

**The New York-St. Petersburg Institute of
Cognitive and Cultural Studies**

Seminar Descriptions 2005

**This information is also available on our website at:
<http://www.ic.sunysb.edu/Clubs/nels/jbailyn/NYL.html>**

SESSION 1: July 4-15, 2005

(Opening Ceremonies: Thursday June 30, 2005: 12:00 noon)

**A-1: Writing Systems of the World (COG)
Robert Hoberman (SUNY Stony Brook)**

We will examine the nature of writing, considered as a technology (or invention, artifact), as a reflection of language, and as a social phenomenon, as well as the cognitive processing mechanisms involved in reading and writing. We will not approach writing as a philosophical problem nor (mainly) as a historical topic; rather the focus will be on the questions "How does a writing system work? What means do various writing systems use to enable the reader to reconstruct the words and sentences that the writer intended?"

1. Writing as technology; the invention of writing in the ancient Near East; phonological, morphological, and semantic aspects of writing; Japanese.
2. Phonological writing: syllabary (Japan); consonantary (Middle East); alphasyllabary (India and Ethiopia); Korean; phonological depth (Russian compared with Belarussian and Serbian-Croatian).
3. Alphabetic writing from Phoenician to modern English: How English spelling got to be the way it is.
4. Reading and the mind: evidence from dyslexia, aphasia, psycholinguistic experimentation; efficiency.
5. Reading and society: When communities acquire writing, when communities change writing systems; orality and literacy.

**A-2: Thoreau's *Walden* and the Politics of Environmentalism (CULT)
Gregory Garvey (SUNY Brockport)**

This course studies Henry David Thoreau's *Walden, or Life in the Woods* as a text that constructs Nature in the context of social criticism. *Walden* stands at the beginning of a tradition that has defined relationships between people and nature and between nature and culture. But just as much as *Walden* is a kind of memoir that argues for a "natural" life, it is also a kind of political propaganda that seeks to bring contrasting value systems into sharp relief. In this course we will study Thoreau's text and then analyze the emergence of Environmentalism as a movement that situates Nature within culture as an integral part of advanced industrial society.

Session 1) Introduction: Henry David Thoreau and the Aesthetics of Dissent, "Economy" and the Idea of Nature

Readings: "Resistance to Civil Government", "Economy" chapter of *Walden*

Session 2) Technologies of Nature I

Reading: "Brute Neighbors" and "Higher Laws" chapters of *Walden*

Session 3) Technologies of Culture I

Reading: "Reading," "Sounds," and "Former Inhabitants" chapters of *Walden*
(continued→)

Session 4) Technologies of Nature II

From *Walden* to the Sierra Club and Earthfirst!

Session 5) Technologies of Culture II From Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis to the Environmental Protection Agency

A-3: Setting Syntactic Parameters (COG advanced)

Janet Dean Fodor (CUNY Graduate Center)

The theory of language learnability is concerned with how it is possible, in principle, to learn a human language, given the limited language input that children are exposed to. Innate linguistic knowledge (Universal Grammar) can be called on to compensate for the "poverty of the stimulus". But how learners deploy UG in processing input sentences remains to be established. The principles-and-parameters theory of language was motivated in part by the simplicity of triggering parameters as the means for acquiring language-specific facts. But recent attempts to model the parameter setting process have uncovered serious problems of efficiency, or even learning failure. We will compare current models, looking for the strong points of each, with the goal of developing a psycholinguistically realistic account of how parameters can be set.

Lecture I: POVERTY OF THE STIMULUS. What information is missing? What is positively misleading? Implications for the extent of innate linguistic knowledge.

Lecture II: STRATEGIES OF THE LEARNING MECHANISM. The Subset Principle and the Uniqueness Principle: can they compensate for impoverished input? Making them work for incremental learning. Could parameter-triggering override the Subset Principle?

Lecture III: PARAMETRIC AMBIGUITY. How extensive is it? How damaging is it? Strategies for dealing with ambiguity. The Triggering Learning Algorithm (Gibson & Wexler); the Variational Model (Yang).

Lecture IV: UNAMBIGUOUS TRIGGERS. Are there any/enough unambiguous triggers? Are they simple enough for the youngest learners to use? How could learners recognize them as unambiguous? The parametric decoding process. Cue-based learning (Lightfoot); the Structural Triggers Learner (Fodor).

Lecture V: A REALISTIC MODEL: Decoding as the key to efficient learning. Making use of the parsing routines. Guessing versus waiting for true triggers. Modelling the time course of parameter setting.

