Philosophy 3110: Social and Political Philosophy
Gabriel Soldatenko, Asst. Prof. of Philosophy
TR 9:30-10:45, Room: SO 2033, Fall 2012

Office Hours: Monday 8:00-9:00, Tuesday 12:00-2:00, and by appointment.
Social Science #4091

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Course Description: This course is organized around a series of close readings of some of the major figures, and traditions, of critical social thought in the West. As a result, the course has two definite limits; in the first place, it is confined to continental philosophy after the mid-nineteenth century. And secondly, it only looks at those authors who are critical, and by “critical” we mean those philosophers and traditions that begin from the premise that a better world is possible, and that such an end is desirable. As a result, this class is not a survey course where we start from the ancients and end at the present. Rather, this course will take our present social arrangement as its point of departure and look at some influential authors who have provided some important tools for how to think critically of the modern world. Thus, the class is meant to provide students with both a solid understanding of what social political philosophy is, and second, provide a ground that allows students to develop their own philosophical sensibility to our current social arrangement.

Texts: All course materials will be provided through Georgia View. Note that the cost you save in not having to buy books may be incurred through printing and photocopying.

Course Requirements: Over the course of the semester students
- will bring the days reading to class according to the schedule on the syllabus and/or the professor’s instructions;
- will actively engage the course material and participate in the class discussion; and
- will attend class regularly, even if attendance is not taken.

Student Learning Outcomes: By the end of the term students will have gained
- a richer sense of the history of Western philosophy, and the interrelation between epistemological questions and their impact on society;
- an understanding of the basic methods and important concepts through which one can engage in social political philosophy;
- a firm understanding of that branch of social political philosophy called “critical theory”;
- a general understanding of the work of Karl Marx, the Frankfurt School, the Anarchist tradition, and Michel Foucault; and

Evaluation: There will be two take-home exams, which will account for 50% of the final grade. In addition, there will be weekly homework assignments that will account for an additional 40%, and class participation in the form of group work will account for the final 10%.
Academic Integrity Statement: Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct. Section II of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the University's policy on academic honesty, including but not limited to provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, and misrepresentation/falsification of University records or academic work. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program.

Absence Policy: There are no excused absences in college. Students are responsible for making up class by conferring with classmates (i.e. getting notes and discussing the main topics of conversation). Students are responsible for all material covered: readings, lectures, and documentary presentations. I will allow make-up exams only if I'm contacted at least two days prior to the exam date.

Schedule of Readings:

August 21: Introduction: Social Political Philosophy and the Limits of Critical Social Theory in the Western Tradition

Part I. Class Analysis and the Critique of Capitalism


September 4 “Preface to the First Edition”
Chapter 4: “The General Formula for Capital”
On the 30th Groups 1 and 2
Homework #1 due on the 4th

September 11 Chapter 7: “Labor and Valorization Process”
On the 6th Groups 3 and 4
Homework #2 due on 11th

September 18 Chapter 13: “Co-operation”
On the 13th Groups 5 and 6
Homework #3 due on 18th

September 25 “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, 1844”
On the 20th Groups 7 and 8
Homework #4 due on 25th

Part II. The Frankfurt School

October 2
“Thé New Forms of Control”
“The Closing of the Political Universe”
On the 27th Groups 9 and 1
Homework #5 due on 2nd


October 9
“The Closing of the Political Universe” (continued)
“From Negative to Positive Thinking”
On the 4th Groups 2 and 3
Homework #6 due on 9th

Sections 1-6
On the 11th Groups 4 and 5
Homework #7 due on 16th

Sections 24-27, 35, 43-45
On the 18th Groups 6 and 7
Homework #8 due on 23rd

Part III. Anarchist Social Thought

Chapters 1-3, 10, and 11
Group 8

“The ABC of Anarchism” (Chapters 1-4, and 7-9)
Group 9
Homework #9 due (can cover either of the readings)
Take Home Exam #1 Due

“What is Anarchism?”
“Prisons”
On the 1st Groups 1 and 2
Homework #10 due on 6th

Part IV. Society and Power

November 8: Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power” in *Essential Works of Foucault v.3*
November 15: Michel Foucault, “First Lecture” and “Second Lecture” from Society Must
          On the 15th Groups 3 and 4
          Homework #11 due on 20th

November 22: No Class

November 29  “The Body of the Condemned”
          On the 27th Groups 5 and 6
          On the 29th Groups 7 and 8
          Homework #12 due on 29th

          “The Spectacle of the Scaffold”
          Group 9

December 11: Take Home Exam #2 Due (10:30-12:30)