

Credit Unit System:
Information on Courses

1. **Course Title** (*English*): Critical Theory of Society

2. **Course Code:**
SM3125

3. **Course Aims & Objectives:**

This course offers an overview of the various developments in contemporary critical theory. The first area of study is radical social theory, particularly the Marxian tradition. Topics include the Marxian philosophy of history, the theories of ideology and hegemony, and the rise of Western Marxism (especially the Frankfurt School). The impact of Marxism on art, particularly on the Situationist International, will be considered. The second area of study includes psychoanalytic critical theory. The course will introduce the basic assumptions of Freudianism and give an overview of influential Freudian theories. The combination of Freud and Marx, and its impact on feminism, will be discussed in detail. The third area includes the rise of structuralism and its influence. Fourthly, recent developments in post-Marxian and post-structuralist social and psychological theory, including the work of Foucault and Deleuze. Deconstruction and other tendencies in recent literary theory will also be discussed. Finally, recent debates in the philosophy of science and the public sphere, such as the work of Bruno Latour, will be introduced. The course will conclude with pertinent issues in recent Cultural Studies, such as multi-culturalism, post-coloniality, racism and so on, to be examined critically.

After taking this course, students will understand the basic assumptions of the major tendencies in contemporary critical theory and be able to debate the strengths and weaknesses of each position. They will also understand how artists have been inspired by these theories; students will also be able to draw on these theories in their own creative work. Accordingly, at least one piece of coursework must be a creative project that shows a strong understanding of critical theory.

4. **Units:** 3

5. **Level:** B

6. **Keyword Syllabus:**

Marxism, ideology, hegemony, the culture industry, the society of the spectacle, the Situationist International, psychoanalysis, feminism, structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstruction, philosophy of science, the public sphere, multiculturalism, post-coloniality.

7. **Teaching pattern:**

Duration of course: 1 semester

Suggested lecture/tutorial/laboratory mix: 2 hours lecture + 1 hour tutorial.

8. **Assessment pattern:**
100% Coursework
Grading pattern: Standard (A+AA-...F)
9. **Pre-requisites:** *(please quote course code & title)*
10. **Pre-cursor:** *(please quote course code & title)*
11. **Equivalent Courses:** *(please quote course code & title)*
12. **Key Readings:**

Easthope, Antony and McGowan, Kate (eds.) Critical and Cultural Theory Reader (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

Hinchey, Patricia. Finding Freedom in the Classroom: a Practical Introduction to Critical Theory (New York: Peter Lang, 1998).

Philips, John. Contested Knowledge: a Guide to Critical Theory (London: Zed Books, 2000).

Sarup, Madan. An Introductory Guide to Post-structuralism and Postmodernism (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993).

Scharff, Robert and Dusek, Val (eds). Philosophy of Technology (Malden: Blackwell, 2003).

Simons, Jon (ed.). Contemporary Critical Theorists: from Lacan to Said (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).

Returned by:

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Extension: _____

Date: June 25, 2005