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**Walter Benjamin: Art, Philosophy, Literature**

Liliane Weissberg  
Fall 2023  
T 1:45 PM-3:44 PM

Van Pelt Library (Kislak Center), 627

**Syllabus**

<b>Tuesday, August 29</b>	<b>Introduction: Reading Walter Benjamin's Works Today</b>
	<b>I. Language, Allegory</b>
<b>Tuesday, September 5</b>	"On Language as Such and on the Language of Men," "Reflections on Humboldt"
<b>Tuesday, September 12</b>	"The Task of the Translator," "Translation: For and Against," "Language and Logic (I-III)"
<b>Tuesday, September 19</b>	"Trauerspiel and Tragedy," "The Role of Language in Trauerspiel and Tragedy," "Outline for a Habilitation Thesis"
	<b>II. Romanticism—and Goethe's Response</b>
<b>Tuesday, September 26</b>	<u>The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism</u> , "The Philosophy of History of the Late Romantics and the Historical School"
<b>Tuesday, October 3</b>	<u>Goethe's Elective Affinities</u> ; "Comments on Gundolf's <u>Goethe</u> "
	<b>III. Baudelaire and Paris</b>
<b>Tuesday, October 10</b>	"Baudelaire (II,III)," "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire"

Baudelaire: Selected Poems (Canvas)

**Tuesday, October 17** "Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century"

**Tuesday, October 24** Arcades Work (excerpts)

#### **IV. Autobiographical Spaces**

**Tuesday, October 31** One-Way-Street, "Unpacking my Library"

**Tuesday, November 7** Berlin Childhood Around 1900, "Curriculum Vitae" (III),  
"Graphology Old and New"

#### **V. Storytelling**

**Tuesday, November 14** "The Storyteller: Observations on the Works of Nikolai  
Leskov," Leskov, stories (on Canvas)

**Tuesday, November 21** "Franz Kafka," Kafka parable  
(on Canvas)

#### **VI. Art and Aesthetics**

**Tuesday, November 28** "On Semblance," "Beauty and Semblance," "On the  
Mimetic Faculty," "On Perception," "Categories of  
Aesthetics," "Theory of Distraction," "Little History of  
Photography"

**Tuesday, December 6** "Painting and the Graphic Arts," "Painting, or Signs and  
Marks," "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological  
Reproducibility" (second version)

#### **Requirements:**

Class Participation and one research paper (ca. 15 pages).

#### **Books:**

Walter Benjamin, *Collected Writings*, and *The Arcades Work*, general editor Michael  
Jennings (Cambridge, Harvard University Press)  
(the volumes are available on-line as well)

Additional material will be posted on canvas

#### **Office Hours:**

Liliane Weissberg's office hours: Wednesdays 3:30-5:00pm at 747 Williams Hall,  
and by appointment: [lweissbe@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:lweissbe@sas.upenn.edu)