

The Frankfurt School and Its Writers

Fall 2015, Rutgers University
German 16:470:643:01 [index 19121]/Comparative
Literature 16:195:617:01 [index 10747]
Tuesdays 4:30-7:10pm, GH-102, 172 College Ave
(CAC)

Prof. Nicholas Rennie
O. hrs. Tu 9:45am, Th 2:30pm,
& by appointment
172 College Ave., rm. 201A
Tel. 732-932-7201
nicholas.rennie@rutgers.edu

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, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas 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). Throughout the course, moreover, we will be examining responses to and development of the thought of the first and second generation of the Frankfurt School in more recent strands of Marxism, deconstruction, feminism, aesthetics and cultural studies.

Requirements:

- 1) Weekly attendance and active participation in class discussion.
- 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 Tuesday 12/15/15). 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.
- 4) 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, and are encouraged – though not required – to do the same with theoretical texts originally written in German. (See section below on papers.)

Grade:

Class presentation	20%
Paper(s)	80%

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, available for purchase at the Rutgers University bookstore. (These titles are indicated in **boldface** within the list of weekly readings below. Readings from these required books will generally not be available through the course’s Sakai site.)

- Samuel Beckett, *Endgame* (New York: Grove, 2009) [ISBN: 9780802144393]
- Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, tr. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969) [ISBN: 9780805202410]
- Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (published 1962), tr. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge [MA]: MIT Press, 1996) [ISBN: 9780262581080]
- Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, tr. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2007) [ISBN: 9780804736336]

- Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way: In Search of Lost Time*, tr. C. K. Scott Moncrieff, Terence Kilmartin (New York: Modern Library, 1998) [ISBN: 9780375751547]
- **Not required, but suggested;** also available at Rutgers University Bookstore: Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Berkeley [CA]: U. of California P, 1996) [ISBN 9780520204232]

Note on buying texts published in German-speaking Europe: A number of these are available at Alexander Library on graduate reserve and listed on the course Sakai site under “Library eReserves.” If on the other hand you wish to buy any texts published in German-speaking Europe, a good way to do so is, in the U.S., through the International Book Import Service (www.IBIService.com). Occasionally, IBIS may have in stock the books you need, in which case they can get them to you within a few days; otherwise you may need to wait a few weeks. Alternatively, you may wish to order directly from another online service such as buchhandel.de or amazon.de – 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.

Optional readings: Note that “optional” readings (so listed under the weekly assignments below) are optional to all students except for the one(s) presenting on that class date. Presenters should normally focus on some main points from the readings assigned to all students, but should also include some discussion of the optional reading in their comments.

Readings available online: Non-boldface titles listed in the weekly readings below are available online at the course Sakai website “2015-09 Frankfurt School & Its Writers 16:470:643” under the Resources tab. Note that you will need to read these texts by the assigned date and bring them to class for discussion, whether on an electronic device 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.

Graduate Reserves – materials in hard copy at library: Additional print materials are available at the Alexander Library Graduate Reserves desk. See “Library eReserves” link in left margin of course Sakai site for a full listing, and to check availability.

Presentations: Each presentation should focus on an aspect of the day’s theory 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 *one 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. Presenters should integrate some discussion of the week’s “optional” reading (pick one, if more than one is listed) in their comments (see “optional readings” above). Presentations should last 20 minutes, followed by discussion.

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 should examine a theoretical concern at issue in one or more of the readings assigned since the previous paper assignment. 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 main thesis. 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. Papers may be written in English or German (French or Italian fine too).

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, and are encouraged – though not required – to do the same with theoretical texts originally written in German. 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 that are not available on the course Sakai site or at graduate reserves should consult the bibliography at the end of Rolf Wiggershaus’s *The Frankfurt School* (on graduate reserve), which lists texts, chronologically, under the name of 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>. 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 a “recommended” title at the bookstore), Rolf Wiggershaus, and Thomas Wheatland. For a history of the postwar legacy of Marxist thought and the Frankfurt School, see Peter Uwe Hohendahl’s *Reappraisals* and *Critical Theory: Current State and Future Prospects*, likewise both on reserve.

Weekly Assignments

1. 9/1/2015

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.

Optional: Martin Jay, “The Creation of the Institut für Sozialforschung and Its First Frankfurt Years,” in: Jay, Martin. *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950*. 1st ed. Boston: Little, Brown, 1973, pp. 3-40.

2. 9/15/2015

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.

Optional: Wheatland, Thomas. “Failure and the Mythologies of Exile,” in: Wheatland, Thomas. *The Frankfurt School in Exile*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009, pp. 61-94.

3. 9/22/2015

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.

Optional: Axel Honneth, Chapter 1 ("Horkheimer's Original Idea: The Sociological Deficit of Critical Theory") in: Honneth, Axel. *The Critique of Power: Reflective Stages in a Critical Social Theory*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1991.

4. 9/29/2015

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.

