

# PH9A5-20 Topics in 20th Century French Philosophy I

**20/21**

**Department**

Philosophy

**Level**

Taught Postgraduate Level

**Module leader**

Miguel Beistegui

**Credit value**

20

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* (1968) is one of the most challenging and significant works of twentieth century "continental" philosophy. It marks the completion of a process of thought that began with the publication of *Empiricism and Subjectivity* in 1953 and that can be summarised as "transcendental empiricism." By that, and beyond what may seem like a contradiction in terms, Deleuze means a method as well as a philosophical project, which we will try and define in detail.

### Module aims

This module will consist of a close reading of key passages from Deleuze's magnum opus, and especially of Chapter 3 ("The Image of Thought"). The third chapter of *Difference and Repetition* consists of a confrontation with key figures in the history of philosophy, and possibly the most canonical ones: Plato, Descartes and Kant. The point of that chapter is simply to ask: what does it mean to philosophise, or, more broadly perhaps, to think? How does thought come about? What are its conditions not of possibility, but actual emergence? Deleuze's point is that there's an answer to that question that's dominated the history of philosophy, and which he wants to oppose by extracting the conditions of what he calls a "thought without image." He offers a critique of what he calls the "dogmatic image of thought," and offers in its place a more ambitious, less restrictive

conception of thought, which leads to an original doctrine of the faculties. He does that by drawing on resources from the history of philosophy and literature.

As a way of approaching that complex chapter, and introducing some of Deleuze's key concepts, we'll begin by reading a number of shorter texts, from his early review of Jean Hyppolite's *Logique and Existence* to his studies on Bergson, Nietzsche, Kant, Proust, and Plato, which all found their way into *Difference and Repetition*. No prior knowledge of Deleuze's thought is required.

## Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

### I. Outline of *Difference and Repetition*, Chapter 3:

Part One (169-173 French/129-132 English trans. Athlone and Columbia/ 170-175 Bloomsbury): Postulate 1, or the dogmatic Image of thought: good sense (*bon sens*) as *Cogitatio natura universalis*.

Part Two (173-180/132-138/175-182): Postulates 2-4

1/ Introduction (173-174/132-133): thought *de jure* vs *de facto*

2/ Common sense (*sens commun*) and recognition (*récognition*), or the harmonious exercise of all the faculties as the transcendental model of thought (174-179/133-137). Postulates 2 and 3.

3/ Representation (179-180/137-138). Postulate 4.

Part Three (180-192/138-148/182-194): The Deleuzian doctrine of faculties, and the reversal/deconstruction of representation.

A/ The violent genesis of thought, and what forces us to think:

1/ Plato (180-186/138-143)

a. The sensible as sign (180-182/138-140): τὸ αἰσθητέον (what can only be sensed, *sentendium*) vs τὸ αἰσθητόν (sensible); τὸ νοητέον (what can only be thought, *cogitandum*) vs τὸ νοητόν (the intelligible).

b. Transcendental memory, or what can only be remembered (*memorandum*), vs empirical memory (*re-collection*) (182-186/140-143).

2/ Kant (footnote 1 p. 187/footnote 10, p. 143): the role of imagination in the sublime vs in schematisation and the beautiful

B/ The "transcendent" or "disjointed" use of the faculties, and philosophy as transcendental empiricism (DR 186-192/143-148)

1/ Principle of difference vs principle of identity (187-189/144-145)

2/ The discordant harmony of the faculties, or the Idea (189-191/145-146)

3/ Rivière/Artaud (schizophrenia) as example (191-192/146-148)

Part Four (192-198/148-153/194-199): Postulate 5: error as the "negative" of thought vs stupidity, wickedness and madness as the "negative" of thought.

1/ Error (192-95/148-50).

2/ Superstition, stultitia (195-96/150)

3/ Stupidity (196-98/150-53).

Part Five (198-213/153-164/199-213): The dialectical logic of sense, and the critique of formal and transcendental logic.

A/ Where sense can be found (199-204/153-57).

1/ 199-200/153-54. In the proposition: sense as the condition of truth.

2/ 200-01/154. Postulate 6: the logical function.

3/201-04/154-57. The Idea as the locus of sense.

B/ Postulate 7: the postulate of modality, or solutions (204-13/157-64).

1/ Sense is, in fact, internal to the problem itself (204-05/157-58).

2/ Problems aren't ready made, but are constructed (205-207/158-59).

3/ The "intrinsic characteristic of the problem, or the differential element in thought (210/161).

4/ Conclusion: sense beyond propositional logic (212-213/163-164)

Part Six (213-17/164-167/213-217): Conclusion on the transcendental conditions of thought

1/ Knowing vs learning (213-215/164-166)

2/ Postulate 8, or the postulate of knowledge (215-216/166-167).

