

## **Delusions of Certainty: Interactions Between Artist/Author and Audience**

There are many simple words with complex meanings. Love. Death. Freedom. Sovereignty. Knowledge. Understanding. Often uttered in everyday and political conversation, but rarely considered or dissected. “Everyone knows what those words mean.” Philosophers have dedicated entire books to each of these ideas. However, philosophical texts often use language meant to be specific, but which require a Bachelor Degree or more to understand the usage. Therefore, the possibility of dealing with these ideas through other media also present an opportunity for discussions to spread beyond just philosophical classrooms.

The foundational concepts of this course are Media and Communication, Philosophy of Language, Metamodernism, Linguistics, Metanarrative, and Identity. By asking students to engage with a variety of contexts and media with the core theme of language games, they can see how humour is a shared “game” led by an artist and received by the audience. This “game” can be used to highlight different aspects, such as self-expression, overcoming barriers, homage to other works, or societal critique.

This course will challenge students to:

- Reconsider how language is used in communication;
- Rethink the assumptions underlying common rhetoric and everyday language;
- Critically evaluate various media as commentary on communication and meaning, and;
- Understand humour as both a means and an end.

This lecture series will necessarily deal with media consumption methods, the medium of the message, and the content itself. While each session will vary with content, the overall structural aspects will be the same:

- Introduction/session overview
- Taught content
- Discussion/debate as a learning check/to diversify perspectives
- Reframe the content/connect to other themes
- Overview of the session and content

Final assessment will be in two parts, a presentation of 5 minutes, and an essay of 8 -10 pages. Students will present the core idea of their paper, and fellow classmates will be assigned to provide formal feedback and suggestions. The essay will be on a piece of art selected by the student, critically evaluated for the societal messages that influence and are propagated by the work.

Lecture 1: McLuhan, Sapir-Whorf, Wittgenstein and the Structures of Your World

- Discussing philosophical and linguistic ideas about how we interpret the worlds around us

Lecture 2: Critiquing the Classics – Historical Context and Fame

- Margaret Cavendish as a contemporary critic of Descartes, and yet much less famous

Lecture 3: Arrival – Language and Decision

- Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and available choice as presented in the film

Lecture 4: Into the Spider-Verse – Identity and Expression

- Graffiti as an art form/vandalism, the politics of social crime

Lecture 5: Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy – Assumption From Experience

- Douglas Adams and subverting expectation, dealing with the absurd

Lecture 6: Megamind – Villainy is for the Hero

- Narratives of villainy and heroism/expectations

Lecture 7: Erik Satie and Bill Bailey – Parody is Homage

- Beethoven, caricature of and appreciation for influential artists and art

Lecture 8: Eddie Izzard – Illuminating Boundaries

- Stand-up comedy and toeing the line of societal judgements

Lecture 9: The Cornetto Trilogy – Setup and Payoff

- Rule of threes, Chekov's Gun, and Reinforcement as cinematic storytelling techniques

Lecture 10: Don't Hug Me I'm Scared (DHMIS) – Critique and Distorted Expectation

- Using the format/medium against the audience, indie development vs. commercial

Lecture 11: Jinger and TOOL – Change Your Mind Later

- Technical skill and pushing boundaries in music

Lecture 12: Reggie Watts – Disorientation and Enjoyment

- Using the absurd in comedy, treating the audience as equals

Lecture 13: Mel Brooks – Healing Trauma

- Mockery of what should be mocked, undermining seriousness with the ridiculous