



Wageningen School
of Social Sciences

Critical perspectives on social theory

Coordinators:

Dr Clemens Driessen (GEO)
clemens.driessen@wur.nl

&

Dr Rob Fletcher (SDC)
robert.fletcher@wur.nl

20 February – 13 March, 2017
(meetings; final essay due 31 March)

Course organised by
Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS),
Wageningen University

Introduction & objectives of the course

Critical social theoretical perspectives are a well-established and essential part of academic debate. For researchers entering into these debates, it is necessary to have at least basic understandings of many branches of theory, both to effectively carry out new research and to recognize subtle references to specific theories while engaging in dialogue with international audiences. Moreover, theoretical development is a cumulative process: as new theories come to the fore, they build on historical waves of previous development. To engage with new developments, it is therefore vital to have working knowledge of what preceded them.

This course intends to help researchers situate themselves in relation to different interpretations and lineages of major theoretical perspectives. The main objective is to give participants a brief opportunity to engage with some of the major foundational movements in critical social theory, so that they can continue to explore different expansions of those movements in their own research. To do so, the course is organized as an **intensive discussion seminar** over the course of four weeks, exploring 7 core theoretical topics, one featuring an international guest speaker (this year Steve Hinchliffe from the university of Exeter on posthumanism / more-than-human geography). Each seminar will have its own set of **required readings**, which include both foundational literature and new research perspectives. Completing these readings is necessary for all students to contribute to discussion during the seminar meeting. These readings will require a substantial time commitment outside of the meeting hours, so participants will need to budget time accordingly in order to fully participate in the course.

In order to have enough time to complete the readings required for the first day of the course, **registration is required by January 15, 2017. No registrations later than that date will be accepted.**

From the 7 seminars, participants should take with them new understandings about the foundations of their own theoretical perspectives. These will include the following key topics in social theory:

- **Marx**
- **Marxisms**
- **Colonialisms, decolonization and postcolonialism**
- **Feminisms**
- **Governmentality and biopolitics**
- **Posthumanism / more-than-human geographies**
- **Psychoanalysis**

To complete credits possible for the Core Seminars of this course, students will need to: 1) attend and participate in each seminar (barring emergencies); and 2) submit brief one page reflections after each set of readings; and 3) further to these submit a reflective essay of approximately 2000 words after the end of course sessions demonstrating their engagement with the reading and course content. The topic and structure of the essay can be discussed with the examiners to reflect the student's research interests. The essay will be due on 31 March 2017, by 5pm.

Target group and learning outcomes

This course is intended for PhDs, postdocs, and staff members who want to expand their engagement with critical social theory in their research. This can include beginning researchers who want an overview of different theoretical approaches, as well as experienced researchers who would like to familiarize themselves with strands of theory outside their normal purview.

Assumed prior knowledge

Participants should have completed Advanced Social Theory (RSO-32806) or an equivalent course addressing classic thought and different strands of social theory. This is not suitable as a student's first theoretical course.

Teaching methods

This course uses a seminar framework. Students are expected to *read and prepare their thoughts and questions* on readings in advance of the seminar date, and to participate fully in group discussions in class. The discussions will be chaired and guided by the instructor of the session together with the course coordinators.

Requirements and ECTS

Individuals who follow the entire course receive 4 ECTS, through: 1) attendance at all seminars; 2) submission of reflections after each meeting; and 3) submission of the final short essay.

Course Schedule

Date and time	Activity	Instructor	Location
20 Feb, 9:30-12:30	Marx	Bram Buscher	C76
23 Feb, 9:30-12:30	Marxisms	Scott Prudham (Toronto)	C76
27 Feb, 9:00-12:00 [!]	Governmentality and biopolitics	Jessica Duncan	C82
2 March, 9:30-12:30	Feminisms	Chizu Sato	C76
7 March, 9:30-12:30	More-than-/Post-humanism	Jamie Lorimer (Oxford)	C76
9 March, 9:30-12:30	Colonialisms and decolonization	Joost Jongerden	C76
13 March, 9:30-12:30	Psychoanalysis	Rob Fletcher	C76

Registration

Registration is possible electronically via the WASS courses page:

<http://www.wass.wur.nl/UK/courses/registration/>. The maximum number of participants is set at 20, the minimum at 7.

Please make sure that you provide the most recent contact details so that in case of any changes you will be notified promptly. After your internet registration you will receive a short notification that your name has been registered. At least two weeks before the course you will receive a confirmation about the location and the schedule. WASS will also send an invoice to the address indicated in the registration form.

Please e-mail to Marcella.Haan@wur.nl in case you have not received the second confirmation two weeks before the course.

Fees

For PhDs of WASS there is a fee of 250 euros. For all other participants and for staff members (fellows/post docs), there is a fee of 500 euros for the whole course.

Location

Room tba.

De Leeuwenborch building, Wageningen University,
Hollandseweg 1
Wageningen the Netherlands

Cancellations

Cancellations may be made free of charge until 2 weeks before the start of the course. Cancellation fee of 100 % applies if participants cancel the course less than 2 weeks prior to the course. The organisers have a right to cancel the course not later than 2 weeks before the course starts. The participants will be notified of any changes at their e-mail addresses.

Further information

On course content please contact the course organisers, via the email addresses at the top of this outline.

On WASS: www.wass.wur.nl

For details about the logistics, accommodation, registration, fees, study materials, etc. please contact Marcella Haan Tel +31 317 484126 Marcella.haan@wur.nl