CONTEMPORARY MARXIST THEORY

This course will provide an overview of 20th-century Marxist, neo-Marxist, and post-Marxist social theory. Among the questions to be addressed are: Does Marxism provide an adequate theoretical foundation for the critique and transformation of capitalist society? What are the critical theoretical alternatives within and beyond Marxism? What are the limitations of Marxism as a theory of human liberation and how have other radical theories addressed these limitations? How does critical social theory inform sociological research and political practice?

COURSE READINGS (asterisk indicates required reading)

WEEK 1.  INTRODUCTION (January 9)

No readings

WEEK 2.  THE ORIGINS OF WESTERN MARXISM (January 16)

*Georg Lukacs, History and Class Consciousness, pp. 1-26, 83-110.
*Carl Boggs, Gramsci's Marxism, chapters 1-3.
Eduard Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism.
Lucio Colletti, "Bernstein and the Marxism of the Second International," in From Rousseau to Lenin.
Andrew Arato and Paul Breines, The Young Lukacs and the Origins of Western Marxism.
Andrew Feenberg, Lukacs, Marx, and the Sources of Critical Theory.
Istvan Meszaros, Lukacs' Concept of Dialectic.
Martin Jay, Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukacs to Habermas.
Antonio Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, especially pp. 5-14, 123-205, 321-343.
Joseph Femia, Gramsci's Political Thought.
Ann Showstack Sassoon, ed., Approaches to Gramsci.
Changal Mouffe, ed., Gramsci and Marxist Theory.
Christine Buci-Glucksmann, Gramsci and the State.

WEEK 3.  THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL AND CRITICAL THEORY (January 23)

*David Held, Introduction to Critical Theory, introduction and chapters 1-8.
Martin Jay, The Dialectical Imagination.
Phil Slater, The Origin and Significance of the Frankfurt School.
Perry Anderson, Considerations on Western Marxism.
Max Horkheimer, Critical Theory.
Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno, The Dialectic of Enlightenment.
Theodore Adorno et al., The Positivism Debate in German Sociology.
Theodore Adorno, Negative Dialectics.
Theodore Adorno, Prisms.
Walter Benjamin, Illuminations.
Herbert Marcuse, Reason and Revolution.
Herbert Marcuse, Negations.
Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization.
Albrecht Wellmer, Critical Theory of Society.

WEEK 4. HABERMAS' RECONSTRUCTION OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM (January 30)

*David Held, Introduction to Critical Theory, chapters 9-14.
*Jurgen Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, appendix.
*Jurgen Habermas, Theory and Practice, chapter 6.
*Jurgen Habermas, Communication and the Evolution of Society, chapter 4 (sections 1-5).
*Jurgen Habermas, Toward a Rational Society, chapter 6.
*Jurgen Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, part 2.
John B. Thompson and David Held, eds., Habermas: Critical Debates.
Craig Calhoun, ed., Habermas and the Public Sphere.
Tom Rockmore, Habermas on Historical Materialism.
Steven K. White, The Recent Work of Jurgen Habermas.

WEEK 5. STRUCTURALIST MARXISM AND ITS CRITICS (February 6)

*Louis Althusser, For Marx, pp. 87-111, 200-218.
Ted Benton, The Rise and Fall of Structural Marxism.
Perry Anderson, Arguments within English Marxism, chapters 1-3.
Simon Clarke et al., One-Dimensional Marxism: Althusser and the Politics of Culture.
Louis Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays, pp. 127-186.
Louis Althusser, Essays in Self-Criticism.
Nicos Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes.
Nicos Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism.
Nicos Poulantzas, State, Power, Socialism.

WEEK 6. ANALYTICAL MARXISM AND RATIONAL-CHOICE THEORY (February 13)

Tom Mayer, Analytical Marxism.
Erik Olin Wright, Classes, especially chapters 1-4.
Erik Olin Wright, Class Counts.
G. A. Cohen, "Reply to Elster on 'Marxism, Functionalism, and Game Theory,'" Theory and Society, Vol. 11, 1982
John Roemer, A General Theory of Exploitation and Class.
John Roemer, ed., Analytical Marxism.
Jon Elster, Making Sense of Marx.
Adam Przeworski, Capitalism and Social Democracy.

WEEK 7. THE MARX-WEBER DEBATE (February 20)

*Anthony Giddens, A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism, Introduction.
Bryan S. Turner, For Weber.
Karl Loewith, Max Weber and Karl Marx.
Frank Parkin, Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique.

WEEK 8. POST-STRUCTURALISM AND POST-MARXISM (February 27)

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy.
Ellen Meiksins Wood, The Retreat From Class.
Gavin Kitching, Rethinking Socialism.
Les Johnson, Marxism, Class Analysis and Socialist Pluralism.
Scott Lash and John Urry, The End of Organized Capitalism.
Bryan D. Palmer, Descent into Discourse: The Reification of Language and the Writing of Social History.

WEEK 9. POSTMODERNISM (March 6)
*George Ritzer, Postmodern Social Theory (chapters 1, 3-6, 9, 12).
*Pauline Marie Rosenau, Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences (chap. 1,7,8).
Jean-Francois Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition.
Jean Baudrillard, The Mirror of Production.
Jean Baudrillard, For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign.
Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish.
Michel Foucault, Madness and Civilization.
Alex Callinicos, Against Postmodernism: A Marxist Critique.
Steve Best and Douglas Kelsner, Postmodern Theory.
Roy Boyne and Ali Rattansi, eds., Postmodernism and Society.
David Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity.
Jurgen Habermas, The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity.
Anthony Giddens, The Consequences of Modernity.
Douglas Kellner, Critical Theory, Marxism, and Modernity.
Michael Ryan, Marxism and Deconstruction: A Critical Articulation.
Barry Smart, Foucault, Marxism and Critique.

WEEK 10. FEMINISM, MARXISM, POSTMODERNISM (March 13)
*Heidi Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union," in Lydia Sargent, ed., Women and Revolution.
*Jane Humphries, "Class Struggle and the Persistence of the Working-Class Family" in Anthony Giddens and David Held, eds., Class, Power, Conflict.
*Sandra Harding, "What is the Real Material Base of Patriarchy and Capital?" in Lydia Sargent, ed., Women and Revolution.
Michele Barrett, Women's Oppression Today.
Annette Kuhn and AnnMarie Wolpe, eds., *Feminism and Materialism.*
Zillah Eisenstein, ed., *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism.*
Nancy Fraser, *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory.*
Jane Flax, *Thinking Fragments: Psychoanalysis, Feminism and Postmodernism in the Contemporary West.*
Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought.*