Critical Theory – Immanent Critique

PHIL 343 / CRN 27122
TR 2-3:50
FR 106

Dr. Rocio Zambrana
zambrana@uoregon.edu
Office Hours: W 2-4
SCH 242

Course Description:
This course is an introduction to Critical Theory. We will examine the idea of immanent critique developed within three generations of the Frankfurt School. We will begin by discussing Horkheimer’s interdisciplinary approach developed in the 1930s, and move on to examine Horkheimer and Adorno’s account of the dialectic of enlightenment during the 1940s. We will then examine the turn to normative theory distinctive of Jürgen Habermas’ work by discussing his theory of communicative action and discourse ethics developed during the 1980s. Finally, we will examine post-Habermasian approaches at the turn of the 21st century via Axel Honneth’s concept of recognition and Nancy Fraser’s norm of parity of participation. Throughout, we will assess notions of social suffering and reification, reason and rationalization, justice and justification at work in this tradition of social thought.

Primary Texts:
1. Course Pack (CP)
2. Jürgen Habermas, *Jürgen Habermas On Society and Politics: A Reader* (HSP)
3. Axel Honneth and Nancy Fraser, *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange* (RR)

Texts are available for purchase at the Duckstore; CP is available on Blackboard.

Course Structure, Requirements, and Policies:
Participation:
Lectures will presuppose familiarity with the text. We will often do group work in class, thus coming prepared to discuss the assigned text is essential and, indeed, required.

Attendance:
You are expected to attend classes regularly and promptly. More than 3 absences will result in a failing final grade, unless proof of illness or emergency is provided.

Written Work:
~You will hand in three 4-page essays – one on each generation of the Frankfurt School. The short essays must succinctly reconstruct an argument within the chosen text(s). They should also critically assess the argument that you have reconstructed.
~You will also be required to submit a 2-page reading response on Marx and Lukács

Please see schedule of readings for due dates. *Papers are due in the Philosophy Department by 2pm and via SafeAssign.* No late papers will be accepted, unless accompanied by proof of illness or emergency.

Guidelines for papers:
• clarity: the paper should have a clearly defined topic and focus.
• accuracy: the paper should present an author’s position in a fair way.
• assessment: the paper should evaluate the author’s position, and bring to bear on the text or issue your own view; you must defend your view.
All of your work must be typewritten (12 pt. font, Times New Roman, double-spaced). You will be expected to cite philosophical texts that you are quoting, paraphrasing, or using as reference appropriately, including secondary literature and online resources.

**Statement on Plagiarism:**
Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional unacknowledged use of someone else’s work as one’s own in all forms of academic endeavor (such as essays, theses, examinations, research data, creative projects, and so on). Plagiarized material may be derived from books, journals, Internet postings, student or faculty papers, and so on including the purchase or “outsourcing” of written assignments for a course. *Plagiarism is grounds for failing the course.* For more information, see: http://www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/.

**Grading Standard:**
A = excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.
B = good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.
C = OK. Some errors, but basic grasp of the material.
D = poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.
F = failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or complete lack of effort.

**Grading:**
- Participation: 10%
- Essays (3): 75% (25% each)
- Reading Response: 15%

**Accommodation for a Disability:**
If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon.

**Classroom Etiquette:**
Please turn off cellular telephones for the duration of the class. Twitter, Facebook, and texting are not permitted. You may be asked to leave the classroom and will be considered absent if engaging in these activities.

* * *

**Schedule of Readings:**

**Wk. 1**
T. 1/7 What is Immanent Critique? Introduction to the course and syllabus
R. 1/9 Karl Marx, excerpts from *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844,* and “The Fetishism of Commodity and the Secret Thereof,” from *Capital* in CP

**Wk. 2**
T. 1/14 Georg Lukács, “Reification and Consciousness of the Proletariat,” Part 1 in CP
R. 1/16 cont. Marx and Lukács
F. 1/17 *Reading Response on Marx and Lukács due*

**Wk. 3**
T. 1/21 Max Horkheimer, “Traditional and Critical Theory,” in CP
R. 1/23 T.W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “Preface” and “The Concept of Enlightenment,” in CP
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk. 4</th>
<th>T. 1/28</th>
<th>cont. Adorno and Horkheimer, <em>Dialectic of Enlightenment</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. 1/30</td>
<td>cont. Adorno and Horkheimer, all texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F. 1/31</td>
<td><em>Essay 1 on First Generation due</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wk. 5</td>
<td>T. 2/4</td>
<td>Jürgen Habermas, “Social Action and Rationality,” in HSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. 2/6</td>
<td>Habermas, “The Uncoupling of System and Lifeworld,” in HSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wk. 6</td>
<td>T. 2/11</td>
<td>Habermas, “Marx and the Thesis of Internal Colonization,” in CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. 2/13</td>
<td>Habermas, “Discourse Ethics: Notes on a Program of Philosophical Justification,” in CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wk. 7</td>
<td>T. 2/18</td>
<td>cont. Habermas, “Discourse Ethics: Notes on a Program of Philosophical Justification,” in CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. 2/20</td>
<td>cont. Habermas, all texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F. 2/21</td>
<td><em>Essay 2 on Second Generation Due</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wk. 8</td>
<td>T. 2/25</td>
<td>Fraser, “Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics,” in RR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wk. 9</td>
<td>T. 3/4</td>
<td>Axel Honneth, “Redistribution as Recognition,” in RR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. 3/6</td>
<td>Axel Honneth, “Redistribution as Recognition,” in RR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wk. 10</td>
<td>T. 3/11</td>
<td>Fraser, “Distorted Beyond All Recognition” and Honneth, “The Point of Recognition,” in RR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R. 3/13</td>
<td>cont., Fraser and Honneth, and closing discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F. 3/14</td>
<td><em>Essay 3 on Third Generation Due</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>