Optional: Jennings, Michael. "Between Allegory and Aura: Walter Benjamin's 1938 Reading of Franz Kafka." *Journal of the Kafka Society of America* 12.1-2 (1988): 42-50. [Some quotations appear only in German.]

Optional: Simpson, Patricia Anne. "In Citing Violence: Gestus in Benjamin, Brecht, and Kafka." *Jewish Writers, German Literature: The Uneasy Examples of Nelly Sachs and Walter Benjamin*. Ed. Timothy Bahti and Marilyn Sibley Fries. Ann Arbor, MI: U of Michigan P, 1995. 175-203.

5. 10/6/2015

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.

Optional: Jameson, Fredric. Chapter 1 ("T.W. Adorno; or, Historical Tropes") in: *Marxism and Form; Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1972.

Friday 10/9: Submit 5-page paper no later than today, as a PDF or MS Word document (.doc or .docx) via the [Assignments](#) link at the course Sakai site.¹

6. 10/13/2015

Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1935-1937), *Illuminations*, 217-51²; Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History" (published 1942), *Illuminations*, 253-64."

Optional: Koepnick, Lutz. "Benjamin in the Age of New Media." *A Companion to the Works of Walter Benjamin*. Ed. Rolf J. Goebel. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009. 112-129.

Optional: Wilde, Marc de. "Benjamin's Politics of Remembrance: A Reading of 'Über Den Begriff Der Geschichte.'" *A Companion to the Works of Walter Benjamin*. Ed. Rolf J. Goebel. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009. 177-194.

7. 10/20/2015

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

¹ After uploading the paper, be sure also to click to *submit* it. When you're finished, double-check that your paper is indeed posted as an attachment at this site. If you have uploaded it properly, Sakai will send you an automated e-mail to confirm receipt.

² 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.

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.

Optional: Martin Jay, “Is Experience Still in Crisis?” in: Hohendahl, Peter Uwe, et al. *Critical Theory : Current State and Future Prospects*. New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001, pp. 31-48.

Optional: Levine, Michael G. “En Garde! Benjamin’s Baudelaire and the Training of Shock Defense,” in: *Writing through Repression: Literature, Censorship, Psychoanalysis*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1994, pp. 91-113.

8. 10/27/2015

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

Marcel Proust, *Swann’s Way* (1913): “Combray.”
Optional: Jacobs, Carol. “Walter Benjamin: Image of Proust.” *MLN* 86.6 (1971): 910-32.

9. 11/3/2015

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 (at sakai) 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.

10. 11/10/2015

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) 319-52.³

Optional: Eva Geulen, “Endgames: Reconstructing Adorno’s ‘End of Art’,” *New German Critique: An Interdisciplinary Journal of German Studies* 81 (Fall 2000) 153-68.

³ P. 340, five lines from the bottom, should read: “railroad tracks of conversation.”

*Friday 11/13: Submit 5-page paper no later than today, as a PDF or MS Word document (.doc or .docx) via the Assignments link at the course Sakai site.*⁴

11. 11/17/2015

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

Optional: Bronner, Stephen Eric. Chapter 6 (“The Illusory Dialectic: From Enlightenment to Totalitarianism”) in: *Reclaiming the Enlightenment: Toward a Politics of Radical Engagement*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

12. 11/24/2015

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

Elisabeth Bronfen, “Reality Check: Image Affects and Cultural Memory.” *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 17.1 (2006): 20-46.

Optional: Andreas Huyssen, Chapter 8 (“The Cultural Politics of Pop”) of *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.

13. 12/1/2015

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.

Optional: Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy.” *Social Text*, No. 25/26 (1990), pp. 56-80.

Optional: Dean, Jodi. “Cybersalons and Civil Society: Rethinking the Public Sphere in

⁴ After uploading the paper, be sure also to click to *submit* it. When you’re finished, double-check that your paper is indeed posted as an attachment at this site. If you have uploaded it properly, Sakai will send you an automated e-mail to confirm receipt.

Transnational Technoculture.” *Public Culture*
13.2 (2001): 243-65.

14. 12/8/2015

Fredric Jameson, Introduction and Chapter 1
 (“The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism”) of:
*Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late
Capitalism* (Durham: Duke UP, 1991).

Optional: Chapter 9 (“Habermas’ Theory of
Society: A Transformation of the Dialectic of
Enlightenment in Light of the Theory of
Communication”) in: Honneth, Axel. *The
Critique of Power: Reflective Stages in a
Critical Social Theory*. 1st MIT Press ed.
Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1991.

*Friday, 12/15/15, final paper (third of three
short papers, or single longer paper) due no
later than today, as a PDF or MS Word
document (.doc or .docx) via the Assignments
link at the course Sakai site. (Short papers:
6pp.; long papers: 16pp.)⁵*

⁵ After uploading the paper, be sure also to click to *submit*
it. When you’re finished, double-check that your paper is
indeed posted as an attachment at this site. If you have
uploaded it properly, Sakai will send you an automated e-
mail to confirm receipt.