



**ENGLISH 399  
INDEPENDENT STUDY  
INTRODUCTION TO JACQUES LACAN  
SUMMER 2012**

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**Meeting Place & Time**

257 Dwyer | F 11-1

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**Course Description**

This section of English 399 is an introduction to the psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan. By way of key seminars, essays and criticism, Lacan will be studied for his post-Freudian ideas and reimaginings with an emphasis on the relationships between language and the unconsciousness, the distinctions between desire and need, and the vicissitudes of identity, subjectivity and selfhood. Particularly relevant will be how Lacan has been deployed in literary theory. Lacanian psychoanalysis is notoriously problematic and slippery—he essentially writes about the dynamics of language through, against and from within the apparatus of language—and students will engage with the material on levels ranging from mere comprehension to critical mining and practice.

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**Texts**

Evans, Dylan. *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*. New York: Norton, 2007.

———. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Freud's Papers on Technique (Book I)*. New York: Norton, 1991.

———. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis (Book VII)*. New York: Norton, 1992.

———. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis (Book XI)*. New York: Norton, 1998.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Art of the Ridiculous Sublime: On David Lynch's Lost Highway*. Seattle: U of Washington P, 2000.

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### Coursework

The primary written work for the course will consist of a staged article-length essay on a topic to be determined in consultation with me. The staging of the essay will consist of the following:

- [1] A full abstract (500 words) and bibliography including a formal title.
- [2] A conference paper version of the essay (6-7 pages).
- [3] A final, article-length version of the essay (15-20 pages).

Grades will be principally based on the article-length version. Active participation is expected and therefore not graded, but I make note of students who contribute strongly to discussions, Q&A, etc. in evaluating an individual's overall quality of work.

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### Calendar

Week	Readings
1	<i>Seminar I: Freud's Papers on Technique</i> <i>Écrits</i> , "The Mirror Stage"
2	<i>Seminar VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis</i> <i>Écrits</i> , "Kant avec Sade"
3	<i>Seminar XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis</i> <i>Écrits</i> , "The Position of the Unconscious"
4	FILM: <i>Zizek!</i> <i>Écrits</i> , "The Freudian Thing" & "The Signification of the Phallus"

5     *FILM: Lost Highway*  
      *The Art of the Ridiculous Sublime*