

Classical and Critical Theory¹

Spring 2016

SOC 260

*Department of Sociology
Brandeis University*

Class Time: Wednesdays, 2-4:50 pm
Location: Pearlman 203

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Mythical is that which never changes, ultimately diluted into the formal legality of thought. To want substance in cognition is to want a utopia. It is this consciousness of possibility that sticks to the concrete, the undisfigured. Utopia is blocked off by possibility, never by immediate reality; this is why it seems abstract in the midst of things – Theodor Adorno

By criticism, we mean that intellectual, and eventually practical effort which is not satisfied to accept the prevailing ideas, action and social conditions unthinkingly and from mere habit; effort which aims to coordinate the individual sides of life with each other and with the general ideas and aims of the epoch, to deduce them genetically, to distinguish the appearance from the essence, to examine the foundations of things, in short, to really know them – Max Horkheimer

The categories of social theory were developed during the period in which the need for refusal and subversion was embodied in the action of effective social forces. These categories were negative and oppositional concepts, defining the actual contradictions in nineteenth century European society. The category 'society' itself expressed the acute conflict between the social and political sphere—society as antagonistic to the state. Similarly, 'individual,' 'class,' 'private,' 'family,' denoted spheres and forces not yet integrated with the established conditions—spheres of tension and contradiction. [Today, however] these categories are losing their critical connotation, and tend to become, descriptive, deceptive or operational terms – Herbert Marcuse

¹ I (as instructor) reserve the right to change this syllabus at anytime (and I probably will). Any changes will be announced in class and via Latte.

A critical theory does not derive [its] principles and ideals from philosophical premises about morality, human nature or the good life. Instead, the method of critical theory reflects on existing social relations and processes to identify what we experience as valuable in them, but as present only intermittently, partially or potentially – Iris Marion Young

Criticism indeed consists of analyzing and reflecting upon limits. But if the Kantian question was that of knowing what limits knowledge has to renounce transgressing, it seems to me that the critical question today has to be turned back into a positive one: in what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory, what place is occupied by whatever is singular, contingent, and the product of arbitrary constraints? The point, in brief, is to transform the critique conducted in the name of necessary limitation into a practical critique that takes the form of a possible transgression – Michel Foucault

Hitherto philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it – Karl Marx

1. Course description; or, what is critical theory?

The OED defines *critical* as “expressing adverse or disapproving comments or judgments.” To be critical is to criticize. It is to take a phenomenon in the world (inequality, patriarchy, that latest Tarantino film, your friend’s bad breath) and express a judgment about it (to other people) that is somehow “critical” of it, i.e. a judgment that finds more in a phenomenon than what it itself presents, which could mean condemning it as morally wrong (e.g. inequality is unjust), but could also mean claiming that there is more to it than meets the eye (e.g. present-day inequality heralds future revolution). Understood this broadly, *everyone* (not just sociologists, philosophers, literary / film critics) is critical everyday. We all express critical judgments about things in the world that affect our lives. So what makes critical *social theory* unique?

This course will examine what we will call the “critical tradition” in social theory.² It will provide a narrative overview of the main ideas and developments in this tradition, starting with its foundation in the thought of German Idealist philosophers like Immanuel Kant and Georg (WF) Hegel, continuing through its presence in the classical social theory of Marx and co., and extending to its present-day form through Habermas, Foucault and Bourdieu and into postcolonial, feminist and post-Marxist theory.

The burden, in some sense, is to show you how this tradition is not *merely* a way of being critical in the terms defined above. As we’ll see, “expressing disapproving judgments” about society is certainly a part of the critical tradition, but that doesn’t come close to capturing what it is about. There is something unique about being critical as a *social theorist* that is neither limited to everyday critique, nor to what has been labeled “public sociology” or “critical sociology”

² Definition of *tradition*: noun; set of principles and problematics that develop in and through history that define a distinctive way of *doing* social theory.

insofar as these are defined as the empirical examination of social problems and the recommendation of public policy to correct them.

