

**Critical Theory**

Code: 100304  
ECTS Credits: 6

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
2500246 Philosophy	OB	3	2

The proposed teaching and assessment methodology that appear in the guide may be subject to changes as a result of the restrictions to face-to-face class attendance imposed by the health authorities.

**Contact**

Name: Gerard Vilar Roca  
Email: Gerard.Vilar@uab.cat

**Use of Languages**

Principal working language: catalan (cat)  
Some groups entirely in English: No  
Some groups entirely in Catalan: No  
Some groups entirely in Spanish: No

**Teachers**

Ager Perez Casanovas

**Prerequisites**

Proficiency in English and Spanish languages.

**Objectives and Contextualisation**

This subject offers a historical and systematic picture of the main philosophical problems addressed by the critical theory developed mainly by the so-called Frankfurt School. To this end, we will study the main texts that have produced the three generations of philosophers and the current trends of the feminist critical theory.

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

1. Understanding the main problems and concepts used by critical theory.
2. To identify, analyze and explain some concepts and arguments.
3. To know the main theoretical approaches.
4. To be familiar with the main texts of the critical tradition.
5. To use the philosophical terminology appropriately
6. Developing the skills for the student's reasoning
7. To promote written and oral presentations of the acquired knowledge
8. To identify the conceptual, analytical and methodological potential offered by the critical theory
9. To establish a dialogue between the tradition of critical theory and other contemporary currents of social philosophy

## Competences

- Analysing and summarising the main arguments of fundamental texts of philosophy in its various disciplines.
- Applying the knowledge of ethics to the moral problems of society, and assessing the implications about the human condition of changes in the world of contemporary techniques.
- Developing critical thinking and reasoning and communicating them effectively both in your own and other languages.
- Placing the most representative philosophical ideas and arguments of a period in their historical background and relating the most important authors of each period of any philosophical discipline.
- Recognising and interpreting topics and problems of philosophy in its various disciplines.
- Recognising the philosophical implications of the scientific knowledge.
- Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
- Students must be capable of applying their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional way and they should have building arguments and problem resolution skills within their area of study.
- Students must be capable of collecting and interpreting relevant data (usually within their area of study) in order to make statements that reflect social, scientific or ethical relevant issues.
- Students must be capable of communicating information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- Students must develop the necessary learning skills to undertake further training with a high degree of autonomy.
- Students must have and understand knowledge of an area of study built on the basis of general secondary education, and while it relies on some advanced textbooks it also includes some aspects coming from the forefront of its field of study.
- Thinking in a critical and independent manner on the basis of the specific topics, debates and problems of philosophy, both historically and conceptually.

## Learning Outcomes

1. Analysing historical cases about scientific facts.
2. Autonomously searching, selecting and processing information both from structured sources (databases, bibliographies, specialized magazines) and from across the network.
3. Carrying out oral presentations using an appropriate academic vocabulary and style.
4. Communicating in the studied language in oral and written form, properly using vocabulary and grammar.
5. Demonstrating a personal stance over a problem or controversy of philosophical nature, or a work of philosophical research.
6. Discriminating the features that define the writer's place in the context of a problem and reorganising them in a consistent diagram.
7. Distinguishing and analysing representative texts of the main genres of the philosophical literature.
8. Distinguishing the topics of philosophical relevance in current debates.
9. Documenting a philosophical issue and contrasting its sources.
10. Engaging in debates about philosophical issues respecting the other participants' opinions.
11. Establishing relationships between science, philosophy, art, religion, politics, etc.
12. Explaining aspects of the history of science by using the discipline's specific terminology.
13. Explaining the philosophical importance of contemporary science and its implementation area.
14. Explaining the specific notions of the History of Philosophy.
15. Identifying the main ideas of a related text and drawing a diagram.
16. Indicating and discussing the main characteristics of the distinctive thought of a period and contextualizing them.
17. Mastering the relevant languages to the necessary degree in the professional practice.
18. Organizing their own time and work resources: designing plans with priorities of objectives, calendars and action commitments.
19. Reading basic philosophical text thoroughly.
20. Reading thoroughly philosophical texts of the History of Philosophy.

21. Recognising, with a critical eye, philosophical referents of the past and present and assessing its importance.
22. Relating several ideas of the current philosophical debates.
23. Solving problems autonomously.
24. Submitting works in accordance with both individual and small group demands and personal styles.
25. Summarising the main arguments of the great contemporary texts of ethics and political philosophy.
26. Using specialized knowledge acquired in an interdisciplinary context when debating.
27. Using suitable terminology when drawing up an academic text.

