

The Frankfurt School and Its Writers/Introduction to Literary Theory

Fall 2008, Rutgers University
German 16:470:643:01 [14501]/Comparative
Literature 16:195:501:01 [07510]
Mondays, 4:30-7:10pm
195 College Ave. (CAC)

Prof. Nicholas Rennie
O. hrs. M 2:00-3:45pm,
& by appointment
Tel. 732-932-7201
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This seminar focuses on a major interdisciplinary theoretical tradition in German writing, and its influence on selected thinkers of the last decades. Work of the Frankfurt School is among the most important 20th-century German-language contributions to such fields as sociology, political science, gender studies, film, cultural studies and comparative literature. We will read texts by such key figures of the Frankfurt School as Walter Benjamin, Theodor W. Adorno, and Max Horkheimer for their relevance to a number of disciplines, but give particular consideration to literary and aesthetic questions. To this end, we will also read texts by select authors to whom these figures responded (e.g. Baudelaire, Proust, Kafka, Beckett). In the second half of the course we will trace the influence of the first generation of the Frankfurt School in the work of such theorists as Jürgen Habermas, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Axel Honneth.

Requirements:

- 1) Weekly attendance, and active participation.
- 2) One 20-minute presentation, which may be the basis for one of the papers.
- 3) Three short papers totaling 16 pp. (see due dates below), or one 16-page paper (due 12/15/08). Students who wish to write a single 16-page paper need to receive approval from me *before the end of September*. Please get in touch in the first week or two of the semester to set up an appointment.

Grade:

Class participation	25%
Paper(s)	75%

Auditors: one 20-minute presentation, and weekly attendance.

Paper submission dates: If, at the beginning of the semester, you find that you are already comfortable with readings of the kind we will be discussing, you are welcome to talk to me (before the end of September, please) about getting permission to submit a single 16-page paper, due December 15th. Otherwise, I ask that you submit three shorter papers (two of five pages, one of six pages) by the deadlines indicated in the syllabus below.

Required texts for purchase at the Rutgers University bookstore. (These titles are indicated in **boldface** within the list of weekly readings below. Any readings from these required books will not be available through the course's online site.)

- Samuel Beckett, *Endgame* (New York: Grove, 1970) [ISBN: 0802150241]
- Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, tr. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969) [ISBN: 0805202412]
- Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (published 1962), tr. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge [MA]: MIT Press, 1996) [ISBN: 0262581086]
- Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, tr. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002) [ISBN: 0804736332]
- Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way: In Search of Lost Time*, tr. C. K. Scott Moncrieff, Terence Kilmartin (New York: Modern Library, 1998) [ISBN: 0375751548]

Optional suggested texts for purchase at the Rutgers University bookstore. (Any assigned readings from these texts will be available through the course's online website; for your convenience, however, you may wish to buy one or the other of these.)

- Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms*, tr. Shierry Weber and Samuel Weber (Cambridge [MA]: MIT Press, 1997) [ISBN: 0262510251]
- Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1996) [ISBN: 0520204239]

As for texts in German that may not be available at the bookstore, in my experience one good way to buy any texts published in German-speaking Europe is, in the U.S., through the International Book Import Service (IBIS, www.IBIService.com). This involves two steps: 1) find the bibliographical information and ISBN at www.buchhandel.de or www.amazon.de or another such site. 2) use copy & paste to e-mail this information to IBIS at ibis@IBIService.com. Occasionally, IBIS may have in stock the books you need; otherwise you may need to wait a few weeks. You may wish to order directly from another online service such as www.buchhandel.de or www.amazon.de instead – compare prices and shipping times. Please think ahead about what texts you may wish to concentrate on in your work and allow time for the necessary books to be delivered by the library or store.

Readings available online

Non-boldface titles listed in the weekly readings below are available online at the course website. To access these readings, go to <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>, where every student registered in this course should see a tab bearing the label “16:195:501:01.” Selecting that tab and then “Resources” in the left column, you can download individual readings in the form of pdf files by clicking on their names. Note that you will need to read these texts by the assigned date and bring them to class for discussion, whether on your laptop or printed out on paper. Please download available texts sooner rather than later – don't wait until the evening before a class to find that internet problems prevent your accessing an assignment. On the other hand, note that a few readings will not yet be available at the start of the semester – I'll let you know when I've uploaded them.

Graduate Reserves – additional materials

Additional print materials are available at the Alexander Library Graduate Reserves desk, and are listed both at the bottom of this syllabus, and on the libraries website under “Find reserves” at <http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/>.

Presentations: Each presentation should focus on an aspect of the day's reading, and should focus on the terms and structure of the text itself. It should present a clear thesis and cite specific passages from the assigned reading as evidence. You can best help the rest of the class if you succinctly articulate what you take to be a particularly important dimension of the reading (even just its main thesis), and then discuss any potential problems that you see with this thesis and that remain unresolved within the text itself. Presentations that list aspects of a text without organizing these under a main organizing principle tend to be less effective in helping others find their way into discussion of the text.

