

Foucault and Critical Theory SS. 490.03

Meeting: Thursday North Hall 111b
Pratt Institute
Spring 2006

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Course Description

Foucault once said that Hegel prowls amongst us, constantly reminding us of what we have lost by abandoning his view of history. But it is not so much Hegel, but the entire legacy of Enlightenment which haunts us today. Foucault himself addressed the problem of Enlightenment in his commentary on Kant's "What is Enlightenment?" The legacy of Enlightenment has been of grave concern since the of origins of Enlightenment. This concern reached its high watermark with the work of Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School. This concern is often associated with the publication of Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, but it is one that pervades and stimulates the diverse work of Critical Theory. This work is also central to understanding the concerns of "postmodern" (or "postmarxist") social theory, especially in the emerging field of Cultural Studies. Indeed, Foucault credited Critical Theory with such importance and insight that he declared it to have been his great fortune to have discovered the Frankfurt School late in his work, because otherwise "...if I had encountered the Frankfurt School while Young, I would have been seduced to the point of doing nothing else in life but the job of commenting on them....And I don't even know whether to be glad or feel sorry about it". One important connection that Foucault found between his work and that of Critical Theory was their common critique of Enlightenment.

"...I think that the Frankfurt School set problems that are still being worked on. Among others, the effects of power that are connected to a rationality defined in the West, starting from the sixteenth century on. The West could never have attained the economic and cultural effects that are unique to it without the exercise of that specific form of rationality. Now, how are we to separate this rationality from the mechanisms, procedures, techniques, and effects of power that determine it, which we no longer accept and which we point to as that form of oppression typical of capitalist societies, and perhaps socialist societies, too? Couldn't it be that the promise of *Aufklärung* (Enlightenment), of attaining freedom through the exercise of reason, had been, on the contrary, overturned within the domain of Reason itself, that it is taking more and more space away from freedom? This is the fundamental problem that we all debate....And this problem, as we know, was singled out by Horkheimer before the others, and it was the Frankfurt School that measured its relationship with Marx on the basis of this hypothesis. Wasn't it Horkheimer that sustained that in Marx there was the idea of a society as being like an immense factory?" (from interview with D. Trombadori)

Indeed, they share a great number of important concerns: the problem of Enlightenment, the

question of power and authority, sexuality, and desire. This course will examine how the writers of the Frankfurt School and the work of Michel Foucault confronted these questions. It will also consider the degree of continuity between Critical Theory and the tendencies of postmodernism exemplified by Foucault's work.

READINGS

The reading for the class will be drawn from these and other sources. Given the number of bookstores available either on-line or here in the city -- as well as having the New York Public Library at your disposal-- you are responsible for obtaining the required texts. This is not to place a burden upon you, but it is a necessary part of education that you learn how to acquire books and materials for yourself.

Required Texts:

- Max Horkheimer. *Eclipse of Reason*. Continuum International Publishing Group
ISBN: 0826477933
- Max Horkheimer. 1972 1994. *Critical Theory: Selected Essays (with an Introduction by Stanley Aronowitz)*. New York: Continuum Publishing. Continuum International Publishing Group ISBN: 0826400833.
- Theodor Adorno. 2005. *Critical Models: Catchwords and Interventions*. Columbia University Press
ISBN: 023113505X
- Michel Foucault. 1998. *Aesthetics, Method, Epistemology*, New York: New Press
ISBN: 1565845587 Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984.
- Michel Foucault. 1998. *Ethics: Subjectivity, and Truth*. ISBN: 1565844343 Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984.
- Michel Foucault. 2003. *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the College de France, 1975-1976*
David Macey (Translator), ISBN: 0312422660 Picador USA
- Michel Foucault. 1986 [1954-62]. *Mental Illness and Psychology*. University of California Press
ISBN: 0520059190
- Michel Foucault. 1992. *Remarks on Marx*. New York: Semiotext(e). (only available used: we may simply make copies of the reading from this one)

The books may be purchased from the Pratt Bookstore, as well as many other bookstores in the city, including St. Marks Books, Barnes and Nobles, etc. You may also purchase these books, often at a discount, via Amazon.com (<http://www.amazon.com>)

Suggested sources for purchasing the readings:

The Advanced Book Exchange
abebooks.com

The Strand

www.strandbooks.com - the huge second-hand store on 12th street.

Labyrinths Books

<http://www.labyrinthbooks.com/>
Powells
powells.com
Barnes and Nobles
www.BARNESANDNOBLE.com
Amazon
<http://www.amazon.com>
City Lights Books (in San Francisco)
www.citylights.com
St. Marks Bookstop
<http://www.stmarksbookshop.com>
31 Third Avenue

Suggested supplemental sources:

Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt, eds. 1982. *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*. New York: Continuum Publishing.

Stephen Bonner and Douglas Kellner, eds. 1989. *Critical Theory and Society: A Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Ernst Cassirer. 1951. *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Michel Foucault. 1965. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. New York: Vintage Press.

