

**Psychology 8007**  
**Foundations of Critical Psychology**  
**SYLLABUS**

**General Information**

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**Course Description**

This course provides historical and current day perspectives on the seminal philosophies and theories of critical psychology. Within this course we will develop an understanding of consciousness as situated at the intersection of systems of power, be it at the individual, group or societal level.

**Course Objectives**

The objectives of the course are: 1) to deepen an awareness and understanding of the ways in which critical psychology can explicate an understanding of consciousness as situated at the intersection of systems of power; 2) to become more able to utilize those understandings to comprehend their impact on the conceptual foundations of the discipline of psychology; 3) to become familiar with the implications of a power analytic for the practice and theory of psychology.

**Required Texts**

There will be required readings listed below and some that will provided on the CourseDen website for this course.

**Evaluation**

The following three metrics will be used to determine the student's grade for the course. Each will contribute shares below to that computation. No additional sources of extra credit are available.

Presentation 20%  
Midterm essay 30%  
Final Essay 50%

For more details of these items, see the descriptions on the *Assignments* page.

## Assignments:

### ESSAYS

#### Purpose

This facet of the course is included in order to provide students an opportunity to enhance their learning experience by individualizing the subject matter to be learned. This will be achieved by doing the following:

1. to focus on significant ideas they choose because they are of interest to them
2. to deepen their understanding of this idea by going beyond the course's coverage of it
3. to contribute their demonstration of that grasp to their overall course assessment (grade)

#### Design

The midterm essay will be an 10-12 page paper (typed, double-spaced) and the final essay will be a 15-20 page paper. In each case this essay will be a response to the following question:

Choose any one major idea from the preceding half of the course that we have just completed that you find of particular interest to you, and do the following:

- 1) specify clearly what the idea is, and why you see it as important;
- 2) summarize briefly what you learned about that idea from the required reading that covered it;
- 3) find additional sources beyond the required readings, that addresses this idea, and summarize what these add to your understanding of it.

#### Functionality

These essays are *due in class on the day specified below*. They will in total contribute 80% toward the student's grade for the course. They must be turned in on time to receive full credit. Late essays will be accepted, but they will qualify only for partial credit.

### PRESENTATION

#### Purpose

This facet of the course is included in order to provide students an opportunity to enhance their learning experience by exploring a particular reading in depth and presenting their findings to their peers. This will be achieved by doing the following:

1. to engage in a close reading of one of the texts or segment of a text used in the course
2. to critically analyze the text by going beyond the course's coverage of it
3. to contribute their demonstration of that grasp to their overall course assessment (grade)

#### Design

Based on the required readings and other materials they have considered, students will provide a 30 minute presentation on one of the text for that week's class. Key issues from the course should be included as central organizing principles for the presentation. This presentation can be used as an opportunity to explore in some depth ideas that are being developed for the course essay.

Choose a text from the readings for that week you find of particular interest to you, and do the following:

- 1) Provide a close reading of selected quotes from the text you found important, confusing, or difficult to unpack;
- 2) Explore the implication of your analysis pertinent to the overall course discussions so far
- 3) Facilitate a 20 minute discussion of your findings

### Functionality

The presentation schedule will be set up during the first class. Students are encouraged to discuss their presentation with Dr. Skott-Myhre during office hours ahead of the class in which they are to present. The methodology of close reading will be explained and demonstrated in the first class.

## DISCUSSION GROUPS

While there is no grade associated with discussion in class, it is a centrally important element in any graduate seminar. Here are some guidelines for such discussion.

### Purpose

The purpose of the Discussion Groups will be to enhance the students' learning by providing an opportunity for collaborative participation in a dynamically interactive process. The focus of this process will be to discuss the readings of the course, in order to thereby clarify and deepen one's understanding of them and one's ability to articulate that understanding.

### Design

The group will focus its discussion on the key ideas of the readings in the course since the last group meeting. At these sessions, it is expected that every student will be an active participant. However, at each session, each student will have a defined responsibility to the group. The six specific tasks for which group members will be responsible are to articulate answers to the following questions: 1) what are a couple of key questions that arise about the readings? 2) what are the key terms and how are they to be understood? 3) what key passages illuminate the main ideas? 4) how can the key ideas be best summarized? 5) how do the key ideas relate to other readings and to life? 6) what images or representations of the key ideas may be helpful in illustrating them?

### Functionality

These groups can meet outside of class as often and whenever, wherever and for whatever purpose the group members would like, but they will meet during class twelve times for about 40-50 minute sessions to fulfill the particular tasks noted above.

## COURSE OUTLINE

Jan 6: Intro

### **Module 1: Marx and Post Marxism**

January 13: Marx: German Ideology

(<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01.htm>)

January 20: No class MLK day

January 27: Althusser: Ideology

(<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm>)

February 3: Baudrillard: Fetishism and Ideology

February 10: Hardt and Negri Commonwealth pp. 100-199 (<http://ebookbrowse.com/michael-hardt-antonio-negri-commonwealth-pdf-d77529901>)

February 17: Negri: Postscript on the Society of Control, Marx Fragment on Machines

**Module 2: Critical Psychology**

February 24: Ian Parker *Revolution in Psychology*

**Module 3: Critical Psychology, Postcolonialism and Race**

February 28: Franz Fanon: *Black Skin White Masks*

March 2: Glen Coulthard *Red Skin White Masks*

**Module 4: Critical Psychology and Psychoanalysis**

March 9: Parker: Lacanian Psychoanalysis and Revolutionary Marxism; Althusser: Freud and Lacan

**March 16 Spring Break**

**Module 4 Cont. Critical Psychology and Psychoanalysis**

March 23: Bracha Ettinger *Matrixial Borderspace*

**Module 5: The Critical Psychology of Deleuze and Guattari**

March 30: Deleuze and Guattari *Anti-Oedipus* pp. Xi-239 (**midterm paper due**)

April 1: Deleuze and Guattari *Anti-Oedipus* pp. 240-396

(<http://ebookbrowse.com/deleuze-guattari-the-anti-oedipus-pdf-d353311085>)

**Module 6: Feminism and Critical Psychology**

April 6: K. Skott-Myhre *Feminization of Labor*; Elizabeth Grosz  
*A Thousand Tiny Sexes*

**Module 7: Feminist Post Humanism**

April 13: Karen Barad *Meeting the Universe Halfway*

April 20: Rosi Braidotti *The Posthuman*

**Module 8: Summation**

April 27: Wrap Up (**Final Paper Due**)

## **Special Notes:**

**Academic Integrity:** Cheating, plagiarism, and all other forms of academic dishonesty will **NOT** be tolerated. All incidents of academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance to university regulations (please see page 4 of your student handbook). Students caught engaged in any form of academic dishonesty will minimally be given a failing grade on the assignment or exam in question.

**Accommodations:** Students with special needs as determined by the Student Development Office must submit a letter to the instructor within the first two weeks of class (or as soon as the needs have been determined) specifying the accommodations they require.

**This syllabus is an evolutionary document:** Therefore, the dates of lectures, exams, projects, etc. may be revised as the term progresses. Thus, the dates contained in this syllabus are **NOT** binding. All modifications to the syllabus will be announced in class and via CourseDen.