Primitive Thing Conceived in a Turbulent Age of Transition': The Transsexual Emerging from *The Well*" from *Palatable Poison**

Report: Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*

Week 8: Feeling Like a Problem I: Double Consciousness
March 2

W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*
Peter Coviello, "Intimacy and Affiliation: Du Bois, Race, and Psychoanalysis"†

Report: Shamoan Zamir, *Dark Voices: W. E. B Du Bois and American Thought, 1888-1903*

Week 9: Feeling Like a Problem II: The Closet
March 16

Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*
Sedgwick, "Henry James, The Art of the Novel" from *Touching Feeling**
Sedgwick, "Axiomatic" from *Epistemology of the Closet**
Tomkins, "Shame-Humiliation and Contempt-Disgust" (*Sisters*)
Darwin, "Self-Attention-Shame-Shyness-Modesty: Blushing" (*Expression*)

Report: Erving Goffman, *Stigma: On the Management of Spoiled Identity*

Week 10: The Uncanny and the Sublime
March 23

Freud, *The Uncanny*
Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas on the Sublime and the Beautiful*

Report: André Green, *The Fabric of Affect in the Psychoanalytic Discourse*

Week 11: Distance, Intimacy, and Enjoyment

March 30

Franz Kafka, *The Trial*

Dr. Paul Schreber, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, excerpts*

Eric Santner, “The Passions of Psychoanalysis” from *My Own Private Germany**

Report: Jacques Ribot, *The Psychology of the Emotions*

Week 12: Melancholia I: Loss and Subjectivity

April 6

Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia”*

Freud, excerpt from “The Ego and the Id”*

Frantz Fanon, “The Fact of Blackness” from *Black Skin, White Masks**

Anne Anlin Cheng, “The Melancholy of Race” and “Difficult Loves” from *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief**

Report: Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*

Week 13: Melancholia II: Loss and History

April 13

Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*†

Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History” (*Illuminations*) and “Left Melancholy”*

Wendy Brown, “Against Left Melancholy” from *Loss**

Judith Butler, “After Loss, What Then?” from *Loss**

Joseph Roach, “History, Memory, and Performance” from *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance**

Report: Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*

Week 14: Mania

April 20

Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy**

Bataille, “Nietzschean Chronicle” from *Visions of Excess**

Marinetti, “Futurist Manifesto”†

Gilles Deleuze, “Ethology: Spinoza and Us” from *Incorporations**

Deleuze and Guattari, “The Subject and Enjoyment” from *Anti-Oedipus**

Darwin, “Joy-High Spirits-Love-Tender Feelings-Devotion” (*Expression*)

Tomkins, “Interest-Excitement” (*Sisters*)

Report: Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*

Final Meeting: Learning From Feeling

Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*