

ENG 401 (25794) & MAS 598 (27773) - Topics in Critical Theory: Eros & Enlightenment

Spring 2013 - TuTh 1:30 - 2:45 PM West in SANDS 101

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The philosophical millennium, which hopes for a state of perpetual peace based on a league of peoples... which tarries for the completed improvement of the entire human race, is universally ridiculed as a wild fantasy. Immanuel Kant

We have no law but the single principle of mutual aid between individuals. . . . We are sharers, not owners. Le Guin

Is critical theory with emancipatory intent possible? Even if it were possible, what should we do? And for what may we hope? We will trace this question, first, by asking Kant's 18th-century question, "What Is Enlightenment?" today, i.e., with Foucault's critique of Kantian modernity and Habermas's defense of it. Secondly, we will examine how erotic and aesthetic rationality in Foucault, Butler, and Marcuse (in that order) respond to Freud's unmasking of discontents simmering at the root of our western, post/modern, yet increasingly global civilization. Are there critical resources for resisting one-dimensional thinking, dystopian imagination, social domination? This approach provides an ideal medium for interdisciplinary conversations of philosophy with other disciplines such as communication and cultural studies, law, political science, and sociology. True to the Socratic and Enlightenment inspirations, critical theory as a philosophy of liberation raises questions pertaining to individuals in communities struggling for a more just and better life.

Readings posted on the blackboard (BB) & books to be purchased (each category is listed alphabetically by abbreviation)

CT: Hoy and McCarthy, "On the Idea of a Critical Theory and Its Relation to Philosophy" in Critical Theory

EME: Habermas, "Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment."

FE: Schmidt and Wartenberg, "Foucault's Enlightenment: Critique, Revolution, and the Fashioning of the Self."

FHC: Kelly, "Foucault, Habermas, and the Self-Referentiality of Critique"

K: Kellner, "A Marcuse Renaissance?"

N: Benjamin, "N, One the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress."

PTRS: Habermas, "Psychic Termidor and the Rebirth of Rebellious Subjectivity."

TPH: Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History."

WE-D: Dreyfus commentary on "What Is Enlightenment?"

WE-F: Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?"

WE-H: Habermas, "Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present: On Foucault's Lecture on Kant's *What Is Enlightenment?*"

WB: Habermas, "Walter Benjamin: Consciousness-Raising or Rescuing Critique."

WE-K: Kant "What Is Enlightenment?"

PCT: Marcuse: "Philosophy and Critical Theory."

0-415-90043-3	JUDITH BUTLER	GT: <i>Gender Trouble</i>	new	1990	Routledge
0-394-74026-2	MICHEL FOUCAULT	HS: <i>The History Of Sexuality , Vol. 1</i>	new	1978, 1980	RANDOM HOUSE
0-8070-1555-5	HERBERT MARCUSE	EC: <i>Eros And Civilization</i>	new	1966, Marcuse's New Preface	BEACON PRESS
978-1578988594	SIGMUND FREUD	CD: <i>Civilization and Its Discontents</i>	new	2010	Martino Fine Books (February 5, 2010)
978-0060512750	URSULA K. LE GUIN	D: <i>The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia</i>	new	2003	William Morrow Reprint edition Aug 14, 2003