



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI TORINO

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TM10_DIP_FIL

Teach Mob – Visiting Professors Academic year 2017/2018

2nd Term
COURSE TITLE Semiotics of the Body
Scientific area M-Fil/05 (Area 9)
Department of Philosophy and Education Science
Language used to teach English and Italian
Teaching Commitment: 36 hours
Course summary The course will offer an introduction to the specific branch of semiotics called “semiotics of the body”. The semiotics of the body approaches classical anthropological and ethnological topics, such as gestural codes, dressing codes, masks, etc. through adopting a methodology that predominantly derives from structural linguistics and semiotics. The course will describe the main developments of the discipline: the US school of the semiotic anthropology of the body, stemming from Charles S. Peirce’s philosophy of the sign and from Roman Jakobson’s structural study of language (Michael Silverstein, Webb Kean, Richard Parmentier); the French semiotic approach to ethnology (Eric Landowsky and socio-semiotics; Gianfranco Marrone); the Italian ethno-semiotic school (Francesco Marsciani, Maurizio del Ninno, Silvana Miceli); the Russian/Estonian school of semiotic analysis of cultures (Yurij M. Lotman, Boris A. Uspenskij). Particular attention will be devoted to the application of the theoretical and methodological framework of the semiotics of the body to contemporary aesthetic phenomena.
Learning objectives Students will be familiarized with the classics of the semiotics of the body, from Petr Bogatyrev’s pioneer studies on The Function of Folk Costume in Moravian Slovakia (1937) until José Enrique Finol’s La corposfera (2015), through the main contributions to the semiotic understanding of the body produced by both the US, the Francophone, and the Russian schools of signification studies. Students will be provided theoretical concepts and analytical tools so as to interpret major phenomena in the contemporary media, such as the presentation of the body in fashion, social networks, advertising, the intercultural issues of body communication, the destiny of the body in the digital world, etc. Also, students will become acquainted with major trends in the field of body communication design, including subfields such as piercing, tattooing, and other present-day common body modification practices.
Tutorship activities Students will be assigned individual research projects (whose topics will be agreed upon with the lecturer) and specifically tutored in view of the writing of their final dissertations. Tutorship will take place both informally (before and after lectures) and formally, during office hours. Bibliographic advice will be tailored on the specific learning needs of each student.

Lab activities

Participants will be invited to participate in a simulation of desk analysis, working on the semiotic reading of body representations selected by the lecturer. The lecturer will guide the analysis through proposing bibliographic references and analytical insights.

Other activities besides the course: i.e. seminars and conferences addressed to PhD students and research fellows, dissemination conferences

The lecturer will offer a specialized talk for the doctoral seminar in semiotics (whose topic in 2017/2018 will be “the semiotics of the face”); furthermore, he or she will accompany students in a guided tour of the “Lombroso” museum, in cooperation with the director of such institution. A dissemination conference will be organized in Turin’s “Circolo dei Lettori”.

Visiting Professor Profile

The visiting professor will be an outstanding scholar of international achievement in the field of semiotics. She or he will have acquired extensive expertise in the field of semiotic anthropology and published in major journals and book series about the semiotics of the body. She or he will have perfect command of English and ability to supervise students in other languages too.

Contact person at the Department

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