

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
Unit Specification

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Title	Introduction to Critical Theory
Unit code	PS040
Credit rating	15
Level	MA in Political Science and International Relations
Contact hours	21
Other Scheduled teaching and learning activities*	None
Pre-requisite units	None
Co-requisite units	None
School responsible	Moscow School of Social & Economic Sciences
Member of staff responsible	Ilya Budraitskis
ECTS**	
Notional hours of Learning***	150

2. AIMS

This unit aims to: give a basic introduction to the notion of critical theory, from its origins to the modern debates, introduce to the main texts and concepts. Students are expected to develop informed attitude towards the critical theory as an interdisciplinary method of research, which covers social, political and cultural spheres. This unit will prepare students to use its approaches and methods in analysis of current social and cultural phenomena.

3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE UNIT

This course, which will combine lectures, common readings and independent work, aims to present the key notions of critical theory, and its transformation in the process of its historical development. Despite the fact that the very term «critical theory» became known from the works of the Frankfurt school, it refers to the concept of ideology and its critique, established by Marx, and developed by such Marxist thinkers as Antonio Gramsci and Georg Lukac. For nowadays it could be defined as a theory that, according to Shawn Rosenberg, «can provide the analytical and ethical foundation needed to uncover the structure of underlying social practices and to reveal the possible distortion of social life embodied in them». By reading and commenting various texts that represent the tradition of critical theory, as well as texts related to the critique of ideology, students will get understand it as important method that has had a great influence on modern social sciences.

* To inform the “Key Information Set”. Defined as ‘any activity that a student has to attend or undertake at a fixed point and that has no flexibility for when it is undertaken, and where the student also has access to an available staff member’ (*“Provision of Information about Higher Education: Outcomes of consultation and next steps” June 2011/18*)

** ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System): There are 2 UK credits for every 1 ECT credit, in accordance with the Credit Framework (QAA). Therefore if a unit is worth 30 UK credits, this will equate to 15 ECT.

*** Notional hours of learning: The number of hours which it is expected that a learner (at a particular level) will

spend, on average, to achieve the specified learning outcomes at that level. It is expected that there will be 10 hours of notional study associated with every 1 credit achieved. Therefore if a unit is worth 30 credits, this will equate to 300 notional study hours, in accordance with the Credit Framework (QAA).

4. INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Category of outcome	Students should/will be able to:
Knowledge and understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conceive the critical theory as a historically established concept; understand conditions of its appearance and modification; - conceive the development of the critical theory from its origins to the modern times; know the main names, works and its socio-political context - understand the impact of the methods of critical theory in modern researches on society, culture and politics; - Understand the essence of the main debates over the critical theory as a method - Understand the place of critical theory and critique of ideology in the general intellectual history
Intellectual skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - freely use the concepts and notions from the tradition of critical theory; - critically evaluate the position of the academic researcher and public intellectual in the modern society
Practical skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - write well-structured and problem-focused academic papers on the historical and theoretical significance of critical theory;
Transferable skills and personal qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - effective written and oral communication; - analytical reflection; - analytical writing; - scientific discussing.

5. LEARNING AND TEACHING PROCESSES (INCLUDING THE USE OF E-LEARNING)

Contact hours: lectures (50%) and tutorials (50%)
 Collective reading and commenting in the classroom
 One essay (homework)
 Students are encouraged to enter in e-mail communication with tutor concerning the search for appropriate literature and developing original argument during preparation of essay

6. ASSESSMENT (INCLUDING THE USE OF E-LEARNING)

Assessment task	Length	Weighting within unit (if relevant)
essay	5000 words	80%
exam	1000 words	20%

7. INDICATIVE READING LIST

1. Karl Marx The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844. Dover Publications. 2007
2. Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels The German Ideology. Martino Fine Books, 2011
3. The Gramsci Reader. Selected writings 1916-1935. NUY Press, 2000. 447 pages
4. George Lukacs. History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics. The MIT Press, 1972 408 pages
5. Walter Benjamin. The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2010. 50 pages
6. Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno. Dialectic of Enlightenment. Stanford University Press; 2007. 304 pages
7. Carl Manheim. Conservatism, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 2001
8. Guy Debord. Society Of The Spectacle; Black & Red, 2000. 132 pages
9. Terry Eagleton. The Idea of Culture; Wiley-Blackwell, 2000. 168 pages
10. Perry Anderson. Considerations on Western Marxism; Verso, 1979. 140 pages
11. Mark Fisher. Capitalist realism; Zero books, 2009. 81 pages
12. Stephen Eric Bronner. Critical Theory: A Very Short Introduction; Oxford University Press, 2011. 144 pages
13. Seyla Benhabib. Critical Theory and Its Aporias; Telos 49 (Fall 1981)

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