

PUBHM-GA 1001
Humans, Publics, Public Humanities

New York University • Fall 2020 • Graduate School of Arts and Science

This course is designed to promote high-level reflection on the import of work in the Public Humanities by rigorously investigating two phenomena on which the very concept is founded: the human and the public. Specifically, the course will trace theories of the human as they have developed in a variety of intellectual traditions from antiquity to the present, and of the public in the numerous manifestations that scholars generally contend it has assumed since the early modern period. It will close with some reflections on that nature of scholarly inquiry in the humanities, and the significance of pursuing such inquiry in nonacademic public contexts.

Intended specifically for Humanities PhD candidates interested in bringing their training to bear in a broad range of professional settings, both within and beyond academia, the course is meant to facilitate that objective by sensitizing students to the specific types of publics entailed in those different settings, and to the specific types of human entities—and human *endeavors*—those settings presume. Class members will ideally complete the semester with an enhanced sense of how they can productively deploy their specialized skills across a wide array of variously “public” spheres of activity.

Assignments and Assessment The course will proceed principally by way of group discussion (20% of final grade). Over the course of the semester, each student – whether you are taking the course for credit or auditing – will do one in-class Zoom presentation (15 minutes) moving off from some aspect of the week’s readings. We are not asking you to do an overview of the week’s readings. Rather, we invite you to push off from the assigned readings and keywords to pursue your own line of flight. We expect your presentation to be planned out and for you to stay within the time-frame, but please do not read a paper. If you are taking this course for credit, then two days after your presentation, you will email a written version of your presentation to both instructors. The written version (6-8 pages, double-spaced) should show engagement with the week’s readings and follow a standard scholarly format. Think of your presentation as belonging to the genre of the conference talk; the paper is a short article. The in-class presentation and paper together comprise 15% of your final grade. Each student will also pair off with a classmate, and outside of class time interview each other about the course keywords – *humans* and *publics* – for how these terms do and do not figure in your own research and (inter)disciplinary field/s. You and your classmate will share your interview with the class in whatever form you like in an in-class Zoom presentation (15 minutes). For students taking the class for credit, this presentation will comprise 15% of your final grade. Each student taking this class for credit will also write a final paper (3000-4000 words) in which you develop your own research on humans, publics, public humanities doing so in a way that will be legible to readers who are not specialists in your own field/s or research specialties. This final paper will be due via email on DECEMBER 21st by 11.59pm and comprises 50% of your final grade.

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Professors André Lepecki & Ann Pellegrini

Office hours:

Prof. Lepecki: Tuesdays 1pm to 3pm (Note the following different dates: Sept. 10, from 10am-12pm; Oct. 7, from 1pm-3pm; Mar. 8; Nov.11, 1pm-3pm). Please book a ZOOM session through this link (make sure to follow the instructions!):
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1E2VqbEXz39DvHSNY008z0NioAGN0cvZ0xhXFFH7ALAo/edit#gid=927773145>

Prof. Pellegrini: Tuesdays 12:00pm–1:00pm & Wednesdays 3:15pm–4:15pm.
To schedule a meeting, go to: <https://calendly.com/annpell/fall-2020-office-hours>.

All assigned readings for this course are available in the Resources section of our NYU classes site.

Session 1 [Legislative Monday – our first class meets Wednesday, Sept. 9th at our usual Monday class time]

Introduction to the course

Session 2 [Sept. 14]

Perspectives on “the human” I

Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, “Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Sept., 1998), pp. 469-488.

Antony Anghie, “Francisco de Vitoria and the Colonial Origins of International Law,” *Social and Legal Studies* 5.3 (1996): pp. 321-36.

Christina Sharpe, “Introduction,” and “The Ship,” in *In the Wake: On Being and Blackness*.

Session 3 [Sept. 21]

Perspectives on “the human” II

Sigmund Freud, “A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-Analysis” (1917), *Standard Edition*, Vol. 17, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), pp. 137-44.

Jean Laplanche, “Starting from the Fundamental Anthropological Situation” (2002), trans. Jonathan House, in *Freud and the Sexual* (New York: Unconscious in Translation, 2011), pp. 99-113.

Alexandre Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2014), pp.1-52.

Session 4 [Sept. 28]

Hegemonic humanism

Readings:

John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), abridg. and ed. Kenneth P. Winkler (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1996), selections.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality* (1754), trans. Maurice Cranston (London: Penguin, 1984), selections.

Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?," in *Kant on History*, ed. Lewis White Beck, pp. 3-10.

Michel Foucault, "What is Critique," in *The Politics of Truth*, eds. Sylvère Lotringer (Los Angeles: semiotext(e), 2007), 41-81.

Session 5 [Oct. 5]

The Human as whiteness' reified colonial expansion

Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, after Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3:3 (Fall 2003): 257–337

Achille Mbembe, "Introduction: The Ordeal of the world" in *Necropolitics* (Durham: Duke UP, 2019), pp. 1-8. **Ebook**

Session 6 [Oct. 12]

The Human and (some of) its others: in-animation

Heinrich von Kleist, "On the Marionette Theater."

Mel Y. Chen, "Introduction: Animating Animacy", "Language and Mattering Humans," in *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2012). **Ebook**

Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny" (1919), *Standard Edition*, Vol. 17, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), pp. 217-56.

