

Modern Social Theory

(VAK 08-351-1-MC1-1)

Master International Relations: Global Governance and Social Theory

Module M C1: Modern Social Theory

Tuesdays 10am-1pm

UNICOM 7.2210

Last change: 22 September 2016

The purpose of the course is to discuss key questions of modern social theory by studying classic and contemporary texts that have shaped the current debate. On the basis of these texts, we will elaborate central concepts for the analysis and evaluation of modern societies. Topics for discussion include the methodological status of social theory, different characterizations of modern society, the relation of agency and structure, the critique of certain features of modern society and the relevance of the categories of race and gender. The course will serve as a general introduction to modern social theory – it does not require any previous knowledge of this field, but the willingness to engage with complex theoretical texts and their arguments.

Preparatory Reading:

Delanty, Gerard (2000): *The Foundations of Social Theory: Origins and Trajectories*, in: Bryan S. Turner (ed.): *The Blackwell Companion to Social Theory*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Blackwell, 21-46.

Outhwaite, William (2000): *The Philosophy of Social Science*, in: Bryan S. Turner (ed.): *The Blackwell Companion to Social Theory*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Blackwell, 47-70.

Christman John (2004): *Social and Political Philosophy*, London: Routledge.

Harrington, Austin (ed.) (2004): *Modern Social Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Joas, Hans; Knöbl, Wolfgang (2009): *Social Theory. Twenty Introductory Lectures*. Cambridge University Press.

Sessions

1	06 Sep 2016	Introduction and Seminar Organization
2	12 Sep 2016	What Is and Why Do We Do Social Theory? Taylor, Tully
3	20 Sep 2016	Modernity/Capitalism: Weber, Marx/Engels
4	27 Sep 2016	City Life and Acceleration: Simmel, Rosa
5	04 Oct 2016	Capitalist Culture/Rationality Lost: Horkheimer and Adorno
6	11 Oct 2016	Rationality Reclaimed: Habermas, Honneth
7	18 Oct 2016	Modern Self and Postmodern Love: Mead, Illouz
8	25 Oct 2016	Action and Structure: Bourdieu, Giddens
9	01 Nov 2016	Power and Subject(ivation): Foucault
10	08 Nov 2016	We have never been modern: Latour
	15 Nov 2016	NO CLASS
11	22 Nov 2016	Feminist Theory I: Beauvoir, Butler
12	29 Nov 2016	Feminist Theory II/Queer Theory: Rubin, Butler
13	06 Dec 2016	Race, Gender, Intersectionality: Mills, Crenshaw
14	13 Dec 2016	Final discussion and presentation of first ideas for term papers

Assignments and grading

1. In-class assignments (45% of final grade)

In the course of the seminar, you will give a seminar presentation on one of the seminar texts and you will write position papers on three of the texts. In order to pass the course, all four of the assignments must be passed. Of the four grades, the worst will be annulled, so that only your best three grades will make up your in-class grade. The in-class grade counts 45% of the final grade (15% for each single presentation or position paper).

a) Seminar presentation

Every student will shortly introduce one or two of the texts (depending on text length). Presenters should prepare a written handout (make enough copies for everyone!) that summarizes the key points of their seminar introduction and the main questions for the discussion. Handouts need an appropriate header and a bibliography of texts used. Page numbers are helpful for class discussion.

Unexcused failure to show up for a text presentation is a “fail”.

b) Position papers on readings

Every student will write position papers (800–1000 words) on three of the texts. The papers should (1) summarize the main aim and/or contribution of the text, as well as (2) raise and discuss two to three questions on or critiques of the text. Each the summary and the text discussion should account for at least one third of the paper (the last third being used as you see fit).

Students choose freely the three texts they write about, following these rules:

- You cannot write a position paper on the text that you present on.
- Of those texts marked with an asterisk you may only choose one for a position paper.
- Texts marked with two asterisks count for two position papers (they may have double length, too) if students choose to have them counted double.
- Papers written for the first session (Taylor/Tully) may be re-written after grading.

2. Final paper/essay (55% of final grade)

The final paper (4000–5000 words) is an in-depth discussion of one of the central debates touched upon in the seminar. Topics and first ideas will be presented at the last session of the seminar. Please come to the office hours for a preliminary discussion of your ideas. Final papers can be co-authored by two students (6000–8000 words).

Students must pass all individual components of the course to pass the course.

Deadlines and other Rules

1. Position papers are due until Monday, 10am before each seminar (via e-mail). Late submissions will not be counted. The final paper is due on 1 February 2017.
2. Papers must be handed in as electronic (via e-mail) and as hard copy. Late submission of electronic copy of the paper will result in a reduction of the grade as specified by the general rules of the MA programme.
3. Students are allowed to miss two sessions without further excuse (but with prior notification).

