Language and Identity (PHIL 6242)  
Fordham University, Fall 2018

Professor: Samir Haddad  
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Office: Collins Hall 133  
Office hours: tba and by appointment.  
Class Times: Thursday 2:15-4:15, in the Collins Hall conference room.

Description: In this seminar we will examine the relationship between language and identity, primarily as it is theorized by three thinkers writing in French: Jacques Derrida, Edouard Glissant, and Barbara Cassin. Paying particular attention to these thinkers’ reflections on their own relationships to French and other languages, we will discuss topics such as nationalism, colonialism, translation, multilingualism, and the connections between languages and nature of philosophical discourse.

Texts: There are four books to purchase, available at the Fordham University Bookstore:


It is recommended, but not obligatory, that you purchase the following texts:

- Souleymane Bachir Diagne, The Ink of the Scholars

All other assigned and recommended readings are available on Blackboard.

Assessment:  
Weekly responses  
Final paper

Weekly response: Each week you are required to email me a response to the reading by 9am on Thursday. This can be of any length.

Final paper: This will be due at the end of the semester, and can be one of two things:  
1) A 15-20 page research paper.  
2) A 3000 word conference paper suitable for submission to a conference such as the APA or SPEP.
Tentative Schedule:

Aug 30  Introduction

Sept 6  Jacques Derrida, “If There is Cause to Translate I: Philosophy in its National Language (Toward a “licterature en français”))”
       Derrida, “If There is Cause to Translate II: Descartes’ Romances, or The Economy of Words”
       Recommended: René Descartes, Discourse on Method, Part 6

Sept 13 Derrida, Monolingualism of the Other, pp. 1-43
       Recommended: Watch the film D’Ailleurs Derrida

Sept 20 Derrida, Monolingualism of the Other, pp. 44-73
       Derrida, “Des Tours de Babel”
       Recommended: Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator”

Sept 27 Derrida and Dufourmantelle, Of Hospitality

Oct 4  Frantz Fanon, “The Negro and Language” from Black Skin, White Masks (pp. 8-27)
       Souleymane Bachir Diagne, “Negritude”, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
       Edouard Glissant, “Introductions” “The Unconscious, Identity, and Method” from Caribbean Discourse (pp. 1-12, 159-170)
       Recommended: J. Michael Dash, “Introduction” to Caribbean Discourse (pp. xi-xlv)

Oct 11 Glissant, Poetics of Relation, “Approaches” (pp. 1-42)
       Recommended: John Drabinski, Levinas and the Postcolonial, pp.144-164

Oct 18 Glissant, Poetics of Relation, “Elements”, “Paths” (pp. 43-127)
       Recommended: Clevis Headley, “Glissant’s Existential Ontology of Difference”

Oct 25 Glissant, Poetics of Relation, “Theories”, “Poetics” (pp. 129-209)

Nov 1  Barbara Cassin, “Introduction: Toward a New Topology of Philosophy”
       Cassin, “Who’s Afraid of the Sophists? Against Ethical Correctness”
       Cassin, “Speak if You are a Man, or the Transcendental Exclusion”

Nov 8  Cassin, “Philosophizing in Tongues”
       Selections from Cassin (ed.), Dictionary of Untranslatables

Nov 15 Cassin, Nostalgia, pp. ix-40

Nov 22 No class – Thanksgiving

Nov 29 Cassin, Nostalgia, pp. 41-63

Dec 6  Diagne, The Ink of the Scholars

Dec 13 TBA