By the end of this course, the goal is that you will understand what makes critical theory distinctive (and hopefully important) as a unique way of analyzing society (i.e. doing sociology, or philosophy, or literary criticism) as well as a way of *changing* it.

1.1 A (very) brief history of critical theory

Our story begins with Hegel's statement (in 1803) that "the principle of the modern world is freedom of subjectivity... [that] the greatness of our time rests in the fact that freedom ... is recognized." As we'll see, critical theory has remained more or less faithful to this formulation in the 200-plus years since Hegel first stated it. Critical theory is about *emancipation*. Its larger goal is to achieve freedom from bondage (of every kind). In this, it is emblematic of that European epoch known as *modernity*, though (as we'll see) more recently the critical tradition has tried to move beyond it. But what does freedom mean in this sense? More specifically: freedom *from* what and *for* whom? While these questions are fundamental to the critical tradition and have preoccupied many theorists, they have never been definitively answered.

The first home for critical theory is Marx and his "ruthless critique of everything existing" that eventually became an epoch-making critique of political economy (aka capitalism). In the 1920s and 1930s, the rise of fascism and the codification of Marxism-Leninism (essentially the dullest aspects of Marx combined with power politics forged in the Russian crucible of 1917) as orthodoxy by the Soviet Union inspired a counter-trend called "Western" Marxism that focused largely on the puzzle of why a worker revolution *hadn't* occurred in Western Europe (and the US) like Marx had predicted. As practiced by theorists associated with the Frankfurt School, it became the focal point of critical theory before and after World War II.

In the wake of the '60s (New Left) revolts, the critique of Reason (by Michel Foucault, feminist theorists and others) challenged basic tenets underlying modernity and the critical project, particularly the nature of the "subjectivity" associated with freedom. A second-generation of Frankfurt School theorists (notably Jurgen Habermas) held firm to those tenets, adapting them in new (democratic) directions. Meanwhile, in Paris, Foucault adapted the critique of Reason to a theory of power, ultimately favoring a radical ethics. His colleague/schoolmate Pierre Bourdieu developed his own brand of critical theory referred to as "reflexivity," which he claimed could remove us from the unrecognized bondage of "symbolic power."

In many ways informed by these arguments, more recent critical theory has revolved around challenges to implicit assumptions resting at the basis of the social sciences and humanities, concerning in particular the racial, gender, and political-economic makeup of the perspective applied to generate understanding of others (e.g. to reconcile ourselves to "alterity"). Removed of these restrictions

(say, of a dualistic gender category like male/female), the promise is not only for a new and better framework with which to understand the world, but also for a more effective and vital politics.

These developments bring us to the present, which finds the critical tradition (post-postmodern) evolving still further: toward *realism* (simply put, not trying to explain how X is actually Y; but trying to get as close to X as possible, understanding that it *really* exists... trust me, there is actually something to that). This has a few separate forms: focused on human/nature relations, alternatives ("real utopias") to the "capitalocene" and climate change; on the premise that the everyday way of being critical (noted above) is not, in fact, unremarkable at all, but the stuff that revolutions are made of; on "social aesthetics" and action; and on what is referred to as "critical realism" (we'll do our best to explain what both of those mean).

1.2 In a nutshell...

Critical theory is an *interdisciplinary* practice that aims to use insights derived from social science and the humanities to achieve emancipation (presumably of humans, but also of animals/nature too?).³ It involves the application of ideas with explanatory intent (i.e. *theory*, the best definition of it I can think of) to observable phenomenon in the social world with the explicit purpose to enhance the presence of freedom (possibly justice too). It also involves the critical analysis of those explanatory ideas to test if they themselves are not limiting (and therefore qualify as "bondage") of the critical project.

Critical theory is not limited to one academic discipline (non-sociologists are welcome!), and its subject matter draws selectively from parts of sociology, philosophy, history, psychology, literature and many others. As we press forward this semester, keep in mind that many of the people we will be reading would *not* define themselves as sociologists, but nor would they define themselves solely as philosophers, historians, literary scholars or any other discipline (e.g. bureaucratic distinctions) we are familiar with.

