

CONF 804 -- 001

ALTERNATIVE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS: CRITICAL THEORY

FALL 2009

SYLLABUS AND SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

This course is offered on Wednesdays at 4:30-7:10 in Room 253 of the Original Building. The **instructor** is Prof. Richard Rubenstein, who can be reached via telephone at 703-993-1307 or 703-400-7674 (cell) or via email at rrubens@gmu.edu. His office is Room 646 Truland, and office hours are by appointment. He is available to discuss either course-related matters or other matters of interest to students.

The **purpose** of the course is to develop our understanding of violent structural conflicts and the possible methods of resolving them. Associated aims are to familiarize students with the ideas generated by thinkers of the Critical Theory school and others who have extended or altered these ideas; to use these insights to deepen our understanding of serious social conflicts; to explore the implications of these theories for conflict resolution practice; and to do research, make presentations to the class, and write papers on topics of interest to the seminar.

The **style** of the course will be that of a graduate seminar, with students doing readings in common and independent reading. Students will also do independent writing and will present draft papers to the class.

With regard to course **content**, the structure of the seminar is as follows:

We begin by studying the sources of Critical Theory, in particular, Marxism and Freudianism, and follow this with an overview emphasizing the historical context and major ideas of the Frankfurt School. We then read theorists chiefly concerned with conflict and socio-political development in the industrial or post-industrial democracies (Marcuse, Habermas). We continue by reading thinkers who analyze political discourse and power relations in the West (Foucault, Butler) and on a global scale (Zizek, Hardt and Negri). Throughout the course, we ask how insights into the nature of structural and cultural violence may help us develop more meaningful and effective methods of conflict resolution.

Students are expected to attend each class thoroughly prepared to discuss the assigned readings. In addition, each student will examine a book and/or essays supplemental to those listed in the syllabus as required. **Grades** will be based on a short essay on an issue discussed in the course readings and in class discussions (20%), a review and oral presentation to the seminar based on a supplemental reading (20%), and a final paper of approximately 30 pages (60%). Further

specifications for the final paper will be supplied in class. Please see the schedule below for relevant dates and deadlines.

ALL STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO BE FAMILIAR WITH THE UNIVERSITY STANDARDS REGARDING PLAGIARISM. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS AT ALL ABOUT THESE STANDARDS, PLEASE SPEAK TO THE INSTRUCTOR.

With regard to **process**, the structure is as follows: Most class sessions will begin with a short lecture by the instructor followed by class discussion. In certain weeks, there will also be brief student presentations. Students will submit short essays at midterm, review papers one week after making their class presentations, and final papers by the dates noted on the schedule below.

There will be one or two guest lectures in this course.

Required books are as follows (for order of readings and other details, please see the schedule below). For **assigned articles on e-reserves**, see the schedule of assignments, below.

Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, 2006

Gordon Finlayson, *Habermas: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, 2005

Michel Foucault, *The Essential Foucault*. New Press, 2003

Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, W.W. Norton, 1990

Rosa Luxemburg, *The Essential Rosa Luxemburg: Reform or Revolution and the Mass Strike*, Haymarket Books, 2007

Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Beacon 1991)

Slavoj Zizek, *Violence: Big Ideas, Small Books*, Picador, 2008

A partial list of **recommended books** follows. Since students' academic backgrounds vary considerably, those familiar with a required book may want to read a recommended book as well.

Michel Foucault, *A History of Sexuality, Vol. I*, Vintage, 1990; *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Knowledge*, Routledge, 1991; *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Vintage, 1995

Erich Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, Holt 1992; *Escape from Freedom*, Holt 1994

Jurgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vols. I and II, Beacon, 1985; *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, M.I.T. Press, 1991

Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Stanford University Press, 2002)

Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: The History of the Frankfurt School*, University of California Press, 1996

Douglas Kellner, *Critical Theory, Marxism, and Modernity*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989

Georg Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*, MIT Press, 1972

Noelle McAfee, *Habermas, Kristeva, & Citizenship*, Cornell University Press, 2000

Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, Routledge, 1987; *Toward a Critical Theory of Society*, Routledge, 2001

Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, 3d Ed., Farrar Straus, 1980

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Sep. 2: Intro to course. Read Richard E. Rubenstein, "Conflict Resolution and the Structural Sources of Conflict," in *Conflict Resolution: Dynamics, Process, and Structure*, ed. Ho-Won Jeong (Ashgate, 1999), on e-reserves

Sep. 9: Marxism and socioeconomic structures: read Rosa Luxemburg, "Reform or Revolution," from *The Essential Rosa Luxemburg*

Sep. 16: Psychoanalysis and psychological structures: read Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*

Sep. 23: The Frankfurt School synthesis: Read selection from Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination*, on e-reserves

Sep. 30: Marcuse: read *One-Dimensional Man*

Oct. 7: Complete *One-Dimensional Man*

Oct. 14: Habermas: read Gordon Finlayson, *Habermas: A Very Short Introduction*

Oct. 21: Foucault: read *The Essential Foucault*. MIDTERM ESSAYS DUE IN CLASS

Oct. 28: Complete *The Essential Foucault*

Nov. 4: Zizek: read *Violence: Big Ideas, Small Books*

Nov.11: Complete *Violence: Big Ideas, Small Books*

Nov. 18: Butler: read *Gender Trouble*

Nov. 25: Complete *Gender Trouble*. SUBMIT PROPOSALS FOR FINAL PAPERSS

Dec. 2: Resolving structural conflicts: symposium with readings. Read Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (1969), pp. 167-191 and "Cultural Violence," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Aug., 1990), pp. 291-305, both on e-reserves

Dec. 9: Course wrap-up

Dec. 18: Final papers due by close of business at ICAR office