

G41.2953

**Major Texts in Critical Theory:
On Words and Things**

Professor Shireen R.K. Patell

Mondays and Wednesdays, 4:00-6:00 PM

We explore major concepts in critical theory-e.g., representation, subjectivity, agency-via in-depth examinations of different perspectives on the relation of words and things, or language and "reality." What is the relationship of language and that which it names, conjures, evokes, denotes? Probing the representational and referential aspects of language, we examine the ethical and political stakes of various theories of signification. with particular attention to the possibilities of understanding "history." Readings from Plato, Benjamin, Austin, Foucault, Derrida, Irigaray, Butler, Laclau, and others. Reading will not be voluminous, but will be difficult.