Fiction has enabled us not merely to imagine things, but to do so collectively. We can weave common myths such as the biblical creation story, the Dream-time myths of Aboriginal Australians, and the nationalist myths of modern states. Such myths give Sapiens the unprecedented ability to cooperate flexibly in large numbers.

Yuval Noah Harari

The course provides an introduction for doctoral students to the critical posthumanities, conceptualized by Rosi Braidotti as a supra/disciplinary, rhizomic field of contemporary knowledge production, and to explore in more detail the possibilities of research that result in the actualization of minority-driven knowledges. As an entryway to this burgeoning field two recent articles by Braidotti will be discussed, the first of which, "A Theoretical Framework for the Critical Posthumanities" (2018), not only explores the key conceptual and methodological perspectives, but explicitly sets out to tackle "the implications of the critical posthumanities for practices in the contemporary 'research' university." What I find illuminating in Braidotti's proposal and believe to be helpful for PhD students is how familiar critical approaches (gender, queer, feminist, postcolonial, cultural, media, race, migration, disability, film and television, trauma, memory, etc. studies) combine in a supra-disciplinary framework, creating new discursive practices within the context of the Anthropocene.

The course endeavors to foster active engagement with the theoretical texts via close reading and annotation of texts as part of the preparation for classes, as well as relying on in-class discussions dedicated to the analysis of creative works to put theory into practice. By taking a workshop-like approach, I invite students to engage on both a theoretical and practical level and to actively contribute to the content of the course: recommending texts for classroom discussion will ensure the integration of their specific research areas. The course will also produce the tangible result of a draft presentation on the students' topic of choice, which can be easily developed into a conference presentation.

The course is based on an approach that regards social responsibility as a core principle which not only restructures subjectivity as "a collective assemblage that encompasses human and nonhuman actors, technological mediation, animals, plants, and the planet as a whole," but also proposes an affirmative, inclusive ethics. The course will focus on the nature-culture and media-nature-cultural continua, on alternative knowing subject formations, and the possible frameworks that oppose unsustainable advanced capitalism that may contribute to a collective construction of hope for the future.

Requirements:
- Due to the workshop-like structure, students are expected to regularly **annotate theoretical texts** as a group (electronically available for all, including the teacher), **formulating questions/comments before class**, which will provide the basis for in-class discussion.
- **Compilation of a list of sources relevant to your research area** (based on the readers, essay collections I ordered + materials accessible via electronic databases see March 2 – workshop session). Narrow down your list to **one (article/chapter-length) for in-class discussion and pair this theoretical text with a creative work of your choice** (literature, film, music video, videogame, etc.) by **March 23.**

- **Student topics**: use your theoretical and creative texts of choice to prepare **a PPT with questions/topics to facilitate group discussion.** Introduce your own research topic through the lens of posthumanism and lead the discussion in part of the class.
  Topic of choice: besides the ones already proposed in the syllabus (ecocriticism, technology, race, animal studies) any of the following and more are welcome: indigenous, new media, gender, disability, migration, extinction, game studies – virtually any of these and their combinations can be investigated from a posthumanist perspective.
- Final two classes: **a DRAFT PPT of a 20-min conference presentation** based on the classroom discussion you led. As the group will have read/watched and discussed both the theory and the creative work, students will have the opportunity to **give informed feedback to their peers**.

Course Schedule

Feb 15 – Orientation
Ferrando, Francesca. "Crash Course: The Posthuman." *YouTube*

Feb 22 – **Introduction of main tenets, overview of available materials**
Reno, Seth T. "Introduction: The Anthropocene and the Humanities." *The Anthropocene: Approaches and Contexts for Literature and the Humanities*, edited by Seth T. Reno. Routledge, 2022, 1-10.
Braidotti, Rosi. "Posthuman Critical Theory." *Journal of Posthuman Studies*. Vol. 1 no. 1, 2017, 9-25.
London, Jack. "To Build a Fire"

Feb 29 – **Introduction continued + short works (no taught class, instructions will be available in Google Classroom)**
Braidotti, Rosi. "A Theoretical Framework for the Critical Posthumanities." *Theory, Culture & Society*, Special Issue: Transversal Posthumanities, 2018, 1-31.
Scalzi, John. "When the Yogurt Took Over: A Short Story." *Whatever.* whatever.scalzi.com, Oct 2, 2010.
2-3 short films (5-10 mins) from the series *Love, Death, and Robots*

Mar 7 – **Workshop session**
Discussion of possible links between the students' own research topics and some aspect(s) of Posthuman Critical Theory. Students are required to check the contents of the following works (available either electronically or purchased for the institute library) and list the five most relevant articles/chapters.

