ARTS2362

Alienation and Social Critique

Term Two // 2021

Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

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School Contact Information

School of Humanities and Languages

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Course Details

Credit Points 6

Summary of the Course

This course asks how a society can legitimately criticise itself. It examines why it is that notions such as freedom, self-determination and historical progress have come to assume a central place in modern life. Are there plausible ways to judge some particular developments of social life as progressive or regressive? Are some forms of social life 'pathological'? Is the price of modern freedom alienation from ourselves and the natural world? The themes discussed in this course may include: alienation, ideology, modernity, totalitarianism, psychoanalysis and power. Thinkers who may be examined include: Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Feuerbach, Nietzsche, Marx, Lukács, Weber, Freud, Heidegger, Adorno, Horkheimer, Arendt, Foucault and other influential figures in critical social philosophy.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Evaluate the merits and limitations of key approaches to the philosophical problem of modernity and social philosophy
2. Assess distinct positions with regard to alienation, freedom and social critique in key works in Western philosophy
3. Critically appraise the relevance of key approaches to alienation, freedom and social critique in modern philosophy to contemporary society.
4. Develop and enhance skills associated with philosophical inquiry, such as: critical analysis, textual interpretation, argument and written expression.

Teaching Strategies

The course will normally be taught with a two-hour weekly lecture, and a one-hour discussion-based tutorial. Lectures will be interactive, and student participation is encouraged. Lectures will cover key themes and specific texts in modern philosophy, as well as background historical issues. Through a selection of readings, exercises, and small group discussions, the course will develop students' ability to read, analyse, criticise, discuss, and interpret philosophical texts. The research portfolio, which is designed to encourage students to engage thoroughly with the prescribed weekly readings *before* class and to prepare questions for the tutorial, is a core element of the teaching strategy of the course. We expect students to participate in this course by attending lectures, engaging with others in tutorials and online discussions (where applicable) and to complete the required reading in preparation for tutorials and lectures. Tutorials will also discuss research skills and writing skills.

Assessment

Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Due Date	Student Learning Outcomes Assessed
Short essay	30%	02/07/2021 11:59 PM	1, 4
Research Portfolio	20%	09/08/2021 11:59 PM	1, 2, 4
Essay	50%	11/08/2021 11:59 PM	1, 2, 3, 4

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Short essay

Details:

This is a short essay, completed within the first five weeks of the course that is primarily a close reading exercise. Students must explain and interpret a key paragraph from a canonical work in philosophy.

Feedback is written and/or marking sheet or rubric.

Length 1200 words

Additional details:

Essay themes will be discussed in tutorials and instructions will be available on Moodle.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 2: Research Portfolio

Details:

A research portfolio where students address issues and questions from their weekly readings for the course. The portfolio is a record of students' preparation for class each week.

Students will write as a minimum 6 x 300 word reading summaries and textual analysis as well as a 200 word reflection on the research portfolio itself.

The written form of the portfolio is less formal than an essay and may be a mix of prose and bullet points.

This portfolio requires students to reflect on their own learning in the course and how assessment tasks, including the research portfolio itself, may contribute to this.

Feedback is written and/or oral.

Length is approx. 2000 words

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 3: Essay

Details:

This is the final assessment task for attendance purposes. Feedback is written comments and or a marking sheet

Major essay on a key figure or theme in the course.

2200 words

Additional details:

Essay themes will be discussed in the tutorials and instructions will appear on Moodle.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

Attendance Requirements

Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and review lecture recordings.

Course Schedule

[View class timetable](#)

Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 31 May - 4 June	Lecture	**Introduction** Social philosophy, social reality, social critique, alienation, utopian visions.
	Tutorial	Tutorial discussion on the lecture themes and on themes in the texts by the young Marx.
	Reading	Karl Marx: 'Comments on James Mill' and 'Estranged Labour'
Week 2: 7 June - 11 June	Lecture	**Reification** What is 'reification'? Is all reification bad, or only some of it? Reification of the social world, reification of human beings, reification of nature? How are these issues related to commodification (all things being regarded as commodities)?
	Tutorial	Tutorial on the lecture themes and the text by Lukacs.
	Reading	Georg Lukacs: 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat'
Week 3: 15 June - 18 June	Lecture	**Ideology and ideology-critique** What is ideology? Are my thoughts and feelings affected by it and if so how? Classical and contemporary accounts.
	Tutorial	Lecture themes and Haslanger's recent account of ideology.
	Reading	Sally Haslanger: 'Ideology, Generics, and the Common Ground'
Week 4: 21 June - 25 June	Lecture	**Power** What is power? Is all power good, or bad? Or is some of it good and some bad?
	Tutorial	Lecture themes and the text.
	Reading	Michel Foucault: 'The subject and power'
Week 5: 28 June - 2 July	Lecture	**Subjectivity, subjecthood, identity** Continuation from previous week. Is human subjectivity formed by external power structures?