Preparatory reading:

Fodor, J. D. (2001) "Setting syntactic parameters" In M. Baltin and C. Collins (eds.) *The Handbook of Contemporary Syntactic Theory*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, UK.

B-1: Theories of Concepts (COG) **Jerry Fodor** (Rutgers University)

A survey of theories about what concepts are, how they are individuated, and what it is to have one. We start with some general constraints that an adequate theory of concepts must meet. Various standard proposals drawn from analytic philosophy and cognitive science are considered, including the view, currently widely held, that typical concepts are stereotypes; that is, that concepts are some sort of statistical structure. Grounds are provided for rejecting such accounts. Alternative options will then be considered. (continued→)

Lectures:

1. Why concepts matter to cognitive science
2. Some theories of concepts
3. The refutation of pragmatism
4. If you have reference, do you also need meaning?
5. Can concepts be learned?

Background readings:

Chapter 1 "Concepts and cognitive science" in Margolis and Laurence *Concepts: Core Readings*, MIT Press, 1999. (82 pages).

Chapter 4, "The mechanisms of thought" in Tim Crane *The mechanical mind* Penguin, 1995.

B-2: Perspectives on Globalization (CULT advanced)
Darcie Vandegrift (Drake University)

How is globalization constructed in popular and academic discourses? To consider globalization as a simultaneously economic and cultural issue, we will discuss how globalization shapes categories of social difference such as race and gender. We will also explore the gendered aspects of global production, as well as transnational sexuality issues in Latin America. Finally, we will examine institutional and collective responses to globalization in the U.S., examining as case studies Nike corporation, anarchists, post-colonial collectives, anti-immigration movements, and global citizenship advocates. Students will complete an interview with someone not enrolled in the class and write their analysis of the interview data. Come prepared to discuss the connections between economy, identity, and ideology in a global context.

1. Introductions: Comparing U.S. and Russian Globalizations
2. Globalization Dilemmas I: Labor and Global Capital
Read: Freeman, Carla. 2000. "Designing Women: Corporate Discipline and Barbados's Off-shore Pink-Collar Sector." From *High Tech and High Heels: Women, Work, and Pink Collar Identities in Barbados*.
3. Globalization Dilemmas II: Identity in a Globalized Context
Read: Appadurai, A. 2000. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy."
4. Economic Globalization's Champions & Skeptics
5. Presentation of Interview Results and Analysis

B-3: Contemporary Theories on the Sacred (CULT)
Patrice Brodeur (University of Montreal) & **Marianna Shakhnovich**
(St. Petersburg State University)

This inter-disciplinary and team-taught course will cover five different theoretical approaches to the academic study of religion today: cognitive, cultural, feminist, post-modern hermeneutical, and political (especially international relations and political (especially international relations - of special interest after 9/11, 2001).

Lecture One: "Cognitive Approach in Contemporary Religious Studies" (Shakhnovich)

The cognitive approach is focused not only on the natural foundations of the religion or on the cognitive aspects of religious symbolism but on the genesis and the developing of the language and its influence on the mythological model of the world.

(Continued →)

Lecture Two: "Cultural Approach in Contemporary Religious Studies" (Shakhnovich)

The unity of the human mental process first of all is apparent in the images and notions that human beings employ in their reasoning about the world. The research on the archaic mythology gives opportunity to study how do the human mind form the religious image. This approach produces the explanatory theories of religion (without denying the values of interpretation) and in this sense returns to classical tradition..

Lecture Three: "Sociological approaches in Contemporary Religious Studies" (Brodeur)

Lecture Four: "Psychological approaches in Contemporary Religious Studies" (Brodeur)

Lecture Five: "Historical approaches in Contemporary Religious Studies" (Brodeur)

C-1: Introduction to Semantics (COG)

Christopher Potts (University of Massachusetts at Amherst)

The goal of compositional semantic analysis is to uncover the principles governing how meaningful expressions combine to form larger meaningful expressions in natural languages. I'll provide historical and conceptual background on semantic theory, but the emphasis will be on *doing semantics*: working through problems, assessing and improving existing analyses, and finding new topics to explore.

