This semester we shall explore five dominant currents coursing through postmodernity — that extraordinary, challenging, adventurous, and disorienting moment in American and European arts and thought we may or may not still be inhabiting:

- investigations into the limits of aesthetic construction;
- radical skepticism before such grand narratives as human nature, identity, social progress, objective reality and morality, absolute truth, & reason;
- epistemological & moral relativism, pluralism, & self-referentiality;
- poststructuralism & posthumanism;
- problematizations of conventional notions of language & history.

We will pick up where we left off in my course on modernism last semester: Samuel Beckett’s arguably postmodern & inarguably stunning response to James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, the non-novel *The Unnamable* (1953). From there we will visit six other pivotal postmodern print texts (Thomas Pynchon’s *Crying of Lot 49*, Kathy Acker’s *Blood & Guts in High School*, Mark Danielewski’s *House of Leaves*; Anne Carson’s *Nox*; Maggie Nelson’s *The Argonauts*; Jenny Erpenbeck’s *Go, Went Gone*) and two pivotal hypermedial ones (Young-Hae Chang’s *Traveling to Utopia*; David Clark’s *88 Constellations for Wittgenstein*), while touching on some of the key postmodern theorists (including George Bataille, Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard, Judith Butler, Hélène Cixous, Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, N. Katherine Hayles, Luce Irigaray, Jean-François Lyotard, & Friedrich Nietzsche), several crucial postmodern art movements (abstract expressionism, pop art, minimalism, conceptual art, earth art, eclecticism & institutional critique), punk rock, and Charlie Kaufman’s film *Synecdoche, New York* — quite possibly having discovered along our journey, as the philosopher Martin Heidegger maintained, that not-being-at-home is always the fundamental human condition.