

Course Title -

Schizoanalysis for beginners: an Introduction to Deleuze and Guattari's 'Anti-Oedipus'

Tutor: Dr Matt Lee Course website for further resources: <http://notebookeleven.com/sfb>

Introduction:

Why do people do things that are 'wrong' even when they appear to know better? Why are societies repressive? How does fascism arise - is it, as some have argued, because people actually desire their own repression? Is reason able to guide desires, to control them even - and should it? How is a better world possible? Such questions have been central to philosophy since the time of Plato and are often some of the most difficult to answer, whilst simultaneously being some of the most important. In the early twentieth century new answers to such questions began to arise that drew on the work of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. By the end of the twentieth century, however, such answers seemed to many to be not only wrong but dangerous. Yet the questions remained, now even more perplexing than they were before.

In the book 'Anti-Oedipus' by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, a critique of psychoanalysis and marxism is made and a new theoretical model (called 'schizoanalysis') with which to understand and change society is offered. The book, written in the early 1970's and highly influenced by the political events of 1968, is often taken to be a key moment in twentieth century 'critical thought'. ('Critical thought' is that form of philosophy which directly engages with questions arising from the political and social world, with its roots in the ideas of Marx and Freud.) 'Anti-Oedipus' is, however, a very difficult text to understand, for numerous reasons, and often leaves readers baffled as to its meaning, purpose or reputation. The aim of this course is: firstly, to demystify Anti-Oedipus and enable it to be read with a critical and questioning mind; secondly, to present and critically discuss some of the key concepts contained in the book.

Course Outline:

There will be eight sessions, each of which will consist of a short 'lecture' talk that gives an outline of the issues, followed by a time for group discussion and questions, sometimes with accompanying short tasks.

Short readings will be the focus of each week, except for session one which is a more general session to provide context of the major themes of the course. The readings will be provided in PDF format and will be no longer than 5 pages at a time. (If anyone needs readings provided in a different format this will be arranged at session one.)

The session outline is as follows, although it is subject to adjustment if the group decides it wants to focus on different issues. The last two sessions in particular are open to revision as the intention is for these to provide a space in which to debate the potentials, if any, of the schizoanalytic model.

Session 1 – The Black horse and the White Horse - a brief outline of the relationship between desire and reason, from Plato to Freud

Session 2 – The Unconscious is a Factory - the problem of desire and lack (Freud, Lacan and the 'schizophrenia' of Deleuze and Guattari)

Session 3 - Desiring Machines Everywhere - the three syntheses of production and anti-production, a new model for 'repression'

Session 4 - Oedipus the Colonist - the critique of the Freudian model of psychoanalysis

Session 5 - 'All history is the history of desire in struggle' - the critique of the Marxist model of historical materialism

Session 6 - The non-fascist life - the experimental model of schizoanalysis

Session 7 - Problems of schizoanalysis #1 - therapy, pharmaceuticals and drugs

Session 8 - Problems of schizoanalysis #2 - assimilation and acceleration

Learning outcomes:

What will you get out of the course? The intention is to provide the following:

- an ability to understand the *general* outline of 'Anti-Oedipus'
- an ability to understand some of the basic concepts of 'schizoanalysis'
- an ability to read and critically engage with 'Anti-oedipus' and 'schizoanalytic' ideas
- a *general* understanding of the philosophical problem of the relationship between reason and desire
- a space to discuss and think about contemporary social and political problems and the possibilities of change