1. Truth-conditions and compositionality
2. Functions and lambdas
3. Anaphora
4. Presupposition
5. Discourse Representation Theory

C-2: FELLOW AMERICANS: The Evolution of Public Speech in the US (CULT)

Kathleen Parthé (University of Rochester) and **Anna Maslennikova** (St. Petersburg State University and University of Rochester)

Lecture 1. **Origins and influences: parliament and pulpit, folk wisdom and founding documents** (John Winthrop, Ben Franklin, The Declaration of Independence (1776), The preamble to the Constitution (1787))

Lecture 2. **Taking the Oath: the Voice of Liberty** (Washington's First Inaugural Address (1789), Jefferson's First Inaugural Address (1801), Kennedy's Inaugural Address (1963))

Lecture 3. **Keeping the promise: the Voice of Freedom** (Frederick Douglass (1852), Abraham Lincoln, The Gettysburg Address (1863), The Second Inaugural Address (1865))

Lecture 4. **Rhetoric in the Time of Crises: the Voice of Faith** (Franklin Roosevelt, The First Inaugural Address (1933), Martin Luther King "I have a Dream..." (1963), George W. Bush Speech to Congress after September the 11th)

Lecture 5. **Comparative Public Speech; the Russian Context**

C-3: Philosophy of Film (CULT advanced) **Jim McFarland** (Connecticut College)

Since Plato compared man's condition to that of cave-dwellers enthralled by shadows on the wall, philosophy has expected cinema. In this course we will recollect this philosophical history, asking how the phenomenon of film illuminates such perennial philosophical questions as the relation of appearance and essence, of causality and time, of society and the individual unconscious.

1. Image and Reality: Plato's cave and cinema
2. The Limits of Media: Lessing's theory of painting
3. Movement and Duration: Bergson's cinematic metaphor
4. Mass Distraction: Benjamin's resistance to Fascism
5. The End of Thought: Deleuze and the Time-Image

D-1: Universals of Human Language (COG)

(Stephanie Harves, Pomona College)

One of the most striking cognitive faculties that human beings share as a species is our ability to acquire language. This ability or "language instinct" has been argued to be an innate, hard-wired faculty of the mind, since it is something that all humans share. An interesting question that arises as a logical consequence from this claim is, "What do all human languages have in common, if anything?" In this course, we will examine one approach to this question, which focuses on comparing sentence structures (i.e., syntax) in a variety of different languages such as English, Russian, French, and Japanese. If humans truly do have an innate cognitive language faculty, then we might expect all languages of the world to share certain linguistic features. The primary goal of this course is to familiarize you with one of the most influential theoretical approaches to the study of linguistic universals in Cognitive Science.

- Lecture 1: What is a sentence? The search for syntactic universals in human language
Lecture 2: Examining the nucleus: A look at verb phrases across languages
Lecture 3: Putting the pieces together: How are sentences represented?
Lecture 4: Subjects, Verbs, and Objects: Making the pieces AGREE
Lecture 5: Movement: What moves where and why?

Reading: Steven Pinker *The Language Instinct*. David Adger *Core Syntax*

D-2: Word Order (COG advanced)

John Fred Bailyn (SUNY Stony Brook)

This course introduces students to various recent approaches to the "Free Word Order" phenomenon in languages such as Japanese, German, Russian and Serbo-Croatian. Significant restrictions on the apparent "freedom" of word order in such languages are discussed, along with the critical issue of how (if at all) to formalize the interaction with discourse interpretation. Movement approaches are contrasted with other approaches

- Lecture I: Free Word Order
Lecture II: Empirical puzzles of free word order
Lecture III: Mechanics of deriving alternate orders
Lecture IV: Movement vs non-movement and semantic effects (or lack thereof?)
Lecture V: Motivation for variant orders and the shape of the grammar

Readings: • G. Grewendorf & J. Sabel (1996) "Scrambling in German and Japanese" (*Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*) • Bailyn, J (2002) "Scrambling to Reduce Scrambling" *GLOT Newsletter* State of the State article

D-3: Speaking Otherwise: Alternative Voices in Text and Film 1 (CULT)

Polly Gannon (St. Petersburg State University)

“The contemporary victors in the abundance of their economic constellation are also spinning in a curious stasis of spiritual and cultural life. They have forgotten death. They are blind to the monsters of unresolved history lurking in the cellars of their modern dreams. They have forgotten the inescapable interconnectedness of all things. In arrogating to themselves the center of the world, when in fact the center is everywhere, the contemporary victors are speaking to the universe on behalf of everyone and speaking badly. It is time now for them to listen, and to listen the way human beings have never listened before. It is time to listen to the speech of poisoned dolphins, the cries of the stratosphere, the howls of the deforested earth, the caterwauling of the dry winds over the encroaching deserts, the screams of people without hope and without food, to the silences of strangled nations, to the passionate dreams of difficult artists, and to the age-old warnings that have always lurked in the oral fables of storytellers and shamans.” Ben Okri *Redreaming the World*

The following topics are all implicated in one another to various degrees, but I have tried to “sift out” and name some of the more significant or persuasive conjunctions of images and ideas. We will read most of the films and texts “across” the categories. In addition, there will be a very generous portion of poetry in the seminars.

