

Critical Theory

College of Letters and Science (<http://ls.berkeley.edu>)

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Program Website: Critical Theory (<http://criticaltheory.berkeley.edu>)

Overview

The Designated Emphasis (DE) in Critical Theory permits interested students to specialize in critical theory, and to obtain certification of this specialization, while pursuing a PhD in an established UC Berkeley Department. Critical Theory is not an independent degree granting program. Students admitted to the DE and completing the requirements will receive a parenthetical notation to that effect on their doctoral degrees.

Critical Theory is typically associated with the work of the Frankfurt School, and that tradition of theory figures significantly in the DE curriculum. However, the program at Berkeley broadens and extends the meaning of critical theory to include 19th-century philosophers of critique, on the one hand, and contemporary critical theoretical work on culture, religion, nationalism, postnationalism, identity, and capitalism, on the other. Above all, Critical Theory at Berkeley emphasizes the centrality of theoretical critique to the examination of contemporary values, conflicts among schemes of values, the powers that organize political, social, cultural, and economic life, and modes of justification and legitimation for cultural inquiry and political analysis.

All students enrolled in PhD programs at Berkeley are eligible to apply for the DE in Critical Theory. Students must apply before advancing to candidacy, preferably in the first or second year of graduate study, so they may complete the DE coursework requirements before taking the qualifying exams in their home department. The DE in Critical Theory admits no more than 15 new students each year. The DE in Critical Theory consists of a five-course track (three core courses and two approved electives) that will culminate for students in a degree certificate in the field of critical theory in addition to their PhD. The aims of this curriculum are to establish an historical grounding for the notion of critique and critical theory, to investigate the claims of the Frankfurt School in relation to other critical projects, and to consider the contemporary formation of critical theory and new debates that form its intellectual focus.

CRIT TH 200 Critique in 19th-Century Thought 4 Units

Department: Critical Theory Graduate Group

Course level: Graduate

Term course may be offered: Fall

Grading: Letter grade.

Hours and format: 3 hours of Lecture per week for 15 weeks.

Prerequisites: Admission to the critical theory designated emphasis or consent of instructor.

This course will examine various formulations of critique in 19th-century theory. Thinkers who may be studied include Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Weber, though the selection will vary by instructor. This is the "foundations" course for the Designated Emphasis in Critical Theory. Course may be repeated for credit. Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes. Instructor: Brown

CRIT TH 205 The Classical Frankfurt School: The First Generation of Critical Theory 4 Units

Department: Critical Theory Graduate Group

Course level: Graduate

Term course may be offered: Fall

Grading: Letter grade.

Hours and format: 3 hours of Lecture per week for 15 weeks.

Prerequisites: Admission to the critical theory designated emphasis or consent of instructor.

This course will explore the founding texts of the Frankfurt School's first generation: Horkheimer, Adorno, Benjamin, Marcuse, Lowenthal, and their circle. It will follow the development of critical theory through its Weimer years, American exile, and return to postwar Germany. Instructor: Jay

CRIT TH 240 Contemporary Critique and Critical Theory 4 Units

Department: Critical Theory Graduate Group

Course level: Graduate

Terms course may be offered: Fall and spring

Grading: Letter grade.

Hours and format: 3 hours of Lecture per week for 15 weeks.

Prerequisites: Admission to the critical theory designated emphasis or consent of instructor.

This course will explore various contemporary engagements with the foundations of critical theory in relation to other histories and locations. Topics will vary by instructor but may include: post-continental political theory, critique and the problem of political dissent and citizenship, gender and race in relation to critical practices, psychoanalysis, and literary and art theory and criticism.

Course may be repeated for credit with consent of instructor. Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

CRIT TH 290 Critical Theory Elective 4 Units

Department: Critical Theory Graduate Group

Course level: Graduate

Terms course may be offered: Fall and spring

Grading: Letter grade.

Hours and format: 3 hours of seminar per week.

Prerequisites: Admission to the Critical Theory Designated Emphasis or consent of the instructor.

Critical Theory electives are taught by core and affiliated faculty in the Critical Theory program and offer important treatments of theoretical materials significant to the intellectual traditions of the program's course of study in nineteenth-century social theory and philosophy, Frankfurt School and related currents in theory and criticism, and contemporary critical theory. In a typical Critical Theory elective, theoretical materials are presented in dialogue with an anthropological, artistic/aesthetic, economic, educational, historical, philosophical, political, rhetorical, sociological, or other disciplinary matrix that constitutes the course's primary materials for study and inquiry.

Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.