



# Course syllabus

Faculty of Social Science  
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## Theorizing Posthumanities

### Posthumanistiskt teoretiserande

**Credit points:** 7,5 ECTS

**Responsible department:** Umeå Center for Gender Studies

**Main field of study:** Gender Studies

**Level:** PhD Studies

**Subject area:** Gender Studies

**Grading Scale:** Fail/Pass

### 1. Confirmation

The Director of Umeå Center for Gender Studies has confirmed this course syllabus on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015

### 2. Learning outcomes

After the course the student will:

- have a familiarity with Posthumanist theories and its relevance to feminist theories
- be able to independently reflect on ontological, epistemological, methodological and ethical implications in Posthumanism, and
- be able to critically reflect on how particular aspects of Posthumanism relate to particular concrete examples within his/hers own research.

### 3. Forms of Instruction

Focus of instruction will be on lectures, seminars and group activities in forms of rhizome dialogues as well as walk talks.

### 3. Course Description

*What does it mean to think beyond humanism? Is it possible to craft a mode of philosophy, ethics, and interpretation that rejects the classic humanist divisions of self and other, mind and body, society and nature, human and animal, organic and technological? Can a new kind of humanities—posthumanities—respond to the redefinition of humanity's place in the world by both the technological and the biological or "green" continuum in which the "human" is but one life form among many? (Cary Wolfe 2009)*

In this course we will explore some of the fundamental ideas of ongoing theories of the posthuman, new materialism and object-oriented ontologies in feminist theory. The course will focus on important genres and modes of knowledge production in transdisciplinary research. The PhD course will target ongoing thesis work in relationship with explorations and experiments using posthumanist theories as analytic, epistemic and ontological modes of knowledge production. The aim of the course is to make scholars familiar with some key posthumanist thinkers and explore the potential with their thoughts at the intersection of the PhD-student's ongoing research questions, aims and traditions. We will critically explore how to become more sensitive to and accountable for matters of concern in research.

During the course we will work on individual writings as well as collaborative with posthumanist texts picked from the list below. The overall purpose of the course is to support each student to establish a personal, reflective, and examined intellectual position in relation to posthumanism as a process of inquiry, thought, and action.

**Time:** see schedule below

**Location:** see schedule below

<b>Main instructors</b>	Martin Hultman Ph.D. Tema T Linköping University	Anna Croon Fors UCGS Umeå University
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### 4. Readings

The course will be based on required readings **as listed below**. For the individual as well as the group work you are encouraged to use texts from this list and to expand with readings that you yourself find relevant.

## 5. Required readings will be picked from this list (details later):

Barad, Karen (2003) "Posthumanist Performativity: Towards and understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 28 (3) 801-831.

Braidotti, Rosi (2002) "Becoming Woman, or Sexual Difference Revisited", In *Metamorphoses: toward a materialist theory of becoming*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Braidotti, Rosi (2013). *The Posthuman*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bryant, Levi (2013) *The Gravity of Things An Introduction to Onto-Cartography, Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies: Ontological, Anarché: Beyond Materialism and Idealism*, 2013.2

Callon, Michele (1986) "Some elements of a sociology of translation: domestication of the scallops and the fishermen of St Breuc Bay", In Law, J. (Ed.) *Power, Action and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge*, pp. 67-83. London: Routledge.

Haraway, Donna (2008). "Companion Species" In, *When Species Meet*, pp. 15-27. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Deleuze, Gilles, & Guattari, Félix (1987). "Introduction" In, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 3-25. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Latour, Bruno (1999). "Do You Believe in Reality", Foreword in *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Mol, Anne Marie (1999) "Ontological Politics: A Word and Some Questions" In Law, J., & Hassard, J. (Eds.) *Actor Network Theory and After*.

Serres, Michel (2007) "Theory of Quasi-Object", In, *The Parasite*, pp. 224-237. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Latour, Bruno (2004) *Why has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concerns*, *Critical Inquiry - Special issue on the Future of Critique*. Vol 30 n° 2 pp.25-248, Winter 2004

Verbeek, Peter-Paul (2008) *Cyborg Intentionality: Re-thinking the Phenomenology of Human-Technology Relations*, *Phenom Cogn Sci*, 7:387

Åsberg, Cecilia, Hultman, Martin & Lee, Francis (2012). *Posthumanistiska Nyckertexter*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.