1. Fault Lines: Abiding Imperfection.
2. Paradise
3. Angels, Ghosts, and Monsters: Uncanny Creatures.
4. The Other West(ern): Crossings and Inversions.
5. Road Movies, Quests, and Waking Dreams

Session 2: July 18-29, 2005

E-1: Pragmatics (COG)

Christopher Potts (UMass, Amherst)

Pragmatics --- the study of language use --- is central to current theoretical linguistics and connects in important ways with nearby fields (philosophy, sociology, literature, etc.). This course will aim to introduce students to the basic concepts of linguistic pragmatics and explore some of their consequences, both for linguistic theory and for the study of cooperative social interaction more generally.

1. Sentences, utterances, denotations
2. Pragmatic maxims
3. Case study: Scalar conversational implicatures
4. Intrusive conversational implicatures
5. Game-theoretic approaches to pragmatics

E-2: Speaking Otherwise: Alternative Voices in Text and Film 2 (CULT)

Polly Gannon (St. Petersburg State University -- Session 2)

“Human beings are blessed with the necessity of transformation.” Ben Okri *Redreaming the World*

In this seminar we will examine constructions and ramifications of gender as depicted in film, in poetry, and in critical literature—all the while talking and reading across disciplines.

First Week: **EnGendering Talk and Text**

Second Week: **Gender, Race, Class, and the Postcolonial Perspective.**

Possible films:

- *Sankofa* (Haile Gerima) • *Daughters of the Dust* (Julie Dash) • *Matewan* (John Sayles) • *Billy Elliot* (Stephen Daldry), • *Y Tu Mama Tambien* (Alfonso Cuarón), • *Ten* (Abbas Kiarostami),

Possible Texts:

- Ben Okri (*A Way of Being Free*) • Arundhati Roy (*Power Politics*) • Zora Neale Hurston (*Their Eyes Were Watching God, Mules and Men*) • Toni Morrison (*Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*) and others.

E-3: Advertising: History, Influence, and Culture (CULT)

Leah Lowe (Connecticut College)

We live in a world saturated with colorful images and catchy slogans designed to sell goods and services. This course investigates the role that advertising plays in popular culture and everyday life paying particular attention to the ways in which it shapes desires, wants, and needs as it recasts "citizens" as "consumers." We will begin by looking at the history of advertising in late nineteenth and twentieth century America before moving on to a critical examination of popular promotional techniques and strategies. The course will conclude with a consideration of advertising--its influence and ideology--within a broader cultural context.

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The Lectures:

1. Nineteenth-century advertising and the rise of the middle class: how will they know who you are?
2. Early twentieth-century advertising: mass production begets mass consumption
3. Decoding visual imagery: the semiotics of advertising
4. How they do it: consumer research, branding, and spin
5. Living in a consuming culture

F-1: Musical Cognition (COG advanced)
John Fred Bailyn (SUNY Stony Brook)

This course will survey major issues in the cognitive psychology of music. Major questions will include: what are the core organizational principles of the music faculty, how much of musical knowledge is learned and how much is not learned; how much of musical knowledge is species specific and how much is shared with other species; how much musical knowledge is universal across cultures and how much is culturally determined and what can we say about the evolution of the music faculty.

1. The human experience of music
2. Evidence of species specific abilities and cultural differences
3. Grouping and meter
4. Melody and harmony
5. Music and Poetry

Major readings: Several chapters of: Fred Lerdahl & Ray Jackendoff (1992) *A Generative Grammar of Tonal Music* Also selections from *The Psychology of Music* (Diana Deutsch, ed), *The Cognitive Neuroscience of Music* (Isabelle Peretz and Robert Zatorre, eds) and *Music, The Brain, and Ecstasy* (Robert Jourdain)

F-2: Education and Politics: (CULT)
Radmila Sević (University of Novi Sad) & Wallace Sherlock (U of Wisconsin)

This course will explore the demands that political and cultural dynamics impose on academic disciplines and educational institutions. In the United States, for example, local control of education is a fundamental cultural value, but in fact it means a continuous struggle about what is worth knowing and how to teach it. Censorship is a perennial and powerful tool in this struggle, and it is used by all contenders regardless of their political stance. In Eastern Europe, education and politics also show a close interaction, but quite a different one.