³ If the politics of critical theory (as we'll discuss) can be ambiguous at times, Marcuse's (eloquent) point of view is clear... "Underneath the conservative popular base is the substratum of the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colors, the unemployed and the unemployable. They exist outside the democratic process; their life is the most immediate and the most real need for ending intolerable conditions and institutions. Thus their opposition is revolutionary even if their consciousness is not. Their opposition hits the system from without and is therefore not deflected by the system; it is an elementary force which violates the rules of the game and, in doing so, reveals it as a rigged game. When they get together and go out into the streets, without arms, without protection, in order to ask for the most primitive civil rights, they know that they face dogs, stones, and bombs, jail, concentration camps, even death. Their force is behind every political demonstration for the victims of law and order. The fact that they start refusing to play the game may be the fact which marks the beginning of the end of a period."

1.3 Course goals

In addition to meeting the you-must-take-a-theory-course (and hopefully not just this one!) requirement in sociology, the course goals are as follows

- Critical theory is a *lived intellectual tradition*. By learning the fundamental arguments that structure the debates that happen here, students can become contributors to that debate, in the process publishing papers and getting great jobs.
- Critical theory provides empirical puzzles and theoretical resources that inform *contemporary empirical research*. Rather than being purely (and merely) a “theoretical” line of thinking, the critical tradition can and should be in close dialogue with contemporary sociological research. In introducing students to some of this research, this course will help *students further develop their own empirical research*.
- Theory (critical but especially *classical*) is *important as an integrative cultural element of the discipline*. Put bluntly: you cannot be a functioning member of the sociology tribe without being (somewhat) well-versed with what the classical writers (Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Simmel & co.) have to say. This constitutes one of the few pieces of common knowledge that holds sociology (a very fragmented and disparate field) together. Hence, *this course will provide you with a kind of invaluable field-specific “cultural capital.”*
- While it can sometimes seem arcane and convoluted, and while its connections to “effective social forces” (e.g. social movements) are more limited now than they have been in the past, critical theory is dedicated “not merely to interpreting the world, but changing it.” Thus, in some sense, *this course will help students think about ways to use their academic training (regardless of the discipline) to help realize social justice*.
- The stuff that we do in this class (read books, write papers and reviews, talk to other humans about intellectual things and not celeb gossip) is stuff you will be doing as an employed academic at some future point in your life. In this sense, think of all the stuff that might seem like meaningless busy work to you that we do in this class (discussion questions every week? WTF?) as exercises in training your *habitus* to be an *academic* one (for better or worse). While I can’t promise you eternal happiness thereby, I can say that it is probably prudent to “embody” academia should you want to make a living from its (sort of meager) fruits.

2. Course website

We will be using Lore instead of Canvas or Blackboard for the course website. The format is similar to Facebook, and it’s easy to post links and comments that

starts or keeps a conversation going. Readings will be posted there, and I'll also post optional readings, news articles, and other things that seem relevant to the class.

Here's the URL: <http://lore.com/Classical-Social-Theory-1>

This is also where you'll submit your discussion questions, PROM reviews and paper assignment. Which brings us to...

3. Requirements

This class is a seminar (not a lecture).⁴ What this means is that, while I will inform our discussion as best I can and lead it toward important points, what happens each time we meet together in class is largely up to you. I will refrain from lecturing as much as possible. This is in order to make the course as beneficial to you as possible.

With that in mind, these are the requirements on which you will be graded:

1. Attendance and active participation in class discussions

This means (a) coming prepared (doing "all" the reading) to every class; (b) discussing the readings in class as part of a collective discussion. This active participation expectation holds even when (i) you don't think you understand the readings; (ii) you hate them; (iii) you are hung over; (iv) you are filled with rage at the injustice of the formation of the theoretical canon. Keep in mind that talking (sort of coherently) in front of people about intellectual stuff is (surprise!) a requirement of academics. If you have a seriously hard time doing this I recommend either (1) talking in front of a mirror or (2) watching YouTube clips of Malcolm X for inspiration.