## 6. Extended list of literature

- Ahmed, Sara. 2008. Imaginary Prohibitions: Some Preliminary Remarks on the Founding Gestures of the New Materialism, *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 15, p 23-39.
- Alaimo, Stacie & Hekman, Susan (Eds.) (2008) *Material Feminisms* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Appadurai, Arjun (1986) (Ed.) "Introduction: commodities and the politics of value," *The Social Life of Things*, pp. 3-63.
- Barad, Karen (2007) *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Bennett, Jane (2010) *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* Durham: Duke University Press.
- Boivin, Nicole (2008) *Material Cultures, Material Minds: The Impact of Things on Human Thought, Society, and Evolution* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, Bill (2003) *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_, (2004) *Things* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bryan, Levi (2014) *Onto-Cartography. An Ontology of Machines and Media*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Clark, Nigel & Hird, Myra 'Deep Shit', E. Joy and L. Bryant (eds.) 'Objects/Ecology' special issue of *O-Zone: A Journal of Object-Oriented Studies*, 2014, 1:44-52. <http://o-zone-journal.org/issue/>. ISSN:2326-8344.
- Coole, Diana and Frost, Samantha (2010) (Eds.) *The New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Dant, Tim (2005) *Materiality and Society* Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Daston, Lorraine (2004) *Things That Talk: Object Lessons From Art and Science* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Haraway, Donna (2007) *When Species Meet*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Harman, Graham (2009) *Towards Speculative Realism. Essays and Lectures*. Zero Books.



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Hayles, Katherine (1999) *How We Became Posthuman. Virtual Bodies In Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Hekman, Susan (2010). *The Material of Knowledge. Feminist Disclosures*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Hird, Myra (2009) "Feminist Engagement with Matter" *Feminist Studies* 35(2), pp. 329-346.

Hird, Myra & Roberts, Cecilia. 'Feminism Theorises the Nonhuman', *Feminist Theory*, 2011, 12(2): 109-117.

Hodder, Ian (2012) *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationship Between Humans and Things*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.

Hornborg, Alf, McNeill, John Robert & Martínez-Alier, Joan (2007) (Eds.) *Rethinking Environmental History: World-System History and Global Environmental Change* Lanham, Maryland: AltaMira Press.

Hultman, Martin (2015), *Den inställda omställningen. Energi- och miljöpolitik i möjligheternas tid 1980-1991*. Gidlunds förlag

Ingold, Tim, (2011) *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* New York: Routledge.

\_\_\_\_\_, (2011) *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* New York: Routledge.

Jorgenson, Dolly, Jorgenson, Finn Arne & Sara Prichard (2013) (Eds.) *New Natures: Joining Environmental History with Science and Technology Studies* Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburg Press.

De Landa, Manuel (1997) *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History* New York: Zone Books.

Langston, Nancy (2010) *Toxic Bodies: Hormone Disruptors and the Legacy of DES*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Malafouris, Lambros (2013) *How Things Shape the Mind: A Theory of Material Engagement*. Boston: MIT Press.

Margulis Lynn and Sagan, Dorion (1995) *What is Life?* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Miller, Daniel (2010) (Ed.) *Stuff* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Morton, Timothy (2014) *HyperObjects. Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*



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- (*Posthumanities*). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Nash, Linda Lorraine (2005) "The Agency of Nature or the Nature of Agency?" *Environmental History* no. 10, pp. 67-69.
- Noble David, (1999) *The Religion of Technology: The Divinity of Man and the Spirit of Invention*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Prigogine, Ilya and Stengers, Isabelle (1984) *Order out of Chaos: Man's New Dialogue With Nature*. London: Heinemann.
- Pritchard, Sara B. (2011) *Confluence: The Nature of Technology and the Remaking of the Rhône*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Reuss Martin & Cutcliffe, Stephen H (2010) (Eds.) *The Illusory Boundary: Environment and Technology in History* Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press.
- Russell, Edmund (2011) *Evolutionary History: Uniting History and Biology to Understand Life on Earth* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Russell, Edmund, Allison, James, Finger, Thomas, Brown, John K., Balogh, Brian & Carlson, W. Bernard, (2011) "The Nature of Power: Synthesizing the History of Technology and Environmental History," *Technology & Culture*, 52(2011), pp. 246-259.
- Shryock, Andrew, Lord Smail, Daniel & Earle Timothy (2011) (Eds.) *Deep History: The Architecture of Past and Present*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Suchman, Lucy (2007) *Human-Machine Reconfigurations. Plans and Situated Actions 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sullivan, Nikki 'The Somatechnics of Perception and the Matter of the Non/Human: A Critical Response to the New Materialism', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 19:3, 2012, pp. 299-313.
- Sutter, Paul S. (2007) "Nature's Agents or Agents of Empire? Entomological Workers and Environmental Change during the Construction of the Panama Canal," *Isis*, 98 pp. 724-754.
- van der Tuin, Iris & Dolphijn, Rick. (2012) *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies*. Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press.