

**Ben Gurion University of the Negev**

**Department of Sociology and Anthropology**

**Contemporary Social Theories**

**Dr. Sara Helman**

**2008-9; 2009-10**

**Course Description:**

The course will engage into a critical analysis of contemporary social theories developed from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the beginnings of the new millennium. The organizing axis of the course will be that of modernity/post-modernity and we will discuss through the analysis of theoretical texts how different scholars conceptualize the social and its constitutive mechanisms.

**Course Objectives:** the course's purpose is to introduce graduate students to contemporary developments in advanced social theory through the critical analysis of theoretical texts.

**Course Requirements:**

- Introduction to Sociological Theory A and B
- Compulsory attendance
- Two book reports
- Presentation of chosen texts
- Take home final exam

**Structure of the Final Course Grade:**

Component	Weight
1. Book Report	30%
2. Class Presentation	20%
3. Take Home Exam	50%
Total:	100%

A pass grade is required in each of the components.

**Description of Meetings and Required Reading**

**First Topic: Modernity, the Enlightenment and the Development of Social Theory: Introductory Lecture**

**Second Topic: Organized Modernity and its Critics**

**a. Immanuel Wallerstein and the modern social order**

Immanuel Wallerstein

1980 © 1979 "The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis," pp. 1-36, in: *The Capitalist World Economy*. London, Cambridge University Press.



Immanuel Wallerstein

1980 © 1979 "Three Paths of National Development in Sixteenth Century Europe," pp. 37-48, in: *The Capitalist World Economy*. London, Cambridge University Press.

**b. Frankfurt School and the Criticism of Modernity**

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer

1976 "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," pp. 120-167, in: *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*. New York, Continuum.

**c. Marxism and Organized Modernity: The reformulation of basic Marxist categories**

Eric Olin-Wright 1982 "Class Boundaries and Contradictory Class Locations," pp. 112-129, in: Anthony Giddens and David Held (Eds.) *Classes, Power and Conflict*. Berkeley, University of California Press.

Eric Olin-Wright

1994 "Marxism After Communism," pp 234-255, in: *Interrogating Inequality: Essays on Class Analysis, Socialism and Marxism*. London, Verso.

**d. The renewed relevance of Ideology: Louis Althusser**

Althusser, Louis. 1971. *Lenin, Philosophy and Other Essays*. London: New Left Books.

**Third Topic: The Postmodern Turn in Social Theory**

**e. Lyotard: The social as language games and the end of meta-narratives**

Jean-Francois Lyotard

1994 "The Post-Modern Condition," pp. 27-38, in: Steven Seidman (Ed.), *The Postmodern Turn- New Perspectives in Social Theory*. London, Cambridge University Press.

**f. Mark Baudrillard and the End of the Social**

Mark Poster

1988 "Symbolic Exchange and Death," pp.119-148, in: Mark Poster (Ed.), *Jean Baudrillard – Selected Writings*. Stanford, Stanford University Press.

"Simulacra and Simulations," pp. 166-184, in: Mark Poster (Ed.), *Jean Baudrillard – Selected Writings*. Stanford, Stanford University Press.

**g. Bob Jessop and the Schumpeterian Workfare State**

Bob Jessop

1999 "The changing governance of welfare." *Social Policy and Administration* 33, 4:348-359.

## **h. The reformulation of Social Theory in Light of the Postmodern Condition**

Zygmunt Bauman

2000 "A Sociological Theory of Post-Modernity," pp. 187-204, in: *The Intimations of Postmodernity*. New York, Routledge.

Zygmunt Bauman

2000 *Liquid Modernity*. Oxford, Polity Press

### **Fourth Topic: Michel Foucault, Discipline, Governmentality and the Constitution of the Subject**

Michel Foucault

1977 *Discipline and Punish-The Birth of the Prison*. Pp. 135-227, New York, Vintage Books.

Michel Foucault

1977 "Two Lectures," pp. 78-108, in: *Power/Knowledge-Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. Edited by Colin Gordon. New York, Pantheon Books.

Michel Foucault

1983 "The Subject and Power," pp. 209-226, in: Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (Eds.) *Michel Foucault- Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

### **Fifth Topic: The Postcolonial Critique of Modernity and Enlightenment**

Edward Said

1979 *Orientalism*. New York, Vintage Books

Hommi K. Bhabha

1994 "The other question: stereotype, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism," pp. 66-84, in: *The Location of Culture*. London, Routledge.

### **Sixth Topic: The Reformulation of Social theory in Light of the Postmodern Critique: Bourdieu and Giddens**

Pierre Bourdieu

1995 "Structures, Habitus and Practices," pp. 52-65, in: *The Logics of Practice*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Pierre Bourdieu and Loic J.D. Wacquant

1992 *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, pp. 94-140. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Anthony Giddens

1984 "Elements of a Theory of Structuration," pp. 1-40, in: *The Constitution of Society*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Anthony Giddens

1991 "The Institutional Dimensions of Modernity," pp. 55-78, in: *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

**Seventh Topic: The Feminist Theoretical Challenge to Social Theory**

Joan Wallach Scott

1988 "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," pp. 28-50, in: *Gender and the Politics of History*. New York, Columbia University Press.

Barbara L. Marshall

1994 "Gender and Modernity: Classical Issues, Contemporary Debates," pp. 6-29, in: *Engendering Modernity: Feminism, Social Theory and Social Change*. Boston, Northeastern University Press.

Sylvia Walby

1992 "Post-Post Modernism? Theorizing Social Complexity," pp. 31-52, in: Michelle Barrett and Anne Phillips (eds.), *Destabilizing Theory*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

**Eighth Topic: The Social under Globalization**

John Urry

2000 "Mobile Sociology." *British Journal of Sociology* 51, 1: 185-203

Bruno Latour

2007 *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.