1. The history and politics of censorship in US schools (Sherlock)
2. Censorship in science education: The antievolution movement (Sherlock)
3. Must public education exclude religious beliefs? (Sherlock)
4. Political influences on the development of English Studies in Central and Eastern Europe (Sević)
5. The impact of English Studies on the politics and ideology of post-communist Europe (Sević)

F-3: Avant-Garde Cinema (CULT) **Jon Rubin** (SUNY Purchase)

In this course we will explore a style of film-making that often stands radically in opposition to the commercial, popular cinema, but which sometimes also draws directly from it. These are films generally made by individuals or small production teams in a fine arts context, but there have been many instances when these works crossed-over into the mainstream or when experimental features have been presented to large audiences in regular movie theatres. We will screen and discuss seminal works from the 1920's through the 1990's, beginning in Europe and moving to the United States. (Continued →)

1. The Surrealist Cinema.
2. On the Road with the Beat Cinema.
3. Success and Notoriety in the 1960's.
4. Structural, Minimal and Lyrical Threads.
5. The Autobiographical Mode.

G-1: The Syntax of Noun Phrases (COG)

Cilene Rodrigues (University of Brasilia)

This course offers an introductory step-by-step discussion on the structure of nominal expressions. Considering cross-linguistic data, we will be interested in the following question: What's between a Determiner and a Noun?

In pursuing an answer to this question, we will consider the following issues:

- (i) What is the head of a nominal domain: the noun or the determiner? (the DP-Hypothesis)
 - Deciding between Dative and Nominative possessors in Hungarian
 - Expressing possession in Romance
- (ii) Do nouns move within the nominal domain?
 - Playing with word order in Germanic Romance languages
 - Constructing nominal expressions in Semitic languages
- (iii) Can we say that nouns have arguments?
 - The possessor, the agent and the patient of a portrait
 - The binder and bindee within nominal expressions
- (iv) What if nominal expressions are similar to finite clauses?
 - Agreement between a noun and a possessor in Turkish, Hungarian and Romance
 - Tense morphology within nominal expression in Somali
- (v) When is movement out of nominal expressions possible?
 - The element under movement first moves to the edge of the nominal domain.
 - If the nominal morphology is weak, it does not prevent extraction of one of its constituents.

Readings:

Abney, S. 1986. *The English Noun Phrase in Its Sentential Aspect*. Doctoral dissertation,

MIT. Barker, C. 1995. *Possessive Descriptions*. Stanford: CSLI.

Longobardi, G. 2001 "The Structure of DPs: Some Principles, Parameters and Problems" In: M. Baltin and C. Collins (eds.). *The Handbook of Contemporary Syntactic Theory*.

G-2: Binding and Anaphora (COG advanced)

Yakov Testelets (The Russian State Humanities University)

Binding theory seeks to explain how different kinds of nominal expressions such as proper names, noun phrases and pronouns have anaphoric relations amongst one another, how they come to denote the same or different things in the world, and how anaphora is related to syntactic structure. In the course, the huge variety of nominal and especially pronominal expressions from the world's languages, will be outlined, and current theorizing about their grammatical properties and their interpretation will be discussed. The empirical problems with different theories, and several alternative formal and functional approaches to anaphora will be mentioned. (Continued →)

Lecture I. Lexicalist approach to anaphora and the classical Binding Theory.

Lecture II. Long-distance binding. I. A typology of pronouns.

Lecture III. Long-distance binding. II. Revisions of the Binding Theory.

Lecture IV. Principle C - pragmatics or grammar?

Lecture V. Binding in Minimalism.

Preparatory reading:

Reinhart, Tanya (1983). *Anaphora and Semantic Interpretation*. L. Croom Helm.

Freidin, Robert (1992). *Foundations of Generative Syntax*, The MIT Press. Chapters 7 and 8.

More advanced reading:

- Harbert, Wayne (1995) Binding theory, Control, and pro. In: Webelhuth, Gert (ed.), *Government and Binding theory and the Minimalist Program*.
- Hornstein, Norbert (2001) *Move! A Minimalist Theory of Construal*.
- Buring, Daniel (2005) *Binding Theory*

G-3: Edgar Allen Poe (CULT advanced)
Jim McFarland (Connecticut College)

The course is a reexamination of the American writer Edgar Allan Poe. Known primarily for his lurid tales and sensationalist poetry, Poe continues to be viewed by literature professors with a certain measure of suspicion. Here, we will approach Poe less as a canonical writer and more as a peculiarly sensitive historical barometer, a man on the margins of his (European) culture who uniquely registered the chaos toward which that culture was inevitably moving.

