

Seminar: Modern Social Theory

Fall 2022

Tuesday 10-13, Unicom 7.2210

VAK 08-351-1-MC1-1

Prof. Dr. Martin Nonhoff

Universität Bremen

Master International Relations: Global Governance and Social Theory

Module M C1: Modern Social Theory

Course Description

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, the continuing impact of the era of colonialism 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

Bhambra, Gurinder K.; Holmwood, John (2021): *Colonialism and Modern Social Theory*. Cambridge, Medford: Polity Press.

Elliot, Athony (2014): *Routledge Handbook of Social and Cultural Theory*. Milton Park, New York: Routledge.

Benzecry, Claudio E.; Krause, Monika; Reed, Isaac Ariail (ed.) (2017): *Social Theory Now*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

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, pp. 21-46.

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

Inglis, David; Thorpe, Christopher (ed.) (2021): *An Invitation to Social Theory*. 2nd edition. Cambridge: Polity Press.

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

Contact:

Prof. Dr. Martin Nonhoff

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 3-4pm (19 October-21 December; in early 2023 the time may change) or by special appointment;

please make an appointment for all meeting times with my secretary Peter Arnhold (arnhold@uni-bremen.de). Office hours should be attended in person.

InIIS, Mary-Somerville-Str. 7, Room 7.2250

E-mail: martin.nonhoff@uni-bremen.de

Phone (office): 0421/218-67476

Phone (home): 0421/794 794 94 (only in emergency cases, please)

Additional Information for Teaching under Corona Conditions

In line with the decisions made by the two universities, this seminar will take place in person. As the seminar room used for Modern Social Theory (7.2210) is not large enough to keep a distance of 1.5 meters, you are invited to wear FFP2 masks at all times. There is no need to wear a mask while you give a presentation.

Assignments and grading

In the three first semesters of the MAIR program, students take twelve classes altogether. Of these twelve classes, students must choose six in which they complete a “large” workload (for 9 credit points) and six with a “small” workload (for 6 credit points). It is recommended that you opt for two small and two large versions each semester. In the following, both workload versions of the class “Modern Social Theory” are described.

Please let me know your choice of workload for this class right some time before the Christmas break.

1. Small version of the seminar workload

In the course of the seminar, you will give a seminar presentation on one of the seminar readings and you will write position papers on two of the (other) texts. The presentation counts for 50 % of the seminar grade; each of the discussion papers counts for 25 %.

a) Seminar presentation

Every student will shortly introduce one (or in one case: two) of the texts (depending on text length). Presenters should prepare a written handout (please upload the handout to StudIP and make enough hard copies for those present in classroom!) that summarizes the key points of their seminar introduction and the main questions for the discussion. Handouts need an appropriate head and a bibliography of texts used. Page numbers for references to the text are helpful for class discussion.

Unexcused failure to show up for a text presentation will result in a 5.0 grade for the presentation (fail).

b) Position papers on readings

Every student will write position papers (750-1000 words) on two of the texts. A position paper needs to show your position in regard to a text we discuss in class. This means that you should summarize the main lines of argument and then develop a critical discussion of the text. The summary should comprise at least one third of your paper, the discussion also at least one third. You can use the last third as you like, either for having a longer summary or a longer discussion. Ideally, your position paper should start with a short introduction of two or three sentences (one paragraph) that manages to describe the main thrust of what the text wants to say. And you should use references to page numbers whenever you reproduce important argumentative steps (not only when you use literal quotes). You do not need to use additional literature; the focus is completely on the text itself. (It is, however, not forbidden to use additional literature.)

Position papers should be thought of as having three goals: First, to help you focus your own thoughts about a text. Second, to help you to remember in class what the text said

and what your own thoughts about it were. Third, it can serve as an excerpt that you can use for your entire academic career (that's why it's important to use page numbers, so that you find important passages quickly in class and later on).

Students choose freely the two 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 a single asterisk you may only choose *one* for a position paper.
- Position papers on texts marked with two asterisks count for *two* position papers if students choose to have them counted double. They may have double length, too.
- You are allowed to write a *third* position paper in order to improve your grades. A third position paper can cancel either half of the presentation grade or the grade of another position paper if the respective grade was worse.
- Papers written for the first session (Taylor, Tully) may be re-written after grading.

2. Large version of the seminar workload

In case you opt for the “large version”, you will write a final paper in addition to a reduced in-class contribution.

a) In-class assignment(s)

Here, you must make a choice: Either you give a seminar presentation on one of the seminar readings; or you write two position papers. Details are given above. The in-class assignments will count for 25 % of the final grade (i.e. if you write position papers 12.5 % each).

b) Final paper

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; in order to make this possible, abstracts must be uploaded to StudIP by 13 Jan 2023 (file format: PDF; folder: “14 Discussion of Final Paper Abstracts”; file name: “MST Final Paper Abstract [NAME]”). An abstract will consist of roughly one page of text outline, a preliminary table of contents and a preliminary bibliography. The abstract itself will *not* be graded. Please come to my office hours for a preliminary discussion of your ideas, at best at some time in late November or early December. Final papers can be co-authored by two students (6000-8000 words). The final paper will count for 75 % of the final grade.

Deadlines and other Rules

1. Position papers are due until Monday, 10am before each seminar (via e-mail). Should the sixth session be postponed to Monday, 14 November, the corresponding position paper would still be due until Monday, 7 November, 10am. Late submissions will not be counted.
2. The abstracts for the final papers must be uploaded to StudIP by 13 January 2023.
3. The final paper is due on 1 March 2023. Papers must be handed in as electronic (via e-mail) and as hard copy. Late submission of the electronic copy of the paper will result in a reduction of the grade as specified by the general rules of the MA program.
4. In order to pass the course, a student must pass all the assignments of the chosen seminar version (small/large workload), i.e. failed partial grades cannot be compensated for by other grades.

