



**University of Cyprus  
Department of English Studies  
Course Syllabus**

**ENG 526 – Posthumanism and Literature  
(7.5 ECTS)**

**Instructor:** Tziovanis Georgakis (PhD)  
**Email:** [georgakis.tziovanis@ucy.ac.cy](mailto:georgakis.tziovanis@ucy.ac.cy)  
**Course Days:** Mondays and Thursdays  
**Course Time:** 16:30 – 18:00  
**Course Venue:** ΧΩΔ01 / 001  
**Office Hours:** Mondays and Thursdays: 11:00 – 13:00  
**Office Hours Venue:** M105A

**Course Description**

This course aims to reconsider the literary and philosophical representations of the human as it was inherited by humanist discourses from Enlightenment and afterwards. The prefix ‘post’ indicates that posthumanism comes both before and after humanism. It comes before humanism because it exposes the unconsidered and unquestioned grounds upon which the human is founded. At the same time, posthumanism comes after humanism because it demonstrates the necessity to otherwise rename the human after it has been decentred by its imbrication in advanced technical, neurobiological, cybernetic, informatic, and economic networks. In particular, during the course, the posthuman entity that simultaneously emplaces and displaces the human entity will be examined in accordance to the following three forms: (a) superhuman, (b) animal, and (c) machine. In-class discussions will focus on theoretical texts by seminal thinkers—in particular, by Neil Badmington, Rosi Braidotti, Jacques Derrida, and Donna Haraway—which will be juxtaposed with works of fiction by Theodore Sturgeon, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Marge Piercy and works of cinema by Luc Besson and Mamoru Oshii.

**Core Objectives**

By the end of the semester, students will:

- understand and challenge the multiple and difficult issues that arise with the engagement of the philosophical and literary aspects of the discourse called posthumanism.
- gain new insights into the related issues and surveyed questions.
- participate in different debates that take place within various literary and philosophical fields.
- interpret and analyze works of fiction and cinema.
- be in a position to distinguish, evaluate, and construct arguments.
- produce critical research essays of the kind that is assigned in upper level courses within the English major.
- develop an attentive eye for the marginal and the unconsidered.
- foster the necessary critical and analytical skills that each university student needs to utilize in every academic setting.



## Bibliography

### (Included in the Course Pack)

- Badmington, Neil. 'Theorizing Posthumanism.' *Cultural Critique* 53 (2003): 10-27. Print.
- Braidotti, Rosi. 'Post-Humanism: Life Beyond the Self.' *The Posthuman*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013. 13-54. Print.
- Derrida, Jacques. 'And Say the Animal Responded?' Trans. Wills, David. *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal*. Ed. Wolfe, Cary. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. 121-46. Print.
- Haraway, Donna. 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s.' *Australian Feminist Studies* 2.4 (1987): 1-42. Print.

### (To be purchased by students)

- Le Guin, Ursula K. *The Found and the Lost: The Collected Novellas of Ursula K. Le Guin*. New York, NY: Saga Press, 2016. Print.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Trans. Hollingdale, R. J. London: Penguin Classics, 1978. Print.
- Piercy, Marge. *He, She and It*. New York, NY: Random House, 1993. Print.
- Sturgeon, Theodore. *More than Human*. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1999. Print.

### (To be viewed in class)

- Besson, Luc. *Lucy*. 90 minutes. France: Universal Pictures, 2004. Film.
- Oshii, Mamoru. *Ghost in the Shell*. 83 minutes. Japan: Kodansha Comics, 1995. Film.

## Class Preparation and Participation

The class will be run seminar-style, by which the class instructor will do some lecturing. At the same time, students are expected to participate actively in class discussions. This format will not work unless all students are well-prepared for the class. It is very important that students engage discussions and readings so that the whole classroom participates in a dialectic exchange of thoughts and ideas. If students are having difficulty understanding parts of the class material, they should inform the instructor. In general, the instructor will not summarize the readings for the students' sake. The readings are for the students to discuss during the discussion portion of the class. The instructor will merely supplement the assigned readings. Part of class preparation also includes taking detailed notes, noting down pressing questions, understanding and evaluating arguments, responding to complex arguments, forming new arguments, and thinking critically about one's own positions. This class will thrive only if all students take responsibility to participate. In addition, the instructor expects that all seminar members will treat each other with the respect necessary for a philosophical discussion. Students should be courteous to the other students in the classroom and avoid disrupting their right to a positive learning environment. To this end, students should not arrive late to class or leave early, engage in side conversations, or pack their belongings before class has concluded. Students should not leave their mobile phones on, use text messaging on their phones, or surf the Internet during class. If students are using a laptop in class, they must sit near the front so as not to distract other students. If students anticipate arriving late to class or need to leave early from class, or are expecting a call (if they need to be reachable for an emergency), they should let the instructor know before class begins.