Session 7 [Oct. 19]

The Human invents its sex

Luce Irigaray, "The Power of Discourse" (1975), in *This Sex Which is Not One*, tr. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985): pp. 68-85.

Paul Preciado, "An Apartment on Uranus," and "Feminism is not Humanism," in *An Apartment on Uranus*, (South Pasadena: semiotext(e), 2019).

Zakiyyah Jackson, *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiblack World* (New York: NYU Press, 2020), pp. 121-58, 239-52. **Ebook**

Dana Luciano and Mel Chen, Dana Luciano and Mel Chen, "Introduction: Has the Queer Ever Been Human?," Special issue: "Queer Inhumanisms," *GLQ* 21.2-3 (2015): iv, pp. 183-207.

Session 8 [Oct. 26]

The Human creates its public

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, chapter 2, "The Public and the Private Realm," pp. 22-78.

Jürgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article" (1964), trans. Sara Lennox and Frank Lennox, *New German Critique* no. 3 (Autumn 1974): 49-55.

Peter Hohendahl, "Jürgen Habermas: 'The Public Sphere'" (1964), trans. Patricia Russian, *New German Critique* no. 3 (Autumn 1974): 44-48.

Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1962), trans. Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (1989; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), Part II, "Social Structures of the Public Sphere," pp. 27-56.

Session 9 [Nov. 2]

(En)Counterpublics: pluralizing "the" public

Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text* 25/26 (1990): 56-80.

Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," *Public Culture* 14:1 (Winter 2002): 49-90.

José Estban Muñoz, "Introduction: Performing Disidentifications," *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (UMinn Press, 1998), 1-34, 201-05.

Ann Pellegrini, "Signaling Through the Flames," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 59, n. 3, Sept. 2007, pp. 911-935.

Session 10 [Nov. 9]

The Viral Human

Kim Stanley Robinson, "The Coronavirus Is Rewriting Our Imagination," *The New Yorker*, May 1, 2020

Bruno Latour, "What protective measures can you think of so we don't go back to the pre-crisis production model?", available at: http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/downloads/P-202-AOC-ENGLISH_1.pdf

Judith Butler, "Human Traces on the Surface of the World,"; Jesusa Rodriguez, "The Zootic Pandemic"; André Lepecki, "Movement in the Pause," in *CONTACTOS*, Diana Taylor and Marcial Godoy-Anatívia, eds.

Session 11 [Nov. 16]

The public undoes the Human

Donna Haraway, *Staying with Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, "Introduction", "Chapter 1," "Chapter 2," (Durham: Duke UP, 2016). **Ebook**

Peter Brooks, "Introduction"; Judith Butler, "Ordinary, Incredulous"; & Elaine Scarry et al., "Part One: Is there an Ethics of Reading?" in *The Humanities and Public Life*. **Ebook**

Gwendolyn Blue, "Multispecies publics in the Anthropocene: from symbolic exchange to material-discursive intra-action," in *Animals in the Anthropocene: Critical Perspectives on Non-Human Futures*, ed. Human Animal Research Network Editorial Collective (Sydney: Sydney Univ. Press, 2015), pp. 165-76. **Ebook**

Session 12 [Nov. 23]

"Disabling" the Human

Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp, "Disability / Anthropology: Rethinking the Parameters of the Human," *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 61, Supplement 21 (Feb. 2020), pp. S4-S15.

Arseli Dokumaci, "People as Affordances: Building Disability Worlds through Care Intimacy," *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 61, Supplement 21 (Feb. 2020), pp. S97-S108.

Sunaura Taylor, "Beasts of Burden: Disability Studies and Animal Rights," *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences*, vol. 19 no. 2 (2011), pp. 191-222.

Jasbir Puar, *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability* (Duke UP, 2017), ix-xxiv. **Ebook**

Session 13 [Nov. 30]

The Humanities (un)makes its publics

Geoffrey Galt Harpham, "Melancholy in the Midst of Abundance: How America Invented the Humanities," chapter 6 of *The Humanities and the Dream of America* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2011), 145-90. **Ebook**

Gerald Early, "The Humanities and Social Change," *Daedalus* 138:1 (Winter 2009): 52-57.

Kathleen Woodward "The Future of the Humanities—In the Present & In Public," *Daedalus* 138:1 (Winter 2009): 110-23.

Kevin Bott, "Keyword: Public Humanities," an interview with Evan Carton, *Newsletter – Imagining America* 12 (Spring 2009): 11-12.

Session 14 [Dec 7].

Engaging the (post)Humanities

Gregory Jay, "The Engaged Humanities: Principles and Practices for Public

Scholarship and Teaching," *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship* 3:1 (Spring 2010): 52–63.

Julie Ellison, "The New Public Humanists," *PMLA* 128:2 (March 2013): 289–98.

Mary L. Mullen, "Public Humanities' (Victorian) Culture Problem," *Cultural Studies* 30:2 (March 2016): 183–204.

Robyn Schroeder, "What Is Public Humanities?" *Day of Public Humanities*, [cont.] Apr. 2017, available at <https://dayofph.wordpress.com/what-is-public-humanities/>.

Rosi Braidotti, "Posthuman Humanities: Life beyond Theory" in *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013).