As part of your participation grade, and in lieu of subjecting you to discussion leading, you are *required* to submit at least *two* discussion questions to me *every week*. These questions have to be related to the readings for that week, and they should be intelligently stated enough

⁴ Nice definition of "seminar" provided by Richard Gale, head honcho, Carnegie Academy of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: "Many define seminars by size (between five and twenty) or configuration (a circle around a central table), by focus (the centrality of a shared text) or professorial function (facilitator or conductor). But beneath these aspects is a pedagogy wherein everyone has a voice and each person's ideas are valued, a venue for exploring varied perspectives, an opportunity to experiment, a way to flesh-out skeletal ideas through the challenge of friendly critics. The seminar is a community working on the principle that if many hands make light work then many minds make deep meaning. Participation is vital, responsibility is shared, and ownership is produced students who take learning into their own hands and make something meaningful out of it."

that they show some demonstrable grasp of at least some of the readings for that week. This is important (seriously). We will try to answer these questions during the seminar.

2. Presentation on outside material (PROM)

This requirement will involve you reading a book that is not required and not already on the syllabus and which you have not already read (for real!), and giving a brief presentation about said book to the class, summarizing its main argument and (in particular) relating it to the required readings for that day. I will also ask you to submit a 5-10 page (dbl-spaced) review of the book to Lore, which will be due the Friday after you present.

While you can choose whichever book you like, I have PROM suggestions (below) for each class. Please discuss your presentation choice with me before you do it, so we can make sure it fits the material for that day.

3. Paper assignment

The gist: I want you to submit a 15-30 page (double-spaced... whew!) paper for the course. *However...* Keep in mind that the larger goal of this requirement is to help you write a paper that you intend to publish—I don't want you to look at what you submit as merely a "course paper." Publishing is an essential part of being an academic. Perhaps most indicative of this (in sociology and nearly every other field) is the fact that it is quickly becoming necessary to publish *as a graduate student* even to be considered for a tenure-track job in the discipline.

I want this class to be as *helpful for you as possible* in this (very important) regard. So, when picking a paper topic, keep in mind this long-term perspective. What you write about is up to you, and I don't have a hard requirement that it *fully* engage with the course material (e.g. that it is a "theory paper" that you write, submit, and then condemn to an early grave), but that it somehow *relate* to the course content in a way that you believe is fruitful and productive.

Having said that, the paper you submit is not meant to be a final or polished product. It will ultimately be a *draft* (even the final version you turn in, though keep in mind that it should be a *complete paper*) that, hopefully, you will continue to work on in the future.

To help you with this, you might approach your paper from the following standpoint: choose some fundamental puzzle in your field of sociology (or allied discipline) that at least some of our theorists have struggled with as well. Hopefully your puzzle is one that you think is important for you to solve in order to successfully carry out your *own* work. Puzzle over this (puzzle) using (quoting, analyzing the ideas of) the theorists who seem most relevant to it. The paper will write itself!

Due date: Thursday May 12 at noon

4. Grading policy

First rule of grad school: grades don't matter. As it was told to me: "the issue of grades should not take a single metaphorical inch of cognitive space in your head." I pass this advice along to you. However, your reputation among the faculty does matter—a lot. The easiest way to get a good reputation among the faculty is to do well in courses (like this one!). Keep this formula in mind when it comes to the grading policy and your participation in this course.

What does this mean for the course requirements? The way that grading will work is if you do well on all of the course requirements (contribute to class, send in your DQs, do your PROM, submit your final paper) you will get an A. If, on the contrary, you take a vow of silence in class and/or do not submit DQs, you will not get an A, regardless of how great your paper is. It should go without saying that talking a lot in class and submitting all of your reaction papers, but not turning in a final paper will not get you an A (and in this instance, you will fail the class). The point, basically, is make sure to complete all the required assignments.

