



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Central issues in Contemporary Continental thought - 54232

Last update 29-08-2024

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: Cultural Studies-Individual Graduate Prog.

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr.Ronit Peleg

Coordinator Email: ronit.peleg@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Tuesdays 12.00

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Ronit Peleg

Course/Module description:

This course offers an advanced toolkit for critical thought and cultural critique through the examination and discussion of key issues in contemporary continental philosophy. Particular emphasis will be placed on intellectual currents that have developed since the late 1960s to the present moment, focusing on thinkers such as Roland Barthes, Guy Debord, Michel Foucault, Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard, Giorgio Agamben, Jacques Rancière, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Étienne Balibar, Judith Butler, and Maurizio Lazzarato.

The objective of the course is to acquaint students with the diverse aspects of contemporary continental thought: its foundational concepts, the central questions it engages with, and the novel perspectives it offers for the description, interpretation, and critical examination of political, cultural, and social phenomena in the contemporary era. Throughout the lectures, we will explore and critically assess the intersections of cultural, political, and economic dimensions in the current global context. Additionally, we will engage with texts that have become seminal in continental philosophy, re-evaluating their relevance and significance in light of the pressing political challenges facing the Western world today.

In the course of our readings, we will discuss, among other topics, "The Society of the Spectacle" in the 21st Century, life within a world of "Simulacra and Simulations," the "Distribution of the Sensible" in contemporary democracies, the neoliberal production of "Bare Life," the "Homo Economicus" and the indebted subject within the contemporary techno-capitalist system, living under the specters of the past, the neo-racism of the present, "Lives That Matter" and those deemed "Unworthy." Inspired by the thought of Jacques Derrida, we will also re-examine the ethical obligation of hospitality (toward refugees and migrants), engage with questions of forgiveness and repentance, and probe the relationships between language, identity, and belonging. Following Kafka and Lyotard, we will also discuss the intersections between the aesthetic and the political, and reflect on the interrelations of body, language, power, and law.

Course/Module aims:

The course aims to provide an advanced philosophical and critical toolkit for examining and reflecting on significant social, cultural, and political phenomena of the contemporary era, while also offering a framework of new concepts for the analysis and evaluation of the current challenges facing the Western world, particularly since the dawn of the 21st century.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

Inspired by contemporary continental philosophy, students will be able to critically examine their own lives and the prominent cultural and political phenomena of the present time from new perspectives, equipped with novel philosophical tools for analysis and mapping.

Attendance requirements(%):
committed attendance

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: frontal lectures in order to allow debate and discussion in class

Course/Module Content:
A detailed list of topics and texts will be provided later.

Required Reading:
A detailed list of topics and texts will be provided later.

Additional Reading Material:

Grading Scheme:
Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 90 %
Attendance / Participation in Field Excursion 10 %

Additional information:
students are encouraged to participate and prepare presentations during the class, and if they do so, it will contribute to the final grade (25%). This is not a mandatory assignment but rather an optional one.