

Post-war French Social Theory

Course Number: SOC770, Fall 2006

Room Number: 33, Wednesdays 16:00-17:40 (4-5:40 PM)

Masaryk University, MA Level

Instructor: Laura Bunt, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: 6-7 PM Wednesdays (or by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Since the French enlightenment, and up to the Dreyfus affair, French intellectuals enjoyed considerable influence over the public sphere, perhaps even believing that they were directing Western civilization itself—manifest in the “revolutionary” concepts of democracy, liberty, and equality. Subsequent World Wars, and lingering twentieth-century French colonial endeavors, however, cast doubt over those doctrines and was tantamount to the suspicion of the role of intellectuals. This course will investigate how French intellectuals reacted to this situation, and what role the institutions they were educated and taught in shaped this reaction. We will also pay close attention to how later twentieth-century intellectuals responded to and critiqued one another, in the development of their individual philosophical trajectories.

In particular, we will examine three of the major schools of social thought generated in France during this period, namely, Existentialism, Structuralism, and Post-structuralism. The goal of this course is to provide students with solid historical background through secondary sources and lectures, and then to read original, primary texts. Class reading will draw from the works of: Sartre, Levi-Strauss, Ricoeur, Althusser, Foucault, Derrida, Kristeva.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students must produce TWO 4-5 page essays based upon the reading and class discussions. Instructor will assign essay questions in advance of due dates. Student are also required to write TWO 1 page response papers.

COURSE RULES

Students are expected to come to class having already read the readings cited on the syllabus for that day. **ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY, ROLE WILL BE TAKEN IN EVERY CLASS.** Students are allowed 3 undocumented absences. Any student missing more than 4 classes without a documented (i.e. medical or family) emergency will be dropped from the class without exception. (Students observing religious holidays are excused from class, but please inform instructor in advance).

COURSE GRADING POLICY

75% Essay Assignments

15% Response Papers

10% Class Attendance

COURSE READINGS

All reading is available online through the university system and is on reserve at the library

COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK 1: SEPT 20TH ORIENTATION WEEK (NO CLASSES)

WEEK 2: SEPT 27TH INTRODUCTION, FIRST DAY OF CLASS

WEEK 3: OCT 4TH Introduction & “Existential Theory” (pgs. 101-112) in *French Social Theory*, by M. Gane.

WEEK 4: OCT 11TH Sartre (pgs. 1-62) in *Existentialism and Human Emotions*.

WEEK 5: OCT 18TH “Structural Theory” (pgs. 137-151) in *French Social Theory*, by M. Gane.

FIRST RESPONSE PAPER DUE IN CLASS

WEEK 6: OCT 25TH **ESSAY WRITING IN ENGLISH LECTURE** (ATTENDANCE MANDATORY, ESSAY QUESTION WILL BE HANDED OUT)

WEEK 7: NOV 1ST **READING WEEK (NO CLASS)**

WEEK 8: NOV 8TH Levi-Strauss (pgs. 1- 33) “The Science of the Concrete” in *The Savage Mind*

FIRST ESSAY DUE IN CLASS, NOVEMBER 8TH

WEEK 9: NOV 15TH Ricoeur (pgs. 20-36) “The Conflict of Interpretations” & “Hermeneutic Method and Reflective Philosophy” in *Freud and Philosophy: Essays on Interpretation*.

WEEK 10: NOV 22ND Althusser (pgs. 25-50) “Ideological State Apparatuses” in *For Marx*.

WEEK 11: NOV 29TH Foucault (pgs.113-121) “Nietzsche, Genealogy and History” in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays* & (pgs. 3-169) in *Discipline & Punish*.

SECOND RESPONSE PAPER DUE IN CLASS

WEEK 12: DEC 6TH Foucault (pgs. 170-295) in *Discipline & Punish*.

WEEK 13: DEC 13TH Derrida (pgs. 31-63) “Cogito and the History of Madness” & (pgs. 196-231) “Freud and the Scene of Writing” in *Writing and Difference*.

WEEK 14: DEC 20TH Kristeva (pgs. 74-88) “Semiotics: a Critical Science and/or Critique of Science” in *The Kristeva Reader*.

*****REVIEW AND PREPARATION FOR FINAL EXAM** (ATTENDANCE MANDATORY, ESSAY QUESTION WILL BE HANDED OUT)***

FINAL ESSAY DUE AT END OF EXAMINATION PERIOD