

SPRING 2016: GPFI5509
The Case for Critique
 New School for Social Research
 Th 2-3:50 pm, 6 E. 16th Street, Rm. 901

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The Case for Critique: Syllabus

Course description

This course investigates the idea of *immanent critique*. We will consider forms of criticism that start from conceptual resources of actual or historical social practices, and we will take seriously the possibility that—although these forms of criticism lack the socially transcendent reach laid claim to by various familiar views that draw their main inspiration from Kant, and so might be said not to qualify as ‘external’—they are not merely ‘internal’ in a sense that would deprive them of genuine rational authority. The idea of immanent critique, thus understood, is sometimes rejected as no more than an illusion. Thinkers such as Hegel and Wittgenstein, who treat our normative positions as practice-bound, are often taken to be thereby depriving themselves of the requisite resources for a critical approach that is wholeheartedly rational. But both Hegel and Wittgenstein are plausibly read as insisting on a transformed image of rational critique is like—an image that straightforwardly combines an ineradicable link to practice with unqualified rational authority. Exploring this possibility and its consequences is the task of this seminar. Course readings will include classic and contemporary contributions to Critical Theory as well as contributions to Anglo-American analytic disputes about philosophy and the social sciences.

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Course requirements

There are two requirements for enrolled students:

- (1) You must do a very brief class presentation, and submit a corresponding (*no more than*) 2 page, double-spaced paper, at one class meeting. Your presentation will be ungraded. As long as you do it, you will receive full credit. You will, however, receive comments. The comments are intended to be helpful and, where relevant, to give you guidance in composing your final seminar paper.
- (2) You must write one 15-18 page, double-spaced seminar paper, which will be due on our last day of class, Thursday, May 12th. Your paper will be graded, and the grade you receive will be your grade for the course. Please feel strongly encouraged to submit a 1-2 paragraph abstract of your paper before you start writing. You can give your abstract to either of us, and we will give you feedback and guidance.

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Schedule of classes and assignmentsCourse Introduction

Week 1. Th, January 28th. **No required reading.**

I. Mapping out the problem of critique

Week 2. Th, February 4th.

Required reading.

Michael Walzer, Chapters 1 and 2 of *Interpretation and Social Criticism* or “Mut, Mitleid und ein Gutes Auge”

Additional resources.

Michael Walzer, “Exodus and Revolution” and Chapters 1, 5, 7 and 9 of *The Company of Critics: Social Criticism and Political Commitment in the Twentieth Century*

Week 3. Date and time TBA.

Required reading.

Axel Honneth, “Reconstructive Social Criticism with a Genealogical Proviso: the Idea of Critique in the Frankfurt School,” Chapter 3 of *Pathologies of Reason*

Additional resources

Amy Allen, “Critical Theory and the Idea of Progress,” Chapter 1 of *The End of Progress*

Seyla Benhabib, Part I of *Critique, Norm and Utopia*

Judith Butler, “What is Critique?”

Michel Foucault, “What is Critique?”

David Owen, “Genealogy and Critical Theory”

Martin Saar, “Genealogical Critique”

Week 4. Th, February 18th .

Required reading.

Onora O’Neill, “Starke und Schwache Gesellschaftskritik in einer Globalisierten Welt”

Additional resources

Onora O’Neill, “Constructivism in Rawls and Kant”

Rainer Forst, “Universalism and Contextualism,” Chapter 4 of *Contexts of Justice*

John Rawls, “Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory”

Week 5. Th, February 25th.

Required reading.

Max Horkheimer, “Traditional and Critical Theory”

Additional resources.

Seyla Benhabib, excerpt from her monograph on Horkheimer (i.e., not the edited collection) [Michael, please make a suggestion.]

Max Horkheimer, “Die Gegenwärtige Lage der Sozialphilosophie und die Aufgabe eines Instituts für Sozialforschung”

Week 6. Th, March 3rd.

Required reading.

Raymond Geuss, Chapters 1 and 2 of *The Idea of a Critical Theory*

Additional resources.

Rahel Jaeggi, “Rethinking Ideology”

George Larrain, “The Concept of Ideology”

Titus Stahl, “Ideology as Practice”

Week 7. Th, March 10th.

Required reading.

Axel Honneth, “Pathologies of Rationality”

Additional reading.

Georg Lukács, “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat”

Max Horkheimer, “Critique of Instrumental Reason”

Week 8. Th, March 17th.

Required reading.

Rahel Jaeggi, Introduction and Parts I and II, Chapters 1-4 of *Kritik von Lebensformen*

Additional resources.

Rahel Jaeggi, “Formen der Kritik,” Part III of *Kritik von Lebensformen*

Rahel Jaeggi, “The Idea of Progress”

NO CLASS, THURSDAY, MARCH 24TH – SPRING BREAK

Week 9. Date and time TBA .

Required reading.

Peter Winch, Chapters 1 and 2 of *The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy*

Additional resources.

John McDowell, “Non-Cognitivism and Rule-Following”
and “Meaning and Intentionality in Wittgenstein’s Later
Philosophy”

Week 10. Th, April 7th.

Required reading.

Peter Winch, Chapter 3 of *The Idea of a Social Science*

Additional resources.

Jürgen Habermas, “Some Characteristics of the Mythical
and the Modern Ways of Understanding the World” in
Theory of Communicative Action

Alasdair MacIntyre, “The Idea of a Social Science” in
Wilson, ed., *Rationality*

Alexander Rosenberg, Chapter 1 of *Philosophy of Social Science*

Week 11. T, April 14th.

Required reading.

Peter Winch, “Understanding a Primitive Society”

Additional resources.

Evans-Pritchard, excerpt from *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic
among the Azande*

Steven Lukes, “Relativism in its Place,” in Hollis and Lukes,
eds., *Rationality and Relativism*

Alasdair MacIntyre, “Is Understanding Religion Compatible
with Believing?” in Wilson, ed., *Rationality*

Ludwig Wittgenstein, “Remarks on Frazer’s *Golden Bough*”

Week 12. T, April 21st.

Required reading.

Alasdair MacIntyre, excerpt from *Whose Justice? Which
Rationality?*

Additional resources.

Mark Risjord, “Relativism and Rationality,” pp.65ff of
Philosophy of Social Science: A Contemporary Introduction

Peter Winch, “Ethical Relativism” and “Language, Belief
and Relativism”

Hilary Putnam, Chapter 1 of *Realism with a Human Face*

Richard Rorty, “Hilary Putnam and the Relativist Menace”

Week 13. T, April 28th.

Required reading.

Cora Diamond, “Criticizing from ‘Outside’”

Additional resources.

Jonas Ahlskog and Olli Lagerspetz, “Language-Games and Relativism: On Cora Diamond’s Reading of Peter Winch”

Paul Roth, “Naturalism Without Fears”

Kevin Cahill, “Naturalism and the Friends of the Understanding”

Week 14. Th, May 5th.

Required reading.

Alice Crary, “Wittgenstein on Political Thought,” in Crary and Read, eds., *The New Wittgenstein*

Additional resources.

Alice Crary, “Ethics, Inheriting from Wittgenstein” in *Beyond Moral Judgment*

Alice Crary, “The Moral Dimension of Mind: Philosophy of Psychology as a Guide to Ethics” in *Inside Ethics*

Conclusions

Week 15. Th, May 12th.

Summary discussion and course reception.

Papers due