		Are there ways to resist? Views by Louis Althusser, Judith Butler, and others.
	Tutorial	Lecture themes and Althusser's text.
	Reading	Louis Althusser: 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses'
	Online Activity	Watch the film The Corporation, and participate in an online discussion about it. Details to be issued on Moodle.
Week 7: 12 July - 16 July	Lecture	**Psychoanalysis and social life** Is the society to blame for all human evil, or are there deep sources for aggression built in the human psychic structure? Views by Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein and others.
	Tutorial	Lecture themes, Adorno's text, the return of fascism.
	Reading	Theodor Adorno: 'Freudian theory and the pattern of fascist propaganda'
Week 8: 19 July - 23 July	Lecture	**Colonization of the life-world by the system** The complexity of modern societies, their differentiation into 'life-world' and 'system', and the colonization of the former by the latter according to Habermas. The idea of emancipation through discourse.
	Tutorial	Habermas' attempt to overcome overly pessimistic views of modern life and of the possibilities to beat the 'system', and other themes from the lecture.
	Reading	Jürgen Habermas: *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Part 2, 153-179.
Week 9: 26 July - 30 July	Lecture	**Recognition and the good life** What is recognition? Why do we want/need it? What is its significance for evaluation and critique of societies or social life?
	Tutorial	The different forms of recognition, their importance, and the consequence of lack thereof.
	Reading	Axel Honneth: *The Struggle for Recognition*, chapter 5.
Week 10: 2 August - 6 August	Lecture	**Freedom** We all want to be free, but what does that actually mean? A lot hangs on the answer to this question.
	Tutorial	Freedom, and other themes from the course
	Reading	Axel Honneth: Freedom's Right, Part I, sections 1, 2, and 3.

Resources

Prescribed Resources

The weekly readings will be accessible through Moodle.

Recommended Resources

A list of further reading will be available on Moodle.

Course Evaluation and Development

Student feedback is collected through 'MyExperience' and the Research Portfolio, and used for future improvements of the course. The current iteration of the course has taken into account the feedback from the previous iteration and course contents have been adjusted according to the current term structure.

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au . Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally, assessment tasks must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible, it will be stated on your course's Moodle site with alternative submission details.

For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

Copying: using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This also applies to images, art and design projects, as well as presentations where someone presents another's ideas or words without credit.

Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and/or progression of ideas of the original, and information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.

Collusion: working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student before the due date, or for the purpose of them plagiarising at any time, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.

Inappropriate citation: Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.

Duplication ("self-plagiarism"): submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

Correct referencing practices:

- Paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing and time management
- Appropriate use of and attribution for a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre (http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/). Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

UNSW Library also has the ELISE tool available to assist you with your study at UNSW. ELISE is designed to introduce new students to studying at UNSW but it can also be a great refresher during your study.

Completing the ELISE tutorial and quiz will enable you to:

- analyse topics, plan responses and organise research for academic writing and other assessment tasks
- effectively and efficiently find appropriate information sources and evaluate relevance to your needs
- use and manage information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- better manage your time

- understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UNSW
- be aware of plagiarism, copyright, UNSW Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of UNSW ICT Resources Policy
- be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of everyone in the UNSW community
- locate services and information about UNSW and UNSW Library

Some of these areas will be familiar to you, others will be new. Gaining a solid understanding of all the related aspects of ELISE will help you make the most of your studies at UNSW.
http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/elise/aboutelise

Academic Information

For essential student information relating to:

- requests for extension;
- late submissions guidelines;
- review of marks;
- UNSW Health and Safety policies;
- examination procedures;
- special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- student equity and disability;
- and other essential academic information, see

https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/protocols-guidelines/

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Acknowledgement of Country

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