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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

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