

Critical Social Thought

The major and minor in critical social thought are administered by the Critical Social Thought Committee: Professor Alderman (English), Cocks (politics, *director of advising*), Cotter (chemistry, *chair*), Grayson (religion), Hornstein (psychology), Martin (English), Remmler (German studies), Rundle (theatre arts, gender studies), Wilson (economics).

Affiliated faculty: Blaetz (film studies), Datla (history), Davis (art history), Douglas (psychology), Gabriel (economics), Gill (politics), Gudmundson (Latin American studies), Gundermann (Spanish, gender studies), Lawrence (educational studies), Markovits (politics), Moseley (economics), Renda (gender studies), Savoy (geology, environmental studies), Smith (politics), Tucker (sociology), Wartenberg (philosophy)

Contact Persons

Patricia Ware, *senior administrative assistant*
Donald Cotter, *chair*
Joan Cocks, *director of advising*

Critical Social Thought Website

<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/criticalsocialthought>

Critical social thought is designed for students with a passion for ideas, a desire to ask probing questions about social realities, and an independent approach to education. This interdisciplinary program explores the place of thought in history and society, and the ways in which ideas both generate and are generated by concrete practice. Critical social thought embraces the historical forces that have shaped contemporary experience; the creative expressions that have emerged to represent that experience; and the conceptual and political tensions between truth and uncertainty, individuality and community, power and freedom, cruelty and justice in the modern age. Treating common sense and conventional beliefs as points of departure rather than predetermined points of arrival,

critical social thought pivots on questioning the taken-for-granted from all angles.

While acquainting students with a variety of intellectual traditions, this program also requires each of its majors and minors to combine different thinkers and currents of thought to engage with a theme or question of her original design. A few examples of past themes students have chosen to pursue are: the Western canon and its critics, the causes of peace and conflict, postcolonial studies, architecture and the social organization of space, social inequality, ethical values and social change, disenchantment, fractured identities in cross-cultural context.

Declaring the Major

Each student who majors in critical social thought (CST) shall meet with the program chair and the director of advising, preferably during the first semester of her sophomore year, to discuss her intellectual interests and to select two advisors from the critical social thought faculty who will help her sculpt her curriculum around a central question of her choice. To declare her major in the program, the student must submit to the chair a title describing her question, a list of the courses she proposes to take for credit in her major, and the signatures of her two CST advisors. Later, she must compose a two-to-three-page proposal that identifies the focus of her program, explains its genesis and significance, and lists the courses she has taken and intends to take to satisfy the requirements of the major. A draft of this proposal must be submitted to the program chair for faculty discussion and approval *four* weeks before the end of the first semester of the student's junior year, or four weeks before the end of the second semester of her sophomore year if she plans to be away in the fall of her junior year. Normally, students will have the opportunity to write their proposals as part of one of the foundational courses, 248, 249, or 250. In the senior seminar, CST 350, students will be expected to present their proposals as they

hone the abstract of their final research paper.

Requirements for the Major

Credits

- A minimum of 40 credits in the program, including three core courses
- 20 of the 40 credits shall be at the 300 level and divided between two or more departments or programs.
- No more than a total of 8 credits of independent study (295, 395) may be counted toward the major in addition to 8 credits of 395 senior thesis work.

Courses

- *Required core courses (students may take all of these core courses but must take at least):*
 - 248, Science, Revolution, and Modernity *or*
 - 249, Enlightenment and Modernity *or*
 - 250, Classics in Nineteenth-Century Critical Social Thought *and*
 - 251, Twentieth-Century Theory and Its Discontents *or*
 - 252, Literature and Politics *or*
 - 253, Critical Race Theory *or*
 - 254, Postcolonial Theory *or*
 - 255, Human Agency and Historical Transformation: Pivotal Moments in the Development of Capitalism *and*
 - 350, Seminar in Critical Social Thought (writing and speaking intensive; to be taken in junior or senior year)
- Majors are also required to take at least one course within four of the program's six fields, which are briefly described below. Courses to fulfill this requirement may be selected in consultation with a major's advisors from either traditional disciplines or other interdisciplinary programs, as well as from CST courses.

Critical social thought is an interdisciplinary major. Students who pursue an interdisciplinary major automatically fulfill the College's "outside the major" requirement (see page 8).

Declaring the Minor

Each student who wishes to minor in critical social thought shall meet with the program chair, preferably by the end of the second semester of her sophomore year, to discuss her minor interest and to select an advisor from the program faculty. In consultation with her advisor, the student shall shape her minor program around a question of her own design. By the end of her junior year, she shall submit to the program chair a two-page proposal that explains the substantive focus of her minor and lists the courses that count toward it.

A draft of this proposal must be submitted to the program chair for faculty discussion and approval *four* weeks before the end of the first semester of the student's junior year, or four weeks before the end of the second semester of her sophomore year if she plans to be away in the fall of her junior year.

Normally, students will have the opportunity to write their proposals as part of one of the foundational courses, 248, 249, or 250.

Requirements for the Minor

Credits

- At least 16 credits, including three courses at the 200 level or higher and at least one course at the 300 level

Courses

- At least one core course at the 200 level (see above)
- The four courses must cross at least two departments.

For New Students

First-year students who are considering critical social thought as a major are encouraged to select courses, in addition to CST 100, with a critical or philosophical slant at the 100 and 200 level in the traditional disciplines and in other interdisciplinary programs (including, but not limited to, area studies programs, environmental studies, gender studies, and film studies). A small sample of courses appropriate for first-year students with an interest in

CST are the following: Economics 210, Marx-ian Economic Theory; Educational Studies 109, Whiteness: The Other Side of Racism; Gender Studies 101, Introduction to Gender Studies; Politics 117, Globalization and Its Discontents; Politics 212, Modern Political Thought; Religion 226, Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion. First-year students strongly interested in CST as a major may also apply to the instructors of 200-level courses in CST (CST 248 through CST 255).