## II. Programme of Seminars:

Week 2: Introducing the "Image of Thought" and its relation to "Transcendental Empiricism"

Week 3: Defining the Problem of "Difference" and "Repetition"

Reading:

1. "Jean Hyppolite, Logique et existence" (1954), in *Desert Islands and Other Texts*.

Difference and Repetition, Preface + 39-41/26-27 + 43-45/28-30

2. "Bergson, 1859-1941" (1956) + "Bergson's Conception of Difference" (1956) in *DI*.

Week 4: On the Problem of Truth and the Image of Thought

Reading:

Nietzsche and Philosophy (1962), Chapter 3, §15 ("A New Image of Thought") + "On Nietzsche and the Image of Thought" (1968), in *DI*.

Proust and Signs (1964), Chapters 2-4 and Conclusion ("The Image of Thought")

Week 5: On the Problem of Truth and the Image of Thought (cont.)

Reading:

"Plato and the Simulacrum" (1966) in *Logic of Sense*.

Week 6: On the Problem of Truth and the Image of Thought (cont.)

Kant's Critical Philosophy (1963) + "The Idea of Genesis in Kant's Aesthetics" (1963), in *DI*.

Week 7:

DR, Chapter 3, Part One (pp. 169-130/129-138): The moral or dogmatic Image of thought, and its postulates. Postulates 1-4: good sense, common sense, re-cognition (récognition), representation.

Background reading:

A/Descartes, *Meditations I and II* + *The Search for Truth through Natural Light*.

B/ Plato: G. Deleuze, "Plato and the Simulacrum" (1966) in *Logic of Sense*.

C/ Kant:

Kant, *KPR*, "Transcendental Logic," and especially the Introduction ("Transcendental Illusion" and "Pure Reason as the Seat of Transcendental Illusion"). See also Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, 37-41/21-23.

I. On common sense, or the harmonious accord of faculties: Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, §§ 20-22, 40; DR, 174-80/133-38; Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, "Problem of the Relation between Faculties: Common Sense," 33-36/18-21.

On recognition, cf. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *The Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding*, as in the first edition: A 84-130, and especially A 98-110

Also Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic (A 669/ B 697) + Transcendental Doctrine of Method, Chapter 1 ("The Discipline of Pure Reason").

II. On aesthetic common sense :

Kant, Critique of Judgement, §§ 9, 20, 35, 40

G. Deleuze, Kant's Critical Philosophy, Chapter 3.

Week 8: The Deleuzian doctrine of faculties, and the reversal/deconstruction of representation.

Reading: DR, Chapter 3, Part Three (pp. 180-192/138-148).

Week 9: Postulate 5: error as the "negative" of thought vs stupidity, wickedness and madness as the "negative" of thought.

Reading: DR, Chapter 3, Part Four (pp. 192-198/148-153).

Background Reading: Plato, Theaetetus, 193 b – d. + Deleuze, "Lucretius and the Simulacrum" in Logic of Sense.

Week 10: The dialectical logic of sense, and the critique of formal and transcendental logic

Postulate 6: the logical function. Reading: DR, Chapter 3, Part Five (pp. 198-204/153-157) + Logic of Sense, series 3, 9, 11, 17.

Postulate 7: the postulate of modality, or solutions.

Reading: DR, Chapter 3, Part Five (cont.), 204-213/157-64.

Background reading:

1. Albert Lautman, Mathematics, Ideas and the Physical Real, trans. Simon B. Duffy (London: Continuum, 2011). Available on Moodle.
2. On Deleuze's theory of Ideas, see Deleuze, "The Method of Dramatisation" (1967) in DI; DR, Chapter 4; H. Somers-Hall, 128-143; D. Smith, Essays 3 and 17; M. de Beistegui, Truth and Genesis, Chapter 8; J. Hughes, 129-47; J. Williams, 149-161; Sauvagnargues, Chapters 9 and 13.

Postulate 8: the postulate of knowledge as the ultimate end of thought.

Reading: DR, Chapter 3, Part Six (213-217/164-67).

## Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Understand and write critically on some of the major figures of the twentieth-century French tradition in philosophy.
- The ability to expound and explain, in both oral and written form, difficult modern philosophical texts.
- Understand and interpret certain texts that are central to modern Continental philosophy, and relate them to on-going philosophical debates.
- Understand a significant portion of the modern Continental philosophical landscape.

## Indicative reading list

Works by Gilles Deleuze:

Empirisme et subjectivité: essai sur la nature humaine selon Hume. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1953. Translated by Constantin V. Boundas. Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

L'Île déserte et autres textes, textes et entretiens 1953-1974. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2002.  
 Trans. Taormina, M. Desert Islands and Other Texts. New York: Semiotext(e), 2003.  
 Nietzsche et la philosophie. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962. Trans. Tomlinson, H.,  
 Nietzsche and Philosophy. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.  
 La Philosophie critique de Kant. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963. Translation  
 Tomlinson, H., and Habberjam, B., Kant's Critical Philosophy. Minneapolis: University of  
 Minnesota Press, 1984.  
 Proust et les signes. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1964, 1970. Trans. Howard, R.,  
 Proust and Signs. London: The Athlone Press, 2000.  
 Le Bergsonisme. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson  
 and Barbara Haberjam. Bergsonism. New York: Zone Books, 1988.  
 Différence et répétition. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968. Trans. Patton, P.  
 Difference and Repetition. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.  
 Logique du sens. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1969. Trans. Lester, M., with Stivale, C. Logic of  
 Sense. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.

Works on Gilles Deleuze:

A/ Guides to Difference and Repetition:

Hughes, Joe. Deleuze's 'Difference and Repetition': A Reader's Guide. London: Continuum, 2009.  
 Pp. 65-86 are devoted to DR, Chapter 3.

Somers-Hall, Henry. Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: An Edinburgh Philosophical Guide.  
 Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013. Pp. 96-128 are devoted to DR, Chapter 3.

Williams, James. Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University  
 Press, 2003, 2013. Chapter 5 is devoted to DR, Chapter 3.

B/ More general works that engage with Difference and Repetition:

Ansell Pearson, Keith. Germinal Life: The Difference and Repetition of Deleuze. London and New  
 York: Routledge, 1999.

Badiou, Alain. Deleuze: The Clamor of Being. Translated by Louise Burchill. Minneapolis:  
 University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

de Beistegui, Miguel. Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology (Part Three).  
 Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004.

Immanence and Philosophy: Deleuze (Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

Boundas, Constantin (ed.). Deleuze and Philosophy. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press,  
 2006.

Bryant, Levi R. Difference and Givenness. Deleuze's Transcendental Empiricism and the Ontology  
 of Immanence. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2008.

Hallward, Peter. Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation. London and New  
 York: Verso, 2006.

Jones, Graham & Roffe, Jon (eds.). Deleuze's Philosophical Lineage. Edinburgh: Edinburgh  
 University Press, 2009.

Kerslake, Christian. Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy: From Kant to Deleuze. Edinburgh:  
 Edinburgh University Press, 2009.

Lord, Beth. Kant and Spinozism: Transcendental Idealism and Immanence from Jacobi to  
 Deleuze. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Montebello, Pierre. Deleuze. Paris: Vrin, 2008.

Patton, Paul (ed.). Deleuze: A Critical Reader. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.

Sauvagnargues, Anne. Deleuze: l'empirisme transcendantal. Paris: Presses Universitaires de

France, 2009. Especially Chapter 2 ("Limage de la pensée").  
Smith, Daniel W. Essays on Deleuze. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012.  
Smith, Daniel W. & Somers-Hall, Henry (eds). The Cambridge Companion to Deleuze. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Web resources:

<http://www.webdeleuze.com/php/sommaire.html> contains many lecture courses and lectures given by Deleuze throughout his life, but mostly from the Vincennes and St Denis period (1970-1987). Many are translated in English.

You can find very useful information and material (including outlines) on John Protevi's website:

<http://www.protevi.com/john/DG/index.html>

## **Subject specific skills**

Students will acquire an in-depth knowledge of the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze leading up to the publication of Difference and Repetition.

Students will acquire an in-depth knowledge and critical assessment of key figures in the history of philosophy.

Students will acquire an in-depth understanding of what it means to think.

## **Transferable skills**

Reading skills, critical skills, analytical skills.

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## **Study**

### **Study time**

| Type          | Required                   |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| Lectures      | 10 sessions of 1 hour (5%) |
| Seminars      | 10 sessions of 1 hour (5%) |
| Private study | 180 hours (90%)            |
| Total         | 200 hours                  |

### **Private study description**

No private study requirements defined for this module.

## **Costs**

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

### Assessment group A1

|                                       | Weighting | Study time |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Assessed Essay<br>A 5,000-word essay. | 100%      |            |

### Feedback on assessment

Written feedback on essays

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## Availability

### Courses

This module is Core for:

- TPHA-V7PM Postgraduate Taught Philosophy
  - Year 1 of V7PM Philosophy
  - Year 2 of V7PM Philosophy

This module is Core option list A for:

- TPHA-V7P2 Postgraduate Taught Continental Philosophy
  - Year 1 of V7P2 Continental Philosophy
  - Year 2 of V7P2 Continental Philosophy

This module is Option list A for:

- TPHA-V7PM Postgraduate Taught Philosophy
  - Year 1 of V7PM Philosophy
  - Year 2 of V7PM Philosophy