

## Philosophy 442/542: Badiou and Deleuze

In many ways, the space defined by the converging and diverging philosophical projects of Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) and Alain Badiou (1937-) seems to articulate some of the most centrally contested problems about the contemporary legacy of Western philosophical thought and its continuance in the twenty-first century, in relation to the most urgent problems of global life and sociopolitical organization today. The problems of the orientation of thought in relation to being, the possibility and meaning of political change and transformation, the senses of language, truth, and temporal becoming, the coherence and structural role of subjectivity, and – perhaps above all – the structural and formal role of the ideas of the One and the multiple in organizing or transforming contemporary thought, life, and politics: all of these are at stake in the complex and multiply mutually contesting relationships and differences between the two philosophers' projects, aims, and distinctive lines of thought, practice, and intervention.

Beginning by considering their common origins in the precipitously interlinked configuration of midcentury French structuralism, psychoanalysis, and Marxism represented by figures such as Althusser and Lacan, we will aim, in this graduate-level seminar, to gain a broad overview of the development of the ideas, problems and practices of Deleuze and Badiou over the course of their careers in relation to the historical inquiries of metaphysics and the related problems of truth, meaning, and politics today. Through a reading of Deleuze's development of a complex logic of difference and differential sense in *Difference and Repetition* (1968) and *Logic of Sense* (1969), we will aim to understand his related conceptions of virtuality, temporal becoming, and the "sense-event", his challenging and transformative invocation of the Spinozist/Nietzschean tradition of the "univocity of being," and his later development of the methodology of philosophy as the "creation of concepts" in *What is Philosophy?* (1991; with Felix Guattari). Following this, we will consider Badiou's early critical engagement with structuralism and the possible constitution of a subject of political transformation of *Theory of the Subject* (1982) before moving on to the innovative and transformative mathematical and ontological theory of the structure of situations and the possibilities of fundamental transformation in the four domains of art, politics, science and love, in his 1988 *magnum opus*, *Being and Event*. Finally, we will read in full Badiou's fascinating and radical interpretation of, and critical engagement with, Deleuze's in his *Deleuze: The Clamour of Being* (1999), and conclude with some discussion of the possible legacies of both thinkers for critical and engaged philosophical thought and practice today.

Enrolled participants will be expected to attend weekly discussions, complete weekly 1-2 page response papers in response to the readings, and complete a shorter (6-10 pp.) midterm paper and longer (8-16 pp.) final paper.