

## CONTEMPORARY MOVEMENTS IN SOCIAL THEORY

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### ***Course Description:***

This course presents the students with an overview of contemporary theories in social sciences. The evolution of social theory in the twentieth century will be analyzed with reference to major themes during the term. Our aim will be to understand and make sense of 'social theory' that seems to follow a different historical and thematic trajectory when compared to political theory, cultural theory or history of philosophy. Social theory is often conceived and designed as a field close to, but not exactly similar to sociological theory.

During the lecture we will attempt to comprehend the views of major theorists, their relation to other theories and the way in which certain concepts are covered and analyzed in their theories. Among the major themes that are relevant to our discussion with regards to social theory will be society, community, individual, structure, agency, modernity, postmodernity and globalization.

### ***Grading System:***

Paper: 50%

Assignments: 30% (15% each)

Presentation: 15%

Participation: 5%

### ***Paper:***

Contemporary social theory term paper will be about any contemporary social theory and/or theorist you choose. It will be about 6 to 8 pages long analyzing one or more theories covered in class. You may either attempt to make a purely theoretical discussion on social theory or you may compare and contrast different theories and/or theorists in the light of certain themes. You may also assess the relevance of a social theory by analyzing its capacity to help us understand social reality on a more practical level in reference to recent events and problems.

### ***Assignments:***

There will be two assignments on two separate weeks about 1 to 3 pages long. The first assignment will discuss what the student has understood from the readings of a specific week. This assignment should portray an attempt to

review and locate a specific week's readings within the social theory context and literature. The second assignment will be in the form of a mini take-home examination and will include the answer of a single comprehensive question due to be returned in 48-hours.

***Presentation:***

Presentations will be about twenty minutes long maximum about one specific article or a combination of more than one article. The aim will be to **clearly summarize and review** the relevant readings in the light of all what we have seen in class so far.

***Schedule:***

**Week 1**

Introducing Social Theory

**G** (1-16)

**Week 2**

The Heritage of Hermeneutics: Dilthey, Weber & Gadamer

**V** (128-133), **R** (21-39), **S** (109-117)

**Week 3**

The Frankfurt School I: Adorno & Horkheimer

**G** (17-22), **O** (1-35)

**Week 4**

The Frankfurt School II: Freud, Adorno, Fromm & Marcuse

**G** (22-52), **Q** (25-37)

**Week 5**

Structuralism: Saussure, Levi-Strauss & Barthes

**G** (53-70), **F** (67-90), **N** (357-367)

### **Week 6**

Hegemony and Ideology: Althusser & Gramsci

**V** (306-311), **H** (177-190)

### **Week 7**

Modernity as an Unfinished Project: Habermas

**G** (155-185), **J** (121-139), **K** (33-42)

### **Week 8**

Discipline, Subjectivity & Power: Foucault

**G** (70-89), **Q** (51-65), **Ia**, **Ib**, **Ic**

### **Week 9**

Between Structure and Agent, Theories of Structuration: Bourdieu & Giddens

**G** (122-154), **P** (121-150), **S** (526-533)

### **Week 10**

The Poststructuralist Turn: Lacan & Derrida

**G** (90-121), **Q** (38-50), **L** (125-140)

### **Week 11**

Post-feminism and Queer Theory: Kristeva, Butler & Haraway

**G** (186-230), **D** (165-178), **U** (396-403), **Q** (72-78, 158-161)

### **Week 12**

The Condition of Postmodernity: Harvey & Jameson

**G** (248-253), **T** (94-104), **M** (235-242)

### **Week 13**

Hyperreality and Rhizomatics: Baudrillard, Deleuze & Guattari

**G** (231-248), **A** (229-234), **Q** (136-147)

### **Week 14**

Networks, Risks & Liquids: Castells, Beck & Bauman

**G** (270-307), **E** (314-324), **C** (325-334), **B** (138-145)

### **Week 15**

Discussion of papers

#### **Reading List:**

**A** Jean Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations" in *The New Social Theory Reader* (Steven Seidman & Jeffrey. C. Alexander, eds.) London: Routledge, 2008, 229-234.

**B** Zygmunt Bauman, "Postmodern Ethics" in *The New Social Theory Reader* (Steven Seidman & Jeffrey. C. Alexander, eds.) London: Routledge, 2008, 138-145.

**C** Ulrich Beck, "The Cosmopolitan Perspective" in *The New Social Theory Reader* (Steven Seidman & Jeffrey. C. Alexander, eds.) London: Routledge, 2008, 325-334.

**D** Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" in *The New Social Theory Reader* (Steven Seidman & Jeffrey. C. Alexander, eds.) London: Routledge, 2008, 165-178.

**E** Manuel Castells, "The New Society" in *The New Social Theory Reader* (Steven Seidman & Jeffrey. C. Alexander, eds.) London: Routledge, 2008, 314-324.

**F** Nick Couldry, *Inside Culture: Re-imagining the Method of Cultural Studies*. London: Sage, 2000.

**G** Anthony Elliott, *Contemporary Social Theory: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2009.

**H** David Forgacs, "National-Popular: Genealogy of a Concept" in *The Cultural Studies Reader* (Simon During, ed.) London: Routledge, 1994, 177-190.

**Ia** Michel Foucault, "The Means of Correct Training" in *The Foucault Reader* (Paul Rabinow, ed.) New York: Vintage, 2010, 188-205.

**Ib** Michel Foucault, "Space, Knowledge and Power" in *The Foucault Reader* (Paul Rabinow, ed.) New York: Vintage, 2010, 239-256.

**Ic** Michel Foucault, "Politics and Ethics: An Interview" in *The Foucault Reader* (Paul Rabinow, ed.) New York: Vintage, 2010, 373-380.

**J** Anthony Giddens, "Jürgen Habermas" in *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences* (Quentin Skinner, ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 121-139.

**K** Jürgen Habermas, "Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy" in *The New Social Theory Reader* (Steven Seidman & Jeffrey. C. Alexander, eds.) London: Routledge, 2008, 33-42.

**L** Richard Harland, *Superstructuralism: The Philosophy of Structuralism and Post-Structuralism*. London: Routledge, 1987.

**M** David Harvey, "The Condition of Postmodernity" in *The New Social Theory Reader* (Steven Seidman & Jeffrey. C. Alexander, eds.) London: Routledge, 2008, 235-242.

**N** Dick Hebdige, "From Culture to Hegemony" in *The Cultural Studies Reader* (Simon During, ed.) London: Routledge, 1994, 357-367.

**O** Max Horkheimer & Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*. Stanford University Press, 2002.

**P** Angela McRobbie, *The Uses of Cultural Studies*. London: Sage, 2006.

**Q** Nick Mansfield, *Subjectivity: Theories of the Self from Freud to Haraway*. New York: New York University Press, 2000.

**R** William Outhwaite, "Hans-Georg Gadamer" in *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences* (Quentin Skinner, ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 21-39.

**S** George Ritzer, *Sociological Theory* (fourth edition). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992.

**T** Madan Sarup, *Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996.

**U** Steven Seidman, "From Identity to Queer Politics: Shifts in Normative Heterosexuality" in *The New Social Theory Reader* (Steven Seidman & Jeffrey. C. Alexander, eds.) London: Routledge, 2008, 396-403.

**V** Alan Swingewood, *A Short History of Sociological Thought* (second edition). London: Macmillan, 1991.