Detailed Reading List

1. Session, 06 Sep 2016: Introduction and Seminar Organization

2. Session, 12 Sep 2016: What Is and Why Do We Do Social Theory? Taylor, Tully

Taylor, Charles (1985): Social Theory as Practice. In: *Philosophy and the Human Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 91–115.

Tully, James (2002): Political Philosophy as a Critical Activity. In: *Political Theory* 30 (4), 533–555.

3. Session, 20 Sep 2016: Modernity/Capitalism: Weber, Marx/Engels

Marx, Karl; Engels, Friedrich (2010 [1848]): *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Download at: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Manifesto.pdf> (11 June 2016).

*Weber, Max (2006): Puritanism and the Spirit of Capitalism. In: Sam Whimster (ed.): *The Essential Weber*, London: Routledge, 25–34.

*Weber, Max (2006): Prefatory Remarks to the Collected Essays in the Sociology of Religion. In: Sam Whimster (ed.): *The Essential Weber*, London: Routledge, 101–112.

4. Session, 27 Sep 2016: City Life and Acceleration: Simmel, Rosa

*Simmel, Georg (2005): The Metropolis and Mental Life. In: Gary Bridge/Sophie Watson (eds.): *The Blackwell City Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, 11–19.

Rosa, Hartmut (2003): Social Acceleration: Ethical and Political Consequences of a Desynchronized High-Speed Society. In: *Constellations* 10 (1), 3–33.

5. Session, 04 Oct 2016: Capitalist Culture/Rationality Lost: Horkheimer and Adorno

**Horkheimer, Max; Adorno, Theodor W. (2002 [1944]): The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception, in: Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno: *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 94–136.

6. Session, 11 Oct 2016: Rationality Reclaimed: Habermas, Honneth

Habermas, Jürgen (1987): *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 341–367. (The file of this reading contains the entire chapter XII, pp. 336–367; mandatory reading is only pp. 341–367.)

Honneth, Axel (2004): A Social Pathology of Reason, in: Fred Rush (ed.): *The Cambridge Companion to Critical Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 336–360.

7. Session, 18 Oct 2016: Modern Self and Postmodern Love: Mead, Illouz

Mead, George H. (1934): *Mind, Self and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist* (edited by Charles W. Morris). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 152–164, 173–178, 214–222.

Illouz, Eva (1998): The Lost Innocence of Love. Romance as a Postmodern Condition, in: *Theory, Culture & Society* 15 (3/4): 161–186.

8. Session, 25 Oct 2016: Action and Structure: Bourdieu, Giddens

**Giddens, Anthony (1979): *Central Problems in Social Theory. Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis*. London, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 49–95.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1999): Structures, Habitus, Practice, in: Elliot, Anthony (ed.): *Contemporary Social Theory*. Malden, Oxford: Blackwell, 107–118.

9. Session, 01 Nov 2016: Power and Subject(ivation): Foucault

Foucault, Michel (2003 [1997]): *Society Must Be Defended. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*. Translated by David Macey. New York: Picador, 23–41 (Lecture Two).

Foucault, Michel (1978 [1976]): *The History of Sexuality. Volume I: An Introduction*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon Books, 135–159 (Part V).

10. Session, 08 Nov 2016: We have never been modern: Latour

**Latour, Bruno (1994 [1991]): *We Have Never Been Modern*. Translated by Catherine Porter. 3. edn. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1–48, 130–145.

11. Session, 22 Nov 2016: Feminist Theory I: Beauvoir, Butler

Beauvoir, Simone de (2010 [1949]): *The Second Sex*. London: Vintage, 23–38, 848–863.

**Butler, Judith (1990): *Gender Trouble*. New York, Abingdon: Routledge, 1–34.

12. Session, 29 Nov 2016: Feminist Theory II/Queer Theory: Rubin, Butler

Rubin, Gayle S. (1999 [1984]): Thinking Sex. Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality. In: Richard Guy Parker and Peter Aggleton (ed.), *Culture, Society and Sexuality. A Reader*. London/Philadelphia: UCL Press, 143–178.

Butler, Judith (1993): *Bodies That Matter. On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. New York, London: Routledge, 169–185.

13. Session, 06 Dec 2016: Race, Gender, Intersectionality: Mills, Crenshaw

Crenshaw, Kimberlé (1989): Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics, in: *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, 139–167.

Mills, Charles (1997): *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1–40.

14. Session, 13 Dec 2016: Final discussion and presentation of first ideas for term papers