Antennae. The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture. https://www.antennae.org.uk/
The Anthropocene: Approaches and Contexts for Literature and the Humanities. Edited by Seth T. Reno. Routledge, 2022.
The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Posthuman. Edited by Bruce Clarke and Manuela Rossini. Cambridge UP, 2017.
Ethical Futures and Global Science Fiction. Edited by Zachary Kendall et al. Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.
A Feminist Companion to the Posthumanities. Edited by Cecilia Åsberg and Rosi Braidotti. Springer International Publishing, 2018.
Posthuman Ecologies: Complexity and Process after Deleuze. Edited by Rosi Braidotti and Simone Bignall. Rowman and Littlefield, 2018.
Posthumanism in Art and Science: A Reader. Edited by Giovanni Aloi and Susan McHugh. Columbia UP, 2021.
Vermeulen, Pieter. *Literature and the Anthropocene*. Routledge, 2020.

Mar 14 – **Posthumanism and technology**
Kłosiński, Michał. "Games and Utopia." *Acta Ludologica*, 2018, Vol. 1, No. 1, 4-14.

Owen, David. "Chapter One: Digital Like Me." *Player and Avatar: The Affective Potential of Videogames*. McFarland, 2017. 23-59.

Where the Water Tastes Like Wine. Good Shepherd Entertainment, 2018.

Orwell: Ignorance Is Strength. Osmotic Studios, 2018.

Mar 21 – **Ecocritical perspectives and Animal Studies** with Bori László

Texts TBA

Mar 28 – **Posthumanism and race** with Bia Szendrei

Texts TBA

Apr 4 – **Consultation Week**

Apr 11 – **Posthuman feminism** with Fruzsi Papp

Texts TBA

Student topic(s)

Apr 18 – **Student topic(s)**

Texts TBA

Apr 25 – **Indigenous perspectives** with Hend Ayari

Texts TBA

Student topic(s)

May 2 – **Prep week – online consultation**

May 4 – **Workshop session: draft presentations, peer feedback**

May 11 – **Workshop session: draft presentations, peer feedback**

Recommended readings:

Braidotti, Rosi. *Posthumanism*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.

Braidotti, Rosi. *Posthuman Knowledge*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2019.

Farca, Gerald. *Playing Dystopia: Nightmarish Worlds in Video Games and the Player's Aesthetic Response*. Columbia UP, 2019.

Ferrando, Francesca. "Posthumanism." *Kilden Journal of Gender Research*, Vol. 2, July 2014, 168-172.

Frissen, Valerie et al. "Homo Ludens 2.0: Play, Media, and Identity." *Playful Identitites: The Ludification of Digital Media Cultures*. Edited by Valerie Frissen at al. Amsterdam UP, 2015. 9-50.

Haraway, Donna J. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke UP, 2016.

Heise, Ursula K. "The Posthuman Turn: Rewriting Species in Recent American Literature." *A Companion to American Literary Studies*. Edited by Caroline F. Levander and Robert S. Levine. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. 454-68.

Herbrechter, Stefan. *Posthumanism: A Critical Analysis*. Bloomsbury, 2013.

Holloway-Attaway, Lissa. "Chapter 8: Embodying the Posthuman Subject: Digital Humanities and Permeable Material Practice." *A Feminist Companion to the Posthumanities,* Edited by Cecilia Åsberg and Rosi Braidotti. Springer International Publishing, 2018.

Roberts, Celia. "Chapter 17: Practising Ambivalence: The Feminist Politics of Engaging with Technoscience." *A Feminist Companion to the Posthumanities.* Edited by Cecilia Åsberg and Rosi Braidotti. Springer International Publishing, 2018.

Vermeulen, Pieter. "Posthuman Affect" *European Journal of English Studies*, 18:2, 2014, 121-134

Wolfe, Cary. Introduction: What is Posthumanism?. *What is Posthumanism?* U of Minnesota P, 2010.