1. Introduction: Poe as a Surface
2. The Philosophy of Furniture
3. Coffin and Maelstrom
4. The Public Sphere
5. Conclusion: Modernity and Poe

H-1: From Speech Perception to Language (COG)
Andrew Nevins (Harvard University)

This course will cover the physics of speech, the psychology of speech, and the mental representation of linguistically-relevant sound.

1. perception of stress; the delimitative function of phonology
2. acquisition of native segmental contrasts; categorial perception
3. perception of syllables; babbling; sonority
4. the cocktail party effect; speaker normalization
5. vowel systems, acoustic enhancement and perceptual dispersion

H-2: Formal and Lexical Semantics and Ontology (COG advanced)
Barbara Partee & Vladimir Borshev (UMass, Amherst & Russian Academy of Sciences)

This advanced mini-course will build on but not absolutely presuppose Chris Potts' Session 1 course **Intro to Semantics**. The course will treat a variety of topics related to word meanings and their integration into sentence meanings. How do word meanings combine to build the meanings of phrases and sentences? How and why do word meanings shift in context? How do word meanings provide evidence of language users' unconscious assumptions about the structure of reality (Apresjan's *naivnaja kartina mira*, Bach's *natural language metaphysics*)?

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Case studies will include the semantics of different kinds of adjectives, the semantics of genitive constructions with relational nouns in Russian and English (*stakan moloka, portret Peti*), the "semantic bleaching" of verbs in negated existential sentences in Russian with the Genitive of Negation (*Ne belelo parusov na gorizonte*), and other. The course will be taught from perspectives of formal and lexical semantics, but formalism will be kept to a minimum.

Lecture titles:

1. Introduction to Lexical Semantics. Meaning postulates. Types of adjective meanings.
2. Genitives I: The Many Meanings of 'Rodin's Lovers': Word Meaning, Phrase Meaning, and Semantic Creativity.
3. Genitives II: Ontology and Metonymy. Semantic Sorts and Semantic Shifts in Genitive Constructions.
4. The Russian Genitive of Negation I: The interaction of compositional semantics, lexical semantics, "Perspective Structure", and context in negated Existential Sentences: The sources of "semantic bleaching" in "weak verbs".
5. The Russian Genitive of Negation II: The genitive of negation and diathesis shift.

H-3: Post-Modern Literature in the Information Age (CULT advanced)
Joseph Conte (University of Buffalo)

One defining aspect of postmodernism has been the paradigm shift from print to digital culture, from the text as bound codex to the various emanations of electronic media. Enthusiasts of this shift in media culture have dubbed our present condition the "late age of print," while others speak more generally of a transition from an industrial to an information age. Yet a complex dynamics of incommensurability arises in periods of technological overlap, in which the competing values and practices of the two cultures of print and hypermedia coexist. Print culture retains an order that is linear, syntactic, privately accessed, and static; and electronic culture is nonlinear in transmission and organization, interconnected through various channels, publicly accessed, and quicksilver in its delivery. As a result, many works and their "delivery systems" display signs of cross-purposing and redundancy: the presence of textual and graphical hyperlinks in web browsers; multiple media formats for works previously classified as either "books" or "films;" and full-text CDROM scholarly editions of classic works of literature interconnected with archival manuscripts, historical and critical source materials. Rather than lament the decline of five hundred years of print technology and an attendant erosion of readerly skills, or applaud the conversion to incipient data forms and their promiscuous linking, one may regard this transitional phase between a print and an electronic order as an unprecedented opportunity to study the art of fiction and the postmodern subject as each undergoes a cognitive restructuring in which vestigial skills of information acquisition and production are gradually exchanged for inventive ones.

1. The Superabundance of Cyberspace: Postmodern Fiction in the Information Age.
2. Being in Uncertainties: Complexity and Postmodernism.
3. The Virtual Reader: Cybernetics and Technocracy in the Novel.
4. Noise and Signal: Information Theory in DeLillo's *White Noise*.
5. Cognitive Dissonances: The Production of Meaning in the New Media.

Readings:

1. John Barth, "Click."
2. "Media and Materiality," from N. Katherine Hayles, *Writing Machines*.
3. Excerpt from David Lodge, *Thinks...*