This graduate seminar will focus on the legacy of the Marquis de Sade’s literary output in modern culture through the filter of different media. Sade obliges those who approach his universe to engage with and challenge the ethical and aesthetic limits of notions such as the obscene, the forbidden, and the unrepresentable. We will start by examining some fundamental theoretical texts in order to understand the import of Sade’s thought and imaginary in modern culture. Sade has indeed fascinated seminal cultural figures of last century, from Sigmund Freud to Jacques Lacan, from George Bataille to Maurice Blanchot, Roland Barthes, Simone de Beauvoir, and Michel Foucault, just to name a few. We will discuss how these thinkers have been influential in shaping contemporary reading of Sade, by examining the points of intersections of their theories. In the second part of the course, we will analyze different cinematographic adaptations of Sade’s work, along with the treatment of sadism in film, theater, and art. We will focus, among others, on authors such as Luis Buñuel, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Liliana Cavani, Peter Brook, Michael Haneke, Yukio Mishima, and Peter Weiss.

Spring 2018, Wednesday, 2:00-4:50 pm, THH 121