Please do *not* read your presentation from a script. Comparative references to other relevant texts are welcome, as long as the assigned text remains the focus of the presentation.

Papers: Like your presentation, your paper should introduce a clear thesis, and should normally do so within the opening paragraph (especially in the case of the 5 and 6-pp. papers). The subsequent argument should demonstrate this thesis with the help of judicious quotations (always include page and/or line numbers) from the text under consideration. Strong papers seek to account for, rather than simply ignore, those features of the text that might seem to contradict the paper's argument. Please pay close attention to the form of your presentation: incomplete and run-on sentences, typos and misspellings, and sloppy and

obscure formulations will lower your grade. You are encouraged to contact me in advance to discuss the topic and structure of your paper.

Graduate students in German are expected to cite from German-language editions of any German “literary” texts (e.g. Kafka) that they discuss in their papers. Other students are likewise encouraged to cite German and French texts in the original language in their papers. Those interested in finding either German or English versions of Frankfurt School publications should consult the bibliography at the end of Rolf Wiggershaus’s *The Frankfurt School* (on graduate reserve), which lists texts, chronologically, by each theorist.

Academic Integrity is a matter of core importance to all teaching and research at any level, but there can be confusion about what practices are or are not appropriate. Please take some time to read the University’s Interim Academic Integrity Policy at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>. This may be useful not only as you go about presenting your own ideas and sources, but also as you teach your students how to treat the materials that they will be using in their own work. Please note that I approach all material that is given me as reflecting the thoughts of the person(s) listed as its author. Even if at some point you give me a *rough draft*, say, be absolutely sure both to put quotation marks around any other people’s words, and to cite your sources fully and in such a way that I could track them down if I wanted to learn more about the material you’re quoting. You want to be careful to avoid creating even the impression that you might be handling your sources sloppily, and you want to make it easy for others to follow your bibliographic leads and learn more about your topic.

Historical background: You are strongly encouraged to acquaint yourself, in the course of the semester, with the history of the Frankfurt School. See, in particular, the books on graduate reserve by Martin Jay (*The Dialectical Imagination*, also available as “suggested” title at the bookstore) and Rolf Wiggershaus. For a history of the postwar legacy of Marxist thought and the Frankfurt School, see Peter Uwe Hohendahl’s *Reappraisals*, likewise on reserve.

Weekly Assignments

1. 9/8/08
Introduction
Theodor W. Adorno, “Survey on Literary Themes” (1960), *Digitale Bibliothek* vol. 97: Theodor W. Adorno: *Gesammelte Schriften*, p. 18,278.
Karl Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach,” from *The German Ideology*, and from “The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof,” Section 4 of *Capital*, vol. 1, in: *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1972) 143-45; 154-55; 319-23.
2. 9/15/08
Max Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse, “Philosophy and Critical Theory” (1937), in: Marcuse, *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory*, tr. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968) 134-58.
Max Horkheimer, “The End of Reason” (1941), in: *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York: Continuum, 1988) 26-48.
3. 9/22/08
Herbert Marcuse, “A Note on Dialectic” (1960), in: *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York: Continuum, 1988) 444-51.
Max Horkheimer, “Traditional and Critical Theory” (1937), “Postscript” (1937), in: M.H., *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, tr. Matthew J. O’Connell et al. (New York: Continuum, 1999) 188-252.
4. 9/29/08
Franz Kafka, “Before the Law” (1914), “The Judgment” (1913), in *The Metamorphosis, In the Penal Colony, and Other Stories*, tr. Willa and Edwin Muir (New York: Schocken Books, 1995) 148-50, 49-63.
Walter Benjamin, “Franz Kafka: On the Tenth Anniversary of His Death” (1934); “Some Reflections on Kafka” (1938), *Illuminations*, 111-40, 141-45.
Adorno, “Notes on Kafka” (1942-53), *Prisms*, 243-71.

5. 10/6/08

Benjamin, "The Author as Producer" (1934), tr. Edmund Jephcott, in: W.B., *Selected Writings 2*, eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Belknap, 1996-) 768-82.

Adorno, "Commitment" (1962), in: *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, ed. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York: Continuum, 1988) 300-18.

Adorno, "Lyric Poetry and Society" (1957), trans. Bruce Mayo, in: Brian O'Connor, ed., *The Adorno Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000) 211-29.

Friday 10/10: Submit 5-page paper no later than today, either in hard copy at 172 College Ave., or as MS-Word file e-mailed to nrennie@rci.rutgers.edu (if you don't receive a confirmation from me within a few hours, assume that I have not received the paper).

6. 10/13/08

Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1935-1937), *Illuminations*, 217-51¹; Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History" (published 1942), *Illuminations*, 253-64."

7. 10/20/08

Charles Baudelaire, "To the Reader"/"Au Lecteur"; "Correspondences"/"Correspondances"; "The Swan"/"Le Cygne"; "In Passing"/"A une passante"; "Parisian Dream"/"Rêve parisien"; "Epigraph for a Banned Book"/"Epigraphe pour un livre condamné," in: *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857, 1861), tr. Richard Howard (Boston: David Godine, 1997).

Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" (1939), *Illuminations*, 155-200.

8. 10/27/08

Benjamin, "The Image of Proust" (1929, revised 1934), *Illuminations*, 201-15.

Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way* (1913): "Combray."

¹ The last sentence of section XI, which in the German appears in italics, is more accurately translated as: "Hence, the presentation of reality in film is incomparably the more significant for people of today, since it provides the equipment-free aspect of reality they are entitled to demand from a work of art, and does so precisely on the basis of the most intensive interpenetration of reality with equipment." Quoted from: Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings* vol. 4, ed. Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Belknap, 2003) 264.

9. 11/3/08

Benjamin, re-read section II of "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," *Illuminations*, 157-60.

Adorno, "Valéry Proust Museum" (1953), *Prisms*, 173-85.

Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way*: "Combray"; and excerpt (online reserves) from "Place-Names: The Place" in: Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way, Within a Budding Grove: Remembrance of Things Past*, tr. C. K. Scott Moncrieff, Terence Kilmartin (London: Chatto & Windus, 1981) 691-704.

Friday 11/7: Submit 5-page paper no later than today, either in hard copy at 172 College Ave., or as MS-Word file e-mailed to nrennie@rci.rutgers.edu (if you don't receive a confirmation from me within a few hours, assume that I have not received the paper).

10. 11/10/08

Samuel Beckett, *Endgame* (1957)

Adorno, "Trying to Understand *Endgame*" (1961), tr. Michael J. Jones, in: Brian O'Connor, ed., *The Adorno Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000) 319-52.²

11. 11/17/08

Horkheimer and Adorno, "Preface," "The Concept of Enlightenment," "Excursus I: Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment," in: *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947) xiv-62.

12. 11/24/08

Horkheimer and Adorno, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," in: *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 94-136.

Michel Foucault, excerpt from *The Politics of Truth* (Semiotext[e], 1997).

13. 12/1/08

Jürgen Habermas, from *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962), Chapters I, II, V, and VI, section 20 ("From the Journalism of Private Men of Letters..."): pp. 1-56, 141-95.

14. 12/8/08

Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context," *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1982), 307-330.

² P. 340, five lines from the bottom, should read: "railroad tracks of conversation."

Excerpt from: Axel Honneth, *The Critique of Power: Reflective Stages in a Critical Social Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997).

Monday, 12/15/08, Final papers due either as MS Word attachments sent to nrennie@rci.rutgers.edu (if you don't

receive a confirmation from me within a few hours, assume that I have not received the attachment), or snail-mailed to me at my home address. Please do not leave this paper for me on campus.
(Short papers: 6pp.; long papers: 16pp.)

Books available on graduate reserve at Alexander Library

1. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, (London, Boston: Routledge & K. Paul, 1984) [B3199.A33A813 1984]
2. --- *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, tr. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: New Left Books, 1974) [B3199.A33M513]
3. --- *Negative Dialectics*, tr. E. B. Ashton (New York, Herder and Herder, 1973) [B3199.A33N413 1973]
4. --- *Prisms*, tr. Shierry Weber and Samuel Weber (Cambridge [MA]: MIT Press, 1997) [HM101.A4513 1981]
5. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt, eds., *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader* (New York: Urizen Books, 1978) [HM101.E745]
6. Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Belknap, 1996-), vols. 1-4 [PT2603.E455A26 1996 v.1-4]
7. Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge: MIT, 1989) [PT2603.E455P334 1989]
8. Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1982) [B53.D4613 1982]
9. Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984) [B2430.F721 1984]
10. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, tr. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge [MA]: MIT Press, 1989) [HM24.H2713 1989]
11. Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, tr. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, c1984) [HM24.H3213 1984 v. 1 & 2]
12. Peter-Uwe Hohendahl, *Reappraisals: Shifting Alignments in Postwar Critical Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991) [PN98.S6H6 1991]
13. Axel Honneth, *The Critique of Power: Reflective Stages in a Critical Social Theory*, trans. Kenneth Baynes (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991) [HM24.H582713 1991]
14. Max Horkheimer, *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, tr. Matthew J. O'Connell and others (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) [B3279.H8471S313]
15. Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1974)
16. --- *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke UP, 1991) [PN98.P67J3 1991]
17. Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973) [H62.J37]
18. --- *Adorno* (Cambridge [MA]: Harvard UP, 1984) [HM22.G3A33 1984]
19. Michael William Jennings, *Dialectical Images: Walter Benjamin's Theory of Literary Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1987) [PN75.B43J46 1987]

20. Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978) [B3305.M74M3513 1978] (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1991) [PT2603.E455Z79 1991]
21. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1972) [HX39.5.A224 1972]
22. Rainer Nägele, *Theater, Theory, Speculation: Walter Benjamin and the Scenes of Modernity*
23. Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, tr. Michael Robertson (Cambridge [MA]: MIT Press, 1994) [HM24.W4861 1994]