Entailed in hermeneutics is not so much concerned with techniques or skills in reading and comprehension, as popularly believed, but the issue of truth and knowledge. Hermeneutics according to Gadamer looks primarily into the role of language-meaning and the process of understanding through language-meaning as the only foundational ‘scientific method,’ indeed a science that we may gain access to as well as determine what is real in the world. In this sense hermeneutics constitutes a radical revision to the criteria of truth or true knowledge set by modern natural sciences. Gadamerian hermeneutics as a new approach of scientific method is particularly important to Cultural Studies, because language or representation through the use of language-sign is the key medium on which critical knowledge and engagement is based. The working of language-meaning and understanding through language-meaning is quintessential one of the key methodological considerations in Cultural Studies. What is more interesting is Benjamin also gives this linguistic aspect a pivotal role in his cultural criticism, only with a more practical critical edge.

Anyway, no pain no gain.

Learning Incomes

Knowledge
- An overall understanding of Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics and controversies around his ideas
- Some sense of Benjamin’s cultural criticism
- Theories of language and culture, criteria of truth (religious or not), and their contemporary implications

Skill
- Analytical and rational skills in interpreting difficult texts and multi-media representations
- In-depth cultural and religious criticism writing and/or production
- Articulating theory and practice in critical works

Attitude
- Confidence in approaching original textual analysis
- Openness and motivation in learning and life
- Care for wider communal affairs and lived experiences
Lectures

Approach
Jan 10 Overcoming Duality: Subject/Object
Reading:
黎志添（2003），《宗教研究與詮釋學》。香港：中大出版社。頁 38-53。
《真理與方法》II，「漢斯-格奧爾格・伽達默爾自述（1973）」，頁 582-622。

Jan 17 From Radical Doubt to aesthetic consciousness
Reading:
陳榮華（1998），「第二章從藝術經驗說明詮釋經驗的整合性」，載《葛達瑪詮釋學與中國哲學的詮釋》。台北：明文書局。頁 23-90
《真理與方法》I第一部份：「藝術經驗裡真理問題的展現」。

Jan 24 Public Holiday: No lecture
Jan 31 Humanities/Cultural sciences
《真理與方法》I第二部份：I之 1. 「浪漫主義詮釋學及其在歷史學中的應用質疑」及 2. 「狄爾泰陷入歷史主義困境」
Feb 1 Life-world and Language-meaning
Reading:
《真理與方法》I第二部份：I之 3. 「通過現象學研究對認識問題的克服」

Philosophical Hermeneutics: Gadamer
I. Aesthetic and Historical Consciousness
Feb 7 Understanding: Heidegger’s Foundational Ontology and Philosophical Hermeneutics
Reading:
《真理與方法》I：第二部份 II 之 1.a 「詮釋學循環和前見問題」
Feb 14 Effective Historical Consciousness
Reading:
《真理與方法》I：第二部份 II 之 3 「對效果歷史意識的分析」

II. The Universal Claim
Feb 21 Universal Claim (against Habermas)
Reading:
《真理與方法》II：「詮釋學問題的普遍性」(1966)

Feb 28 Truth and Language
Reading:
《真理與方法》I：第三部份之 1. 「語言作詮釋學經驗的媒介」; 《真理與方法》II：「甚麼是真理？」(1957)

Mar 6 Totality and Difference (debate with Derrida)
Reading:
《真理與方法》II：「解構和解構」

Critical Theory: Walter Benjamin
Mar 13 Pure Language
Reading:
‘The Task of Translator’ (1921);
‘On Language of Such and the Language of Man’ (1916)

Mar 20 Origin and Truth
Reading:
Benjamin, ‘Epistemo-critical Prologue’;
Gadamer, Reason in the Age of Science

Mar 27 Telling Lived Experiences
Reading:
Benjamin: 《說故事的人》
蒙田：「論經驗」

Hermeneutics and Cultural Criticism
Apr 3 Idea of Culture
Reading:
Benjamin, 「波德萊爾的幾個主題」;
Gadamer, 《真理與方法》I：第三部份之 3 「語言作詮釋學本
體論的視域」

Apr 10 Poetic and politics: critique and community
Reading:
Benjamin, ‘The author as producer,’ in Demetz, Peter ed. (1978),
Gadamer, 「實踐理性問題」《真理與方法》II

Apr 17 Conclusion

Tutorials

Tutorial sessions will start after the Chinese New Year holidays. All 6 tutorials are
based on sharing of readings in a small group. You must have read all the materials
before coming to tutorial classes.

Week 6 豐子愷漫畫與生活藝術；
Week 9《真理與方法》I，第三部份之 3 「語言作詮釋學本體論的視域」，a) 語言作世界經驗；
Week 10《真理與方法》I，第三部份之 3 「語言作詮釋學本體論的視域」，b) 語言中心及其思辨結構；
Week 11《真理與方法》I，第三部份之 3 「語言作詮釋學本體論的視域」，c) 詮釋學的普遍性觀點；
Week 13 Rilke 里爾克的杜伊諾哀歌（選段）and Gadamer (1994),
‘Mythopoietic Reversal in Rilke’s Duino Elegies,’ in Literature and
Philosophy in Dialogue. NY.: State University of NY. Trans. Paslick,
Robert H.；
Week 14 Benjamin: 《說故事的人》
Requirements

In tutorials you have to read all the required materials beforehand and consider their implications in the immediate contexts. Tutorials are more closely tied in with the final interpretive or creative work.

You are also required to write a short piece (2500 words) on theoretical perspectives. This short piece is tied in with key concepts in philosophical hermeneutics. Topic and cut-off date for this shorter piece will be announced later.

An individual piece on interpretive/critical writing in context (2500 words) is expected by the end of term. You may apply (critically or not) either Gadamer or Benjamin’s ideas in your interpretive/critical writing.

Active and consistent participation and contribution will receive bonus grade(s).

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on honesty in academic work submitted by students, and adopts a policy of zero tolerance on cheating and plagiarism. Any related offence will lead to disciplinary action including termination of studies at the University. Students must submit their assignments to the Webpage of “VeriGuide” (維誠). (http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/veriguide)

Participation 20%
Short Piece 40%
Interpretive/critical Work 40%

Recommended References

Benjamin, Walter:
‘Language as such and Language of Man’ in Reflections
‘The Task of the Translator’ in Illuminations
‘Epistemo-critical Prologue,’ in The Origin of German Tragic Drama

Gadamer, Has-Georg:
Truth and Method or (2007) 《真理與方法》北京：簡務。洪漢鼎譯。esp. Section 3;
Literature and Philosophy in Dialogue, esp. the idea ‘mythopoietic reversal’.

Ormiston, Gayle L. & Schrift, Alan D. ed.:
(1990), The Hermeneutic Tradition: from Ast to Ricoeur;
(1994), Transforming the Hermeneutics Context: from Nietzsche to Nancy.

陳榮華（1998），《葛達瑪詮釋學與中國哲學的詮釋》。台北：明文書局。

Additional References

Adorno, Theodor W.:


張慶熊（1995），《熊十力的新唯識論與胡塞爾的現象學》。上海：人民出版社。