Michel Foucault. 1972. *The Order of Things: A History of the Human Sciences*. New York: Vintage Press.

Michel Foucault. 1980. *The History of Sexuality, Vol. I: An Introduction*. New York: Vintage Press.

Michel Foucault. 1979. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Press.

Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno. 2003 [1944] *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Stanford University Press.

Immanuel Kant. 1959 [1784]. "What is Enlightenment?" in *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Translated with an Introduction by Lewis White Beck. New York: Bobbs-Merrill.
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/kant-what-is.html>

Herbert Marcuse. 1964 *One Dimensional Man*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Herbert Marcuse. 1956. *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical inquiry into Freud*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Outline of the Course of Study

Week I. Introduction to the Course

Week II. Politics

Kant "What is Enlightenment?" <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/kant-what-is.html>

Recommended: Cassirer Introduction to *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*

Week III. Enlightenment and Method

Foucault "What is Enlightenment?" *Ethics Subjectivity, and Truth* 303-320.

Foucault "Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse: Who is a 'Negator' of History?" in *Remarks on Marx*, 115-130.

Adorno "Progress" *Critical Models* 143-161.

Week IV.

Horkheimer "Rise and Decline of the Individual" *Eclipse of Reason* 128-161.

Foucault "What is an Author?" *Aesthetics, Method, Epistemology*, 205-222.

Adorno "Critique" *Critical Models* 281-288.

Supplemental:

Herbert Marcuse "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology" *Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, 138-162.

Adorno "Society" in Bronner and Kellner, 267-278.

Week V.

Adorno "The Meaning of Working Through the Past" *Critical Models* 89-105.

Adorno "Introduction and Discussion of Professor Adorno's Lecture 'The Meaning of Working Through the Past'" *Critical Models* 295-308.

Horkheimer "The End of Reason" *Eclipse of Reason*.

Week VI

Foucault "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx" *Aesthetics, Method, Epistemology*, 269-278.

Foucault "Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History" *Aesthetics, Method, Epistemology*, 369-393.

Foucault "The Order of Things" *Aesthetics, Method, Epistemology*, 261-268.

Foucault "On the Ways of Writing History" *Aesthetics, Method, Epistemology*, 279-296 .

Week IV.

Horkheimer "Authority and Family" in *Critical Theory*, 47-128.

Supplemental:

Horkheimer "The Authoritarian State" in *Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, 95-117.

Week VI.

Horkheimer "The Revolt of Nature" *Eclipse of Reason*, 92-127.

Adorno "Note on Human Science and Culture" *Critical Models* 37-40.

Foucault "The Imagination of the Nineteenth Century" *Aesthetics, Method, Epistemology*, 235-240.

Week VII.

Marcuse "The Dialectic of Civilization" in *Eros and Civilization*, 78-105.

Michel Foucault *Mental Illness and Psychology*.

Supplemental:

Wilhelm Reich Introduction to *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*.

Week VIII.

Adorno "Sex Taboos and Law Today" *Critical Models*, 71-88.

Foucault *The History of Sexuality, vol. I: An Introduction*, 1-161.

Foucault "Sade, Sergeant of Sex" *Aesthetics, Method, Epistemology*, 223-228.

Week IX.

Foucault "The Courses" *Ethics Subjectivity, and Truth*, 3-100.

Adorno "Education After Auschwitz" *Critical Models*, 191-204.

Adorno "Resignation" *Critical Models*, 289-294.

Week X.

Foucault *Society Must Be Defended*

Week XI.

Foucault *Society Must Be Defended*

Week XII.

Foucault *Society Must Be Defended*

Week XIII.

Adorno "Commitment" *Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, 300-318.

Horkheimer "Art and Mass Culture" *Critical Theory*, 273-290.

Foucault "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism" *Aesthetics, Method, Epistemology*, 433-458.

Week XIV. Presentation of Paper Topics

Week XV. Review/papers due

Course Requirements

Presentations

Participants are expected to give at least two presentations during the semester on the readings for the class. In addition, a final brief presentation on your paper/project is also required. The presentations and class participation will account for 40 percent.

Final Paper

One essay, 10-20 pages in length (typed and double-spaced).

Class Participation

Education is not a one way street and we can not expect to simply passively receive knowledge unless we expect to live a passive life. Participation is mandatory and will be factored into the final grade.

Absences and Lateness

Persistent absences or lateness will result in a reduction of your final grade.

Grades and Incompletes

Incompletes will be granted only in accordance with the established policy of the college. The request must be made in advance of the last week of class. It must be made in writing. **An incomplete is “available only if the student has been in regular attendance, has satisfied all but the final requirements of the course, and has furnished satisfactory proof that the work was not completed because of illness or other circumstances beyond control” (Pratt Institute Bulletin).** *If you do not turn in your paper on time, and you do not have an approved incomplete, you will fail the course.* If you do not complete your work by the beginning of the next semester, I will not issue a change of grade except under the most extraordinary circumstances.