



LUND UNIVERSITY  
Faculty of Social Sciences

## **A. Syllabus for faculty third-cycle course: Exploring the Social: Critical Theory, Critical Thinking and Social Science, 7.5 higher education credits**

**(Title in Swedish: *Att utforska det sociala: kritisk teori, kritiskt tänkande och samhällsvetenskap, 7,5 hp*)**

The course was adopted and the syllabus was approved by the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Lund University, 15 April 2011.  
This syllabus is valid from 15 April 2011.

### **B. Course Details**

The course is offered by the Faculty of Social Sciences as an interdisciplinary free-standing course for the social sciences in the third cycle. The language of instruction is English or Swedish, depending on the student group.

### **C. Learning Outcomes**

On completion of the course, the student shall be able to

- identify and reflect on the complexity of critical theory as an intellectual tradition
- locate the tradition within the history of social science in general and of the disciplines of social science in particular.
- critically examine different contributions within critical theory and their impact on the analysis of social processes
- discuss key concepts within the field and its relevance for the social sciences
- identify and evaluate major developments within the theory concerning new fields of study (feminist theory, postcolonial studies, queer/crip theory)
- formulate a research problem and carry out a minor research project.

### **D. Course Content**

The course aims to provide a critical introduction to some of the classical texts and the contemporary debates in critical theory. Central to the course is an attempt to explore what is critical about critical theory. The course strives for both an understanding of important strands and approaches in the tradition of critical theory, and an assessment of their relevance and significance to a social, economic and cultural analysis of current societies.

A key idea in the tradition of critical theory is the rejection of the separation between facts and values, analysing society from the standpoint of its

emancipatory transformation. It is clear that the roots of critical theory are situated in the Marxist tradition. It is equally clear, however, that critical theory is an attempt to adapt Marx's insights in the face of profound social and economic change.

The first part of the course introduces the tradition of critical theory, providing a short introduction to the theorists of the Frankfurt School. It will be argued that these scholars were at the forefront of analyses of the emerging consumer society, making these set of theories suitable for the understanding late capitalism. The contradictory aspects of critical theory, especially its commitment to reason challenged by the French tradition will be analysed in the second part of the course. The third part analyses the way new trends within the field of critical theory have re-elaborated and further developed the field. We will especially focus on the contributions of feminist and postcolonial scholars and their re-readings of self and society through the lens of critical theory.

### **E. Teaching and assessment**

Through the medium of lectures, workshops and group discussions the course will provide students with specialised knowledge regarding the contribution of these theoretical trends to the understanding of the social.

The course begins with an introductory lecture on the compulsory literature as well as a presentation of the three sub-themes. Students prepare a paper based on one of the sub-themes, which will be discussed during a three-day intensive course. The participants are asked to comment on each other's papers, as well as to present their own findings.

The course is made up of a combination of lectures, workshops and group discussions. Lectures present generic knowledge for students interested in the field of critical theory. The workshops offer opportunities for the students to discuss course-related issues with senior researchers from Lund as well as from other academic settings.

The course uses a variety of teaching methods, making it student-centred and thus enhancing doctoral students' participation in the process of learning. The lectures have an interdisciplinary focus and the participants will be encouraged to give oral and/or written presentations of the literature and the specific topics at seminars. Attendance at seminars is mandatory.

Course assessment consists of three parts: 1) preparatory reading of compulsory course literature and optional articles before the main introductory lecture and the three thematic lectures related to the sub-themes of the course, 2) submission of a draft paper to be discussed at a three-day intensive course, and 3) submission of the final version of the paper for examination. The course paper must critically reflect on the introductory course literature and the compulsory literature of one of the themes, as well as additional optional articles.

## **F. Grades**

The grades awarded in examination are Pass or Fail. To receive a Pass the doctoral student must fulfil the learning outcomes for the course.

## **G. Admission requirements**

Applicants must be PhD students. In the event that the number of applicants exceeds the number of available places, PhD students from the Faculty of Social Sciences at Lund University are given priority.

## **H. Literature**

### **Books**

Dant, Tim (2003): *Critical social theory: culture, society and critique*. London: Sage (178 pp.).

Diken, Bülent (2012): *Revolt, revolution, critique: the paradox of society*. Abingdon: Routledge (204 pp.).

Haslanger, Sally (2012): *Resisting reality: social construction and social critique*. New York: Oxford University Press (490 pp.).

Sasken, Sassen (2014): *Expulsions: brutality and complexity in the global economy*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press (304 pp.)

Simons, Jon (ed.) (2010): *From Agamben to Žižek: contemporary critical theorists*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press (275 pp.).

**Additional Reading List of Articles** (approx. 500 pp.)

Alcoff, Linda (2007) Fraser on Redistribution, Recognition and Identity. *European Journal of Political Theory*. 6: 255-265.

Anievas, Alexander (2005) Critical Dialogue: Habermasian Social Theory and International Relations. *Politics*. 25: 135-143.

Barnor, Henry (2007) Racialised modernity: An analytics of white mythologies. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 30: 643-663.

Binkley Sam and Capetillo, Jorge (2008) Foucault, Marxism and the Cuban Revolution: Historical and Contemporary Reflections. *Rethinking Marxism*. 20: 3: 437-451

Buker, Eloise (1990) Hidden Desires and Missing Persons: A Feminist Deconstruction of Foucault. *The Western Political Quarterly*. 43: 811-832.

Calhoun Craig (2005) Social Theory and the Premise of all Criticism: Max Horkheimer on Religion. *Critical Social Theory*. 31: 1: 153-168.

Cook, Deborah (2006) Staying Alive: Adorno and Habermas on Self-Preservation under Late Capitalism. *Rethinking Marxism*. 1: 18. 433-447.

Derek, Gregory (2010) War and Peace. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. 35 2 154-186.

Dixon, Maria (2007) Transforming Power; Expanding the Inheritance of Michel Foucault in Organizational Studies. *Management Communication Quarterly*. 20: 283-296.

Edward, Andrew (1970) Work and Freedom in Marcuse and Marx. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*. 3 2: 241-256: University of Toronto Press

Fischer, Ariane (2009) Settling Accounts with the Sociology of Knowledge: The Frankfurt School Mannheim and the Marxian Critique of Ideology qua Mental Labor. *Social Identities*. 18: 212-224.

Forchtner, Bernhard (2011) Critique, the discourse-historical approach, and the Frankfurt School. *Critical Discourse Studies*. 8: Issue: 1-14.

Fopp, Rodney (2010) "Repressive tolerance" Herbert Marcuse's Exercise in Social Epistemology. *Social Epistemology*. 24: 2: 105-112.

Garrett, Paul (2008) Questioning Habermasian Social Work. A note on Some Alternative Theoretical Resources. *British Journal of Social Work*. 39: 867-883.

- Gingrich-Philbrook, Craig (2001) Love's excluded subjects: Staging Irigaray's heteronormative essentialism. *Cultural Studies*. 15: 222-228.
- Habermans, Jurgen (2008) Notes on Post-Secular Society. *New Perspectives Quarterly*. 25: 4: 17-29.
- Herr, Ranjoo (2008) Politics of Difference and Nationalism: On Iris Young's Global Vision. *Hypatia*. 23: 39-59.
- Herbert, Steve (1996) The geopolitics of the police. Foucault, disciplinary power and the tactics of the Los Angeles Police Department. *Political Geography*. 15: 47-57.
- Honneth, Axel (2004) Recognition and Justice: Outline of a Plural Theory of Justice. *Acta Sociologica*. 47: 4. 351-364.
- Horkheimer Max ([1968] 1999) What is Critical Theory?. *Critical Theory*. New York: Continuum. 7-37-
- Howard Dick (2000) Political Theory, Critical Theory and the Place of the Frankfurt School. *Critical horizons*. 1: 2: 271-280.
- Jacques, Hamel (1998) The positions of Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Touraine Respecting Qualitative Methods. *British Journal of Sociology*. 49: 1-19.
- Jeffrey, Oca (2009) Eroticizing Marx. Revolutionizing Freud: Marcuse's Psychoanalytic Turn. *An Online Journal of Philosophy*. 3 1 10-23.
- Jones, Campbell, Alvesson M., Willmott H (2005) Practical deconstructivist feminist Marxist organization theory: Gayatri Spivak. *The Sociological Review*. 53: 228-244.
- McClintock, Anne, and Stoler, Anne Laura (1997) Imperial Leather : Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context. *American Anthropologist*. 99: 383-386.
- McNay, Lois (2008) The trouble with Recognition. Subjectivity, Suffering and Agency. *Sociological Theory*. 26: 271-296.
- Mansbridge, Jane (2008) Iris Marion Young: Legacies for Feminist Theory. *Politics & Gender*. 4: 2-18.
- Naples, Nancy (2004) To Interpret the World and to Change it: An Interview with Nancy Fraser. *Signs*. 29: 4: 1103-1124.
- Neill, Shane (2010) Struggles against injustice: contemporary critical theory and political violence. *Marxism Today*. 2010: 6: 2: 127-39.

Pickles, John (2005) New cartographies and the decolonization of European geographies. *Area*. 37 4: 355-364.

Sawchuk, Dana (2005) Horkheimer and Adorno on Social Change. Problems and Potential in Light of "History from Below". *Critical Sociology*. 31: 4: 537-558.

Schlippacke, Heidi (2001) A Hidden Agenda: Gender in the Selected Writings by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. *Orbis Litterarum*. 56: 4: 294-313.

Schueller, Malini (2009 ) Decolonizing Global Theories Today. *Interventions*. 11: 235-254.

Spencer, Robert (2010) Thoughts from Abroad. Theodor Adorno as a Postcolonial Theorist. *Culture, Theory and Critique*. 51: 3: 207-221.

Summers-Bremmer, Eluned (2000) Reading Irigaray, Dancing. *Hypatia*. 15: Issue: 1 90-124.

Swart, David (2003) From Critical Sociology to Public Intellectual: Pierre Bourdieu and Politics. *Theory and Society*. 32: 791-823.

Wacquant Loi (2004) Critical Thought as Solvent of Doxa. *Constellations*. Vol. 11, No. 1, 2004.

Webster, Fiona (2000) The Politics of Sex and Gender. Benhabib and Butler Debate Subjectivity. *Hypatia*. 15 1: 1-22.

William, Bogard (1998) Sense and Segmentarity. Some Markers of a Deleuzian-Guattarian Sociology. *Sociological Theory*. 16: 52-74.

Zhaoguo, Ding (2011) Theorizing Resistance in Spivak's Deconstructive Marxist Postcolonial Criticism. *Studies in Literature and Language*. 2: 19-25.