## Content

1. Critical theory and traditional theory (Horkheimer, Habermas)
2. The critique of instrumental reason (Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse)
3. Knowledge in constellations (Benjamin)
4. Looking for a non-identifying reason (Adorno)
5. The communicative reason (Habermas)
6. The pathologies of reason (Honneth)
7. Critical theory and gender (Fraser, Benhabib, Allen)

## Methodology

1. Master classes and other methodologies of group work in class.
2. Writing workshop to follow-up the writing process of different works.
3. Individualized tutorials or in small groups in office hours.
4. Presentation of group work in class.
5. Preparation of personalized itineraries and follow-up of the student's autonomous work.
6. Collaborative and cooperative learning.

## Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Class Activities	7	0.28	1, 5, 9, 11, 14, 4, 3, 27, 18, 10, 24, 21, 22, 25
Grup discussions	10	0.4	26, 12, 3, 18, 10, 24
Theoretical Classes	38	1.52	26, 11, 12, 14, 19, 21, 22
Type: Supervised			
Conducting works	12.5	0.5	26, 17, 13, 19, 20, 10, 25
Tutorships	10	0.4	2, 5, 6, 3, 15, 16, 19, 18, 24, 22, 23
Type: Autonomous			
Compulsory Readings	40	1.6	8, 7, 9, 15, 18, 22, 23, 25
Writing	25	1	4, 27, 15, 19, 24

## Assessment

Evaluation:

Continuous evaluation consists in:

1. Two partial exams

Partial 1 (4 points)

Partial 2 (4 points)

2. To write an essay (2000 words) (2 points)

General information

- At the beginning of the course, the format to follow for the writing of the philosophical essay will be explained, and an expanded list of recommended readings will be provided.

- The dates for the written exams and the delivery of the remaining exercises are indicated in the course timeline. It will not be accepted any work out of the set dates. For more information, see the re-evaluation criteria.

- Any change in the assessment or content dates will be announced in advance.

- In the event that tests or exams cannot be taken onsite, they will be adapted to an online format made available through the UAB's virtual tools (original weighting will be maintained). Homework, activities and class participation will be carried out through forums, wikis and/or discussion on Teams, etc. Lecturers will ensure that students are able to access these virtual tools, or will offer them feasible alternatives.

- In the event of a student committing any irregularity that may lead to a significant variation in the grade awarded to an assessment activity, the student will be given a zero for this activity, regardless of any disciplinary process that may take place. In the event of several irregularities in assessment activities of the same subject, the student will be given a zero as the final grade for this subject.

Non evaluable students

The students who do not present at least one of the two partial exams will not be evaluated at the end of the course unless they contact with the person in charge of the subject with enough time in advance. In that case, the professor will find an alternative evaluation for the student.

Criteria for reevaluation

In order to have a final grade, it is mandatory for the student to be evaluated both the partial and the essay.

Date of re-evaluation: to be determined.

**WARNING - STUDENTS WHO WOULD LIKE TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE RE-EVALUATION MUST CONTACT BY EMAIL WITH THE SUBJECT PROFESSOR TWO WEEKS BEFORE OF THE DATA ESTABLISHED. PLEASE DO NOT FORGIVE TO EMAIL ME TO Gerard.Vilar@uab.cat**

## Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Mid-term Exams	50%	3.5	0.14	1, 2, 26, 5, 6, 8, 7, 9, 17, 11, 12, 13, 14, 4, 3, 27, 15, 16, 19, 20, 18, 10, 24, 21, 22, 23, 25
Tutorships	25%	2	0.08	18, 24, 23
Writing a brief essay (2000 words)	25%	2	0.08	2, 27, 18, 24

## Bibliography

### References

Adorno, Th. and Horkheimer, M., *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*.

Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*

Fraser, Nancy, *Fortunes of feminism*

Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*

Honneth, A., *The Struggle for Recognition*

Horkheimer, M., *Critical Theory and Traditional Theory*

Horkheimer, M, *Critique of Instrumental Reason*

### Further Readings

Benhabib, S. (2006). *Situating the Self*.

Benhabib, S. et al (1995). *Feminist contentions: a Philosophical Exchange*. Londres: Routledge.

Fraser, Nancy (1997). *Justice Interruptus. Critical Reflections on the "postsocialist" position*.

\_\_\_\_ (2008). *Scales of Justice*.

Habermas, J. (1989). *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*

McCarthy, Th. (1992). *Ideals and Illusions*.

Jay, M. (1988). *The dialectical Imagination*.

Rush, F. (ed.) (2004). *The Cambridge Companion to Critical Theory*. Cambridge: CUP

Wiggershaus, R. (2012). *The Frankfurt School*.