POSTHUMAN KNOWLEDGE(S)

19.08.2019 - 23.08.2019

Utrecht University
The Netherlands

Course Director: *Prof. Rosi Braidotti*

Lecturers*: Prof. Rosi Braidotti (Utrecht University), Dr. Rick Dolphijn (Utrecht University), Prof. Jessica Ringrose (University College London), Prof. Emma Renold (Cardiff University), Sarah Boers (Utrecht University), Daniela Gandorfer (Princeton University), Goda Klumbyte (University of Kassel) and Dr. Simone Bignall (University of Technology, Sydney)*

Tutors: *Ruth Clemens (Leeds Trinity and Utrecht University); Fiona Hillary (RMIT University, Melbourne); Emily Jones (University of Essex); Goda Klumbyte (University of Kassel); Kay Sidebottom (Leeds Beckett University)*

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COURSE SUMMARY:

In 2019, Braidotti's intensive course will focus on "Posthuman Knowledge(s)" , which is also the title of Braidotti's new monograph, published by Polity Press. The other textbook that will be selectively adopted for the course is *The Posthuman Glossary* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).

The aim of this interdisciplinary course is to offer a critical overview of the contemporary scholarship dealing with the applications and implications of the 'posthuman turn,' for knowledge production and research, notably in the Humanities and Social Sciences. The posthuman turn is defined as the convergence, within the context of advanced or cognitive capitalism, of post-humanism on the one hand and post-anthropocentrism on the other. Although these two lines of critical thought often overlap, they are rather distinct phenomena both in terms of their theoretical genealogies and in their practical applications. Their current convergence is triggering a number of qualitative developments of a very original nature, which we will try to study.

A related aim of the course is to introduce the participants to Braidotti's specific brand of neo-materialist, critical posthuman theory. This theory rests on two main concepts: the emphasis on the embodied and embedded, relational and affective structure of subjectivity and the grounded and accountable nature of knowledge claims. These aspects will be connected through the emphasis on perspectival politics of locations and critiques of power on the one hand and affirmative ethics on the other. To strengthen this aspect of the course, participants will be required to read Braidotti's *The Posthuman* (Polity Press, 2013) and selected entries from *The Posthuman Glossary* (Bloomsbury, 2018) prior to the start of the course.

In order to evaluate posthuman knowledge(s), the course will present, explore and assess the defining features of a selected number of fields within the fast-growing Posthumanities, such as the Environmental, Digital and Medical Humanities, asking questions such as: what is the object of enquiry of these emergent areas of research? What is the knowing subject of the Posthumanities? How do these new fields of knowledge affect the constitution of subjectivity and practice of the academic Humanities today? Mindful of the differences in power and access that structure the debate on the posthuman, we will also investigate how posthuman knowledge(s) can assist us in moving beyond the patterns of exclusion of the sexualized, racialized and naturalized "others" that were not recognized as belonging to humanity and were also disqualified as subjects of knowledge. Special attention will also be given to the continuing efforts to learn to think beyond anthropocentrism.

Next to outlining the main features of the Posthumanities, the course will also endeavour to present in a collaborative fashion – through panels and tutorials – a selection of concrete case-studies drawn from the Environmental, Digital and Medical Humanities. These cases will be presented by teams of tutors, who are participating scholars drawn from a range of disciplines and interdisciplinary areas of research, notably: literature and animal studies, pedagogy, media and technology studies, legal theory, philosophy and the arts. Throughout the course, special efforts will be made to highlight the crucial contribution of art practices to all areas of posthuman scholarship and research

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE:
Following an established tradition, each day of the course is structured as follows: the mornings are devoted to plenary keynote lectures, by the course director, invited teachers and special guests.

The afternoons are devoted to parallel seminar sessions. All of the participants will be sub-divided into smaller tutoring groups, led by a team of tutors who follow the same group throughout. Participants will be notified of the group they have been assigned to and receive the name and contact details of their tutor before the summer school starts. Rosi Braidotti will be present every afternoon and will be on call to assist. Every afternoon after the break all the tutorial groups come together for a full hour plenary session devoted to the presentation of artistic and curatorial practices, chaired by one of the tutors. This will be followed by a closing plenary session in the form of thematic panel presentations by selected course participants. The panels will be chaired by the tutors in turn.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
This course is intended for participants with an advanced master's level or higher. Participants in the course are expected to have read before the start of the intensive course the compulsory texts assigned for the lectures and the tutorials. Attendance to all the sessions is compulsory and the participants are required to sign up formal attendance lists for all the sessions. They are also expected to actively take part in tutorials, prepare questions and discussion points for plenary sessions, both the morning ones following the keynote lectures and the closing plenaries after the afternoon tutorials. The fulfilment of these requirements entitles participants to gain credits for the course.

CERTIFICATES and CREDITS:
Participants who meet all the requirements, attend all the sessions – or can formally justify their absence-, and show active participation in the discussions will be issued with an official Utrecht University Certificate of attendance on the last day of the school. This intensive course grants participants 2.0 ECTS credits.

COMPULSORY READING:
The basic textbooks for the course are *Posthuman Knowledge* (Polity Press, 2019) by Rosi Braidotti and selected chapters from *Posthuman Ecologies* (Bloomsbury Academic 2018), edited by Rosi Braidotti and Simone Bignall, which all participants are expected to buy.

BACKGROUND READING:
Please note that all participants are expected to have read Rosi Braidotti's book *The Posthuman* (Polity Press 2013), and the introduction and selected entries of *The Posthuman Glossary* (Bloomsbury Academic 2018), edited by Rosi Braidotti and Maria Hlavajova, which all participants are advised to buy.

THE PROGRAMME
Professor Braidotti will lecture every day, chair all plenary sessions and be present at all panel presentations. Each day will be devoted to a specific aspect of the contemporary posthuman knowledge production:
DAY 1: General Introduction to the Posthumanities; case-study: education and pedagogical practice
DAY 2: The Environmental Humanities; case-studies: comparative literature & postcolonial theory
DAY 3: The Medical Humanities and Legal Theory; case-study: bio-politics of posthuman law
DAY 4: The Digital Humanities and Media Environments; case-study: algorithmic culture
DAY 5: Posthuman Affirmative Ethics, Pain and Dying.

REGISTRATION:
Applications are now open: www.utrechtsummerschool.nl/courses/culture/posthuman-knowledge.
Application deadline: June 1, 2019. Course fee: €300. Housing fee (optional): €200.