

The College of the Humanities

HUMS 4104: TWENTIETH CENTURY THOUGHT

Prof. S. Maicher

Description:

This course explores theories of identity, society, and culture, in the twentieth century. Focusing on select influential thinkers in a diversity of fields, it examines the effects of these ideas on political thought in the latter half of the century.

The nineteenth century had been increasingly skeptical about the enlightenment project, its faith in individual reason and that the world could be rationally ordered to maximize human freedom. The works of Friedrich Nietzsche, for instance, represented late nineteenth century challenges to belief in the rational progress of society. The start of the twentieth century begins with thinkers who in many ways represent the culmination of this skepticism in the powers of reason to organize our society and lives to maximize freedom and peace.

This course aims to show the range of thought bearing on issues of culture and identity in the twentieth century. Thus, the course begins in the early 20th century with the works of a sociologist, a psychologist, and then moves to mid-century philosophers. Firstly, we begin with the work of Max Weber, a sociologist. He starts us off with an exploration of the darker effects of a reliance on instrumental notions of reason. Weber also represents a challenge to Marxist accounts of the relations of culture and economy, and in the process becomes an enormously influential figure in the development of the modern study of culture. Next, Sigmund Freud also continues the increasing skepticism about humans as rational animals, and in fact, provides a theory of human psychology that emphasizes irrationality, the unconscious and shadowy destructive drives. This understanding of relation of the self and culture at the beginning of the twentieth century is one that is rather pessimistic about the possibilities of perfectly ordered societies inhabited by autonomous individuals. An approach that now seems incredibly prescient, given the terrible destruction of the world wars.

We then shift to an extremely influential philosophical perspective on language, meaning and culture. Ludwig Wittgenstein's later work "The Philosophical Investigations", one of the most important philosophical texts of the 20th century, presents an account of the manner in which language and meaning is produced. After examining Wittgenstein, the work of the Frankfurt school of social theorists then serves as an example of mid-century social theory, which will lead us into part three of the course which introduces late 20th century political theory, in particular the debate between Liberals and Communitarians. This shifts our focus to the political ramifications of the ideas we have so far explored.

The Communitarian political theorists, like Charles Taylor, represent a critique of liberal political theory, and argue that liberal theory does not take seriously enough the ways in which culture matters for politics. This debate was crucial in setting the stage for contemporary political debates, and the last section of the course, which explores the challenges of multiculturalism in diverse nations and in an ever more interconnected world.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: The final grade of the course is based on the following:

1. [10%] A reading report on a reading of the student's choice.*
 2. [40%] A final paper. **
 3. [50%] A final take-home exam. ***
- (*) Reading reports should be three pages in length. Two pages should summarize the material of the reading and the last page should comment on some issue or point of interest in the reading.
- (**) The essay should be 15 pages double-spaced typed. To be submitted on the second last class of the term. Late papers will lose 5% per day.
- (***) In accordance with University regulations, the take-home exam will be handed out at the end of the last lecture. It will be due on the last day of the exam period, 12 noon. The questions will cover the entire course, with some degree of choice.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Sigmund Freud: *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. (1921)
- Sigmund Freud: *Civilization and Its Discontents*. (1929)
- Franz Kafka: *The Trial*. (1925)
- Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Philosophical Investigations*. (1953)
- Charles Taylor: *The Malaise of Modernity*. (1991)
- Amartya Sen: *Identity and Violence*. (2006)
- Course Reader. (photocopy package).

COURSE OUTLINE:

PART ONE: CULTURE AND IDENTITY: Sociology and Psychology at the start of the 20th Century.

1. Introduction to the course.
2. Max Weber: On culture and society. [Selections from: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.*] [Reader]
3. Max Weber: On rationalization and bureaucracy. [Selections from: *Economy and Society and Science as a Vocation*] [Reader]
4. Sigmund Freud: The unconscious. [First Essay from: *Three Essays on Sexuality*]. [Reader]
5. Sigmund Freud: *Group Psychology*.
6. Sigmund Freud: *Civilization and Its Discontents*. [1].
7. Sigmund Freud: *Civilization and Its Discontents*. [2].
8. Franz Kafka: *The Trial*. [Novel]

PART TWO: LANGUAGE, MEANING AND CULTURE: Philosophical perspectives. Frankfurt School.

9. Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Philosophical Investigations* [1]
10. Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Philosophical Investigations* [2]
11. Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Philosophical Investigations* [3]
12. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer: "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception". From, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*. [Reader]
13. Jürgen Habermas: Selections from "Technology and Science as Ideology", from *Toward a Rational Society*. [Reader]. Kurt Vonnegut: *Cat's Cradle*. [Novel].

PART THREE: LIBERALS AND COMMUNITARIANS: The self and culture in politics.

14. John Rawls: Selections from, *Theory of Justice*. [Reader]
15. Alasdair MacIntyre: *After Virtue*, chapter 15. [Reader]
16. Charles Taylor: "Atomism". [Reader]
17. Charles Taylor: *The Malaise of Modernity*. [1]
18. Charles Taylor: *The Malaise of Modernity*. [2]
19. Charles Taylor: *The Malaise of Modernity*. [3]

PART FOUR: CONTEMPORARY MULTICULTURALISM: The challenges of diversity.

20. Iris Marion Young: "Justice and the Politics of Difference". [Reader]
21. Amartya Sen: *Identity and Violence* [1]
22. Amartya Sen: *Identity and Violence* [2]
23. Amartya Sen: *Identity and Violence* [3]
24. Conclusion.

(* This syllabus may be subject to minor revisions prior to the start of the course.)

REGULATIONS COMMON TO ALL HUMANITIES COURSES

COPIES OF WRITTEN WORK SUBMITTED

Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “*substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.*”

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course

GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 (12)	B = 73-76 (8)	C - = 60-62 (4)
A = 85-89 (11)	B- = 70-72 (7)	D+ = 57-59 (3)
A- = 80-84 (10)	C+ = 67-69 (6)	D = 53-56 (2)
B+ = 77-79 (9)	C = 63-66 (5)	D - = 50-52 (1)

F	Failure. Assigned 0.0 grade points
ABS	Absent from final examination, equivalent to F
DEF	Official deferral (see “Petitions to Defer”)
FND	Failure with no deferred exam allowed -- assigned only when the student has failed the course on the basis of inadequate term work as specified in the course outline.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

The last date to withdraw from **FALL TERM** courses is **DEC. 3, 2012**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 10, 2013**.

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at: carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*).

PETITIONS TO DEFER

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a **FINAL** assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply a deferral of examination/assignment. If you are applying for a deferral due to illness you will be required to see a physician in order to confirm illness and obtain a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination or assignment deadline. This supporting documentation must specify the date of onset of the illness, the degree of incapacitation, and the expected date of recovery.

If you are applying for a deferral for reasons other than personal illness, please [contact](#) the Registrar’s Office directly for information on other forms of documentation that we accept.

Deferrals of assignments must be supported by confirmation of the assignment due date, for example a copy of the course outline specifying the due date and any documented extensions from the course instructor.

Deferral applications for examination or assignments must be submitted within **5 working days** of the original final exam.

ADDRESSES: (Area Code 613)

College of the Humanities 520-2809	300 Paterson
Greek and Roman Studies Office 520-2809	300 Paterson
Religion Office 520-2100	2A39 Paterson
Registrar's Office 520-3500	300 Tory
Student Academic Success Centre 520-7850	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre 520-6608/TTY 520-3937	501 Uni-Centre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-2600 Ext. 1125	4 th Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125	4 th Floor Library