Seminar Overview

#	Date	Topic
1	4 Oct. 2022	Introduction and Seminar Organization
2	11 Oct. 2022	What Is and Why Do We Do Social Theory? Tully, Taylor
3	18 Oct. 2022	Capitalism, Exploitation and the Female Body: Marx, Federici
4	25 Oct. 2022	Modernity, Capitalism and Coloniality: Weber, Quijano
5	1 Nov. 2022	City Life and Acceleration: Simmel, Rosa
6	8/14* Nov. 2022	Capitalist Culture/Rationality Lost: Horkheimer and Adorno
7	15 Nov. 2022	Rationality Regained? Habermas, Haraway
8	22 Nov. 2022	Action and Structure: Bourdieu, Giddens
9	29 Nov. 2022	Women's Social and Spatial Situation: Beauvoir, Young
10	6 Dec. 2022	Gender Norms and Norms of Sexuality: Butler, Rubin
11	13 Dec. 2022	Race and Intersectionality: Mills, Crenshaw
12	20 Dec. 2022	Power and Subject(ivation): Foucault
	27 Dec. 2022	<i>Christmas Break</i>
	3 Jan. 2023	<i>Christmas Break</i>
13	10 Jan. 2023	Discourse and Hegemony: Laclau and Mouffe
14	17 Jan. 2023	Final discussion and presentation of first ideas for term papers

* Due to an important departmental meeting that will possibly take place on 8 November 2022, the sixth seminar session may well be postponed to Monday, 14 November 2022. You will be informed about the final scheduling of this session by mid-October.

Seminar: Modern Social Theory
Fall 2022

Prof. Dr. Martin Nonhoff
Universität Bremen

Detailed Reading List:

4.10.2022 Introduction and Seminar Organization

10-13 hrs.

(1)

11.10.2022 What Is and Why Do We Do Social Theory?

10-13 hrs.

(2)

Readings:

Taylor, Charles (1985): *Social Theory as Practice*, in: id.: *Philosophy and the Human Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 91-115.

Tully, James (2002): *Political Philosophy as a Critical Activity*, in: *Political Theory* 30/4, pp. 533-555.

Presentation(s):

18.10.2022 Capitalism, Exploitation, and the Female Body

10-13 hrs.

(3)

Readings:

Marx, Karl; Engels, Friedrich (2022[1848]): *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Marxists Internet Archive, 14-27, 34, 56-57. Download at: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/index.htm> (29.9.2019).

(ATTENTION: The file of this reading contains many additional materials/ text passages. Mandatory reading encompasses only the pages given above.)

**Federici, Silvia (2004): *Caliban and the Witch. Women, The Body and Primitive Accumulation*. New York: Autonomedia, 61-115.

Presentation(s):

25.10.2022 Modernity, Capitalism and Coloniality

10-13 hrs.

(4)

Readings:

*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.

**Quijano, Anibal (2000): *Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America*, in: *Neplanta. News from the South* 1/3: 533-580.

Presentation(s):

1.11.2022 City Life and Acceleration

10-13 hrs.

(5)

Readings:

*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*, in: *Constellations*, 10/1, 3-33.

Presentation(s):

8./14.11.2022* Capitalist Culture/Rationality Lost

10-13 hrs.

(6)

Reading:

**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.

* see p. 4 of
 syllabus

Presentation(s):

15.11.2022 Rationality Regained?

10-13 hrs.

(7)

Readings:

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.)

Haraway, Donna (1988): *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*, in: *Feminist Studies* 14/3: 575-599

Presentation(s):

22.11.2022 Action and Structure

10-13 hrs.

(8)

Readings:

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

**Giddens, Anthony (1984): *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1-40.

Presentation(s):

29.11.2022 Women's Social and Spatial Situation

10-13 hrs.

(9)

Readings:

*Beauvoir, Simone de (2010[1949]): *The Second Sex*. London: Vintage, 3-18.Young, Iris Marion (1980): *Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment Motility and Spatiality*, in: *Human Studies* 3/1: 137-156.

Presentation(s):

6.12.2022 Gender Norms and Norms of Sexuality

10-13 hrs.

(10)

Readings:

Butler, Judith (2004): *Gender Regulations*, in: Judith Butler: *Undoing Gender*. New York, Milton Park: Routledge, 40-56.**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.

Presentation(s):

13.12.2022 Race and Intersectionality

10-13 hrs.

(11)

Readings:

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

Presentation(s):

20.12.2022 Power and Subject(ivation)

10-13 hrs.

(12)

Readings:

Foucault, Michel (2004[1976]): *Lecture of 14 January 1976*, in: Michel Foucault: *Society Must Be Defended*. London: Penguin, 23-42.Foucault, Michel (1978 [1976]): *The History of Sexuality. Volume I: An Introduction*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon Books, 135-159 (Part V).

Presentation(s):

27.12.2022 & *Christmas Break*

3.1.2023

11.1.2023 Discourse and Hegemony

10-13 hrs.

(13)

Reading:

**Laclau, Ernesto; Mouffe, Chantal (2001): *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*,
2nd edition. London, New York: Verso, pp. 93-145.

Presentation(s):

18.1.2023 **Final Discussion/Presentation of Term Paper Abstracts**

10-13 hrs.

(14)

Don't forget to upload your final paper abstracts by 13 Janaur 2023 (file format: PDF; folder: "14 Discussion of Final Paper Abstracts"; file name: "MST Final Paper Abstract [NAME]").

Please read all the abstracts for this session and give constructive comment. The goal is to make these papers as good as possible! And giving critical comment is the best way to do so.