For those of you who like the security of numbers, here is the grading rubric:

Assignment	Percent of Final Grade
PROM	20%
Paper Assignment	40%
Attendance and Participation	40%

The more general point to emphasize is that if you make an *effort* to be a productive member of this class, doing what is asked of you and making the most of your (and my) time over the course of the semester, you will get an A in the class (though that might not actually mean much in the larger scope of things).

Three caveats to mention about this: I know the material we deal with in this class may be intimidating for you, and that there is a lot of required reading. I also know that grad school is extremely busy, time-consuming and often overwhelming. Finally, I don't expect you to become an expert in social theory by the end of this course. What I do expect is that you to *try* to make this class as beneficial for your future career as an academic as I, and others in the field, know

that it can be.⁵ I think I've organized the course in such a way that satisfying the assignments will not only mean getting an A in the class, but it will also *not waste your time* because it will involve you doing things that you will otherwise *have* to do in order to become an academic (I presume this is what you want to be?). Your participation in this course should ultimately be viewed in terms of how it furthers *that* goal.

5. Reading

The readings are the core this course. Everything should start and stop with them, no matter how tangential. However misguided social theory courses are as far as relevance (for getting a job!) go, the format everywhere is pretty much the same and remains very simple: dive right into the primary texts (head first) and see what you find. So that's what we'll do.

Relatively speaking, there is a lot of reading required (around 200 pages per week) for this class. I realize how pressed for time and brain-space you are, but try to get through as much of it each week as you can. I'll send out discussion questions the week before each class to help you get your bearings, but keep in mind that the most interesting stuff usually comes when you read something you didn't expect or are completely clueless about, but have an intuition that *something* is there. So as not to forestall such moments of insight, my guidance will be minimal.

Second rule of grad school: you can never read too much. Reading is just about the only way (though not necessarily the best way) to acquire the kind of intellectual capital you'll need in order to be a functioning member of the discipline. Plus, if you name-drop a theorist, idea, article, etc, this makes you look *very* good in the eyes of authority figures. So basically what you get from reading as much as you can, especially at this early and impressionable stage of your grad school career, is pure gold that will pay dividends well into the future. Take advantage of it (because very soon you won't have any time to do it).

As for primary texts: these books are required. I don't care how you get them (buy, rent, steal, ILL), just get them.⁶ The rest of the readings (drawn from these books) will be distributed through Lore as either weblink or PDF.

- Karl Marx. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. THE RED COVER, not the blue.
- Herbert Marcuse *Eros and Civilization* (any edition) – maybe?

⁵ Please recall the course objectives given above.

⁶ If you are worried about buying these because of high price, keep in mind that these books are often used in (lots) of other courses, meaning there is a *market* for them (not true of most academic books), meaning that you can probably recoup your initial investment by reselling... meaning that no money wasted buying them! (Plus Foucault looks particularly impressive on any bookshelf/coffee table).

- Michel Foucault. *Madness and Civilization* (any edition)
- Michel Foucault. *Discipline and Punish* (any edition)
- or
- Michel Foucault. *History of Sexuality, Volume I* (any edition)
- Judith Butler. *Undoing Gender: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (any edition)
- Pierre Bourdieu. *Masculine Domination* (any edition)

6. Course schedule

Jan 13 – Welcome

Sub-question: What is critical theory?

- Latour, “Has Critique Run Out of Steam?”
- Heath, “The Structure of Hip Consumerism”
- Agger, “Critical Theory, Poststructuralism and Postmodernism: Their Sociological Relevance”

Jan 20 – No class

Brandeis Monday

Jan 27 – Yes, we have to read Hegel and Kant: Necessary Philosophical Prelude

Sub-question: What is a subject and what is an object? How do they relate? Should we even care?

- Kant, “What is Enlightenment?”

- Kant, "Introduction" to *Critique of Pure Reason*
- Kant, "The Impossibility of a Skeptical Satisfaction of Pure Reason in its Internal Conflicts"
- Buck-Morss, "Hegel and Haiti"
- Hegel, "A Kantian Philosophy"
- Hegel, "Self-Certainty and the Lordship and Bondage of Self-Consciousness"
- Nietzsche, selection from *Birth of Tragedy*
- Marcuse, "The Philosophical Setting"
- Adorno, "On Subject and Object"

Feb 3 – Classical Precedents, I: Marx and Ruthless Critique
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Sub-question: When we criticize the (social) world, must we be "ruthless"?

- Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right" (MER)
- Marx, "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing" (MER)
- Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach" (MER)
- Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844" (MER)
- Marx, "The German Ideology, Part I" (MER)
- Marx, selection from *The Grundrisse*
- Marx, selection from *Capital, Volume 1*
- Berman, "Marx, Modernism and Modernization"
- Fraser, "Behind Marx's Hidden Abode"

PROM ideas

Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*

Slavoj Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*

Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production*

Fredric London, *The Willing Slaves of Capital*

Feb 10 – Classical Precedents, II: Weber, Simmel, Durkheim, Du Bois
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Sub-question: Are there limits to critique? Why is Weber such a wet blanket?

- Weber, "Science as a Vocation"
- Weber, "Religious Rejections of the World and their Directions"
- Weber, "Prefatory Remarks on Collected Essays in the Sociology of Religion"
- Weber, selection from *Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism*
- Simmel, "Crisis of Culture"
- Du Bois, selections from *Souls of Black Folk*
- Durkheim, "Rules for the Distinction between the Normal and the Pathological"
- Durkheim, "Conclusion from *Division of Labor in Society*"

PROM ideas

Lawrence Scaff, *Max Weber in America*

Christian Smith, *The Sacred Project of American Sociology*

Aldon Morris, *The Scholar Denied: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Birth of Modern Sociology*

Feb 17: No class

Midterm Recess (Wow, already?)

Feb 24 – The Frankfurt School: Defining the Project

Sub-question: How are critical theories different from “regular” theories?

- Horkheimer, “Traditional and Critical Theory”
- Marcuse, “Note on the Dialectic”
- Marcuse, “Liberation from the Affluent Society”
- Adorno, “How to Look at Television”
- Lukacs, “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat”
- Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (?)

PROM ideas

Thomas Wheatland, *The Frankfurt School in Exile*

Eva Illouz, *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capital*

Nina Eliasoph, *Avoiding Politics: How Americans Produce Apathy in Everyday Life*

Mar 2 – Habermas, I: Resisting the Grand Hotel Abyss

Sub-question: Can we salvage Reason even when it dominates us (and nature)?

- Horkheimer and Adorno, selections from *Dialectic of Enlightenment*
- Marcuse, selections from *One-Dimensional Man*
- Horkheimer, “Means and Ends”
- Habermas, “Modernity: An Unfinished Project”
- Habermas, “Knowledge and Human Interests: A General Perspective”

PROM ideas

Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*

Harmut Rosa, *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity*

James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed*

Mar 9 – Habermas, II: Communication as the (Democratic) Fixation of Belief

Sub-question: What is “democratic will-formation”? I don’t know. Let’s find out!

- Habermas, “Political Communication in Media Society”
- Habermas, selections from *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*
- Habermas, “Three Normative Models of Democracy”
- Habermas, “A Genealogical Analysis of the Cognitive Content of Morality”
- Peirce, “The Fixation of Belief”

PROM ideas

Ronald Jacobs and Eleanor Townsley, *The Space of Opinion: Media Intellectuals and the Public Sphere*

Sandra Gustafson, *Imaging Deliberative Democracy in the Early American Republic*

Andrew Perrin, *Citizen Speak: The Democratic Imagination in American Life*

Mar 16 –Reason Catches a French Flu: Enter Foucault

Sub-question: Reason = Power. True? False?

- Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*
- Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?”
- Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History”

PROM ideas

Francois Cusset, *French Theory: How Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze & Co. Transformed the Intellectual Life of the United States*

David Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography*

Ian Hacking, *Mad Travelers: Reflects on the Reality of Transient Mental Illnesses*

Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*

Mar 23 – The Late Foucault: Power and Ethics

Sub-question: How do practices (e.g. embodied ways of acting) dominate *and* create us?

- Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* or *History of Sexuality, Volume I*
- Foucault, “The Subject and Power”
- Foucault, “Governmentality”
- Foucault, selection from *History of Sexuality, Volume II*
- Foucault, “Neoliberalism”
- Brown, “Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism’s Stealth Revolution”

PROM ideas

Ann Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*

Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain*

Philip Gorski, *The Disciplinary Revolution: Calvinism, Confessionalism and the Growth of State Power in Early Modern Europe*

Leela Ghandi, *The Common Cause: Postcolonial Ethics and the Practice of Democracy*

Mar 30 – *Après le postmodern deluge*: New Foundations for Critical Theory

Sub-question: Who's to say who's "the subject"?

- Butler, *Gender Trouble*
- Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution"
- Laclau and Mouffe, selection from *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*
- Laclau, "Discourse"
- Fraser, "Social Justice in an Age of Identity Politics"
- Fraser, "Rethinking Recognition"

PROM ideas

Claire Decoteau, *Ancestors and Antiretrovirals: The Biopolitics of HIV/Aids in Post-Apartheid South Africa*

Nancy Fraser, *The Fortunes of Feminism: From State-Managed Capitalism to Neoliberal Crisis*

Jeffrey Alexander, *Performance and Power*

April 6 – Feminist, Queer and Critical Race Critiques
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Sub-question: Is sociological perspective sexed, gendered, racialized?

- Smith, "The Everyday World as Problematic"
- Collins, "The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought"
- Harding, "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology"
- Mills, "Ideal Theory as Ideology"
- Emirbayer and Desmond, "Race and Reflexivity"
- Green, "Queer Theory and Sociology"

PROM ideas

Amin Ghazani, *There Goes the Gayborhood*

Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*

Sandra Harding, *Is Science Multicultural?*

Adam Isaiah Green, *Sexual Fields: Toward a Sociology of Collective Sexual Life*

April 13 – The Postcolonial Imagination

Sub-question: Are we all just stooges of the Empire (and not the Star Wars kind)?

- Fanon, selections from *The Wretched of the Earth*
- Fanon, selections from *Black Skin, White Masks*
- Go, “For a Postcolonial Sociology”
- Chakrabarty, selection from *Provincializing Europe*
- Gandhi, selection from *Affective Communities*
- Said, “Introduction” from *Orientalism*
- Bhabra, “Talking Among Themselves?”
- Chibber, “Capitalism, Class and Universalism”

PROM ideas

Vivek Chibber, *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital*

Raewyn Connell, *Southern Theory: Social Science and the Global Dynamics of Knowledge*

Julian Go, *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning*

Gurminder Bhabra, *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination*

April 20 – Bourdieu’s Critical Sociology

Sub-question: Can you play three-card monte without being cheated?

- Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*
- Bourdieu, selection from *Outline of a Theory of Practice*
- Bourdieu, selection from *Pascalian Mediations*
- Bourdieu, "The Sociologist in Question"
- Wacquant, "Critical Thought as Solvent of Doxa"
- The Editors of N+1, "Too Much Sociology"
- Strand, "The Genesis and Structure of Moral Universalism"

PROM ideas

Thomas Medvetz, *Think Tanks in America*

Loic Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity*

Monika Krause, *The Good Project: Humanitarian Relief NGOs and the Fragmentation of Reason*

April 27 -- No Class

Passover

May 4 – The Return of the Real: Contemporary Debates

Sub-question: I'm not sure we even have class today

- Latour, "Has Critique Run out of Steam?"
- Boltanski, "The Empirical Sociology of Critique"
- Boltanski and Thevenot, "The Sociology of Critical Capacity"
- Martin, "Authority and Experience"
- Martin, "Personal Best"

- Martin and Desmond, "Political Position and Social Knowledge"
- Wright, "Transforming Capitalism through Real Utopias"
- Moore, "The End of Cheap Nature"
- Gorski, "What is Critical Realism? And Why Should You Care?"
- Sayer, "Critical Realism and the Limits of Critical Social Science"