## Attendance Policy



Attending class is extremely important. Missing any class, coming in late, or leaving early will detract from the final grade. If students miss a class, they are still responsible for finding out what was delivered in class that day and if there were any assignments given by the course instructor. Class success is determined by the students' active presence and by how much work they are willing to put in. Students are urged to make a commitment to the coursework for themselves and for their colleagues.

### Course Assignments and Assessment

**In-class Presentation: 15%**

Student will form groups of 3 persons and present on the assigned readings. Each presentation will be 20 minutes long.

**Midterm examination: 30%**

Each student will respond to specific questions given by the instructor relevant to the assigned readings. The length of this assignment is 1,000-1,500 words.

**Final examination: 50%**

Each student will write one research essay relevant to the assigned readings and in-class discussions. The length of this assignment is 2,000-2,500 words.

**Class attendance and participation: 5%**

### Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to the following: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, bribes, examination by proxy, grade tampering, and submission of non-original works. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic grade of 0. Information about plagiarism and citation rules will be provided during the semester. If students have any questions or are unsure of what constitutes academic dishonesty, they should ask the course instructor.

### Office Hours and Availability

If students have any questions or wish to discuss course progression, course material, general philosophy or literature questions, or just to talk, the course instructor is available to them on Mondays and Thursdays from 11:00 – 13:00. If deemed necessary, they can schedule an appointment. The instructor strongly encourages all students to stop by and introduce themselves. Before students send an email with a query, they can come to office hours first. If they are unable to attend the designated office hours, they can email the instructor at [georgakis.tziouanis@ucy.ac.cy](mailto:georgakis.tziouanis@ucy.ac.cy). The instructor will do everything possible to respond to any questions, comments, or issues within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on the weekends.

### Course Schedule

**A. INTRODUCING POSTHUMANISM**

**Week 1: Theorizing Posthumanism**

Weekly reading:

Badmington, Neil. 'Theorizing Posthumanism.' *Cultural Critique* 53 (2003): 10-27. Print.

**Week 2: Life Beyond the Self**



Weekly reading:

Braidotti, Rosi 'Post-Humanism: Life Beyond the Self.' *The Posthuman*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013. 13-54. Print.

## **B. THE POSTHUMAN AS SUPERHUMAN**

### **Weeks 3-4: Nietzsche's Human as Superman**

Weekly reading:

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Trans. Hollingdale, R. J. London: Penguin Classics, 1978. Print.

### **Week 5: Sturgeon's *More than Human***

Weekly reading:

Sturgeon, Theodore. *More than Human*. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1999. Print.

### **Week 6: Besson's *Lucy***

Film viewing:

Besson, Luc. *Lucy*. 90 minutes. France: Universal Pictures, 2004. Film.

**MIDTERM EXAMINATION ASSIGNMENT DUE: 30%**

## **C. THE POSTHUMAN AS ANIMAL**

### **Week 7-8: Derrida's Animal**

Weekly reading:

Derrida, Jacques. 'And Say the Animal Responded?' Trans. Wills, David. *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal*. Ed. Wolfe, Cary. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. 121-46. Print.

### **Week 9: Le Guin's 'Buffalo Gals, Won't You Come out Tonight'**

Le Guin, Ursula K. 'Buffalo Gals, Won't You Come out Tonight.' *The Found and the Lost: The Collected Novellas of Ursula K. Le Guin*. New York, NY: Saga Press, 2016. 37-70. Print.

## **D. THE POSTHUMAN AS MACHINE**

### **Weeks 10–11: Haraway's 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs'**

Weekly reading:

Haraway, Donna. 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s.' *Australian Feminist Studies* 2.4 (1987): 1-42. Print.

### **Week 12: Piercy's *He, She and It***

Weekly reading:

Piercy, Marge. *He, She and It*. New York, NY: Random House, 1993. Print.

### **Week 13: Mamoru's *Ghost in the Shell***

Film viewing:

Oshii, Mamoru. *Ghost in the Shell*. 83 minutes. Japan: Kodansha Comics, 1995. Film.

**FINAL EXAMINATION ASSIGNMENT DUE: 50%**