First-year students interested in critical social thought are urged, moreover, to arrange a meeting with the program chair, Karen Remmler (kremmler@mholyoke.edu) and/or the director of advising, Joan Cocks (jcocks@mholyoke.edu) at their earliest convenience.

CST 100s, Experiments in Critical Social Thought, is designed especially for entering students curious about the program. Students may also consider other first-year seminars such as: CST 133, Gods and Monsters: Science and Scientist in the Modern Work; Politics 100 (03), The Self and Political Thought; German Studies 100, Memory and War

The Introductory and Intermediate Courses

Experiments in Critical Social Thought is a 100-level first-year seminar recommended for students who are curious about the program. Majors may take all of the intermediate core courses but must take two: 248, 249 or 250, and one of the following: 251, 252, 253, 254, or 255.

The Capstone Course

The Seminar in Critical Social Thought is a one-semester, 300-level, speaking and writing course in which students will prepare and present a final analytical/research paper on some aspect of their CST theme. Required for all critical social thought majors.

The Fields and Illustrative Courses

CST majors are required to take at least one course in at least four of the following six fields. Ordinarily, a major decides with her advisors what course would satisfy a given field. If, however, a student wishes either a fuller description or examples of courses that would satisfy each of the fields, she should consult the CST website at

<http://www.mholyoke.edu/acad/criticalsocialthought/courses.html>, where she will find illustrative courses for each, as well as a more thorough description of the field itself.

Social and Political Theory: On key tendencies and genres of critical inquiry, and competing conceptions of freedom, power, justice, and the good life

Order and Transformation: On the interplay between continuity and change, stability and disorder, tradition and experimentation in thought and practice

Cultural Expression and Social Reality: On the interpenetration of cultural representations, modes of perception, technological innovations, and practical reality

Class and Political Economy: On different social organizations of material production and their implications for relations among individuals, social groups, regions, and peoples

Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality: On racial power relations, colonial and postcolonial identities, ethnic and communal solidarities and hostilities, and varieties of nationalism

Gender and Sexuality: On identities and relations grounded in the masculine/feminine distinction; and their transformation by ordinary and unconventional selves, marginal subcultures, social movements, and state policy

Course Offerings

100f First-Year Seminar

Fall 2011

**100f(1) War and Memory*

(First-year seminar; speaking- and writing-intensive course; taught in English; Same as German Studies 100, European Studies 100) How do nations, groups, and individuals remember war? We explore the conflicting narratives of war that emerge at memorial sites, in museums, in film and other visual media, and in oral testimony. With an emphasis on case studies of actual national and transnational controversies arising out of competing versions of the past by the multiple participants in war, we investigate the impact of war in the last century up to the present for defining national, ethnic, gender, and racial identities; for establishing responsibility and rendering justice; and for remembering the dead. Cases focus on the remembrance of WW II and its legacies in Germany, Japan, and the U.S.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

K. Remmler

Prereq. fy; No knowledge of German necessary; 4 credits

100f(2) Self and Political Thought

(First-year seminar; writing-intensive course; Same as Politics 100f(02)) What is the relationship between personal experience and political thought? How do political thinkers grasp and convey the connections between self and political order? Our first-year seminar will probe the links between heart and mind in political philosophy by exploring the lives and writings of illustrative figures who together span the history of political thought. Texts will include memoirs and fiction as well as abstract theoretical works

Meets Social Sciences III-A requirement

J. Cocks

4 credits

100f(3) What Is Performance?

(First-year seminar; writing-intensive course; Same as Theatre Arts 150 (02)) What's the difference between acting and being, and how does the idea of "performance" structure this difference? How do we "perform" our

own identities, and how do we interpret the performances of others? This seminar offers a basic introduction to performance studies, an exciting new discipline through which everyday life, ritual behaviors, and artistic practices are studied. Perspectives from the arts, humanities, and social sciences will be explored using both textual and performative approaches. This is a speaking-, reading-, and writing-intensive class that includes innovative individual and group exercises.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

E. Rundle

Prereq. fy or permission of instructor; 4 credits

100f(4) Goodbye, Conventional Wisdom

(First-year seminar; speaking- and writing-intensive course; Same as European Studies 100 (01)) One of the hallmarks of a liberal arts education is to draw on a broad base of knowledge in order to interrogate common assumptions. No one exemplifies this critical approach better than French philosopher Michel Foucault. One of the most influential thinkers of recent times, Foucault revolutionized several academic disciplines and even questioned the very notion of a discipline itself. He did so by revealing the history and transformations of ideas now viewed as self-evident. This first-year seminar invites students to develop similar analytical skills. Following Foucault's lead, the course pays special attention to preconceptions about government, freedom, identity, and sexuality. *Meets Humanities I-B requirement*
J. Crumbaugh
4 credits

248s Science, Revolution, and Modernity

Introduces critical analysis of science and technology by tracing the historiography of the Scientific Revolution. The significance of this extended intellectual episode has been assessed in radically different ways throughout the intervening centuries. As such, it provides a fertile ground on which to pose and answer important questions about science and its role in society. What does it mean to regard science as 'revolutionary'? How are scientific developments shaped by, and how do they shape, the social, economic, and political worlds in which they are embedded? How is our contemporary under-

standing of science and technology influenced by the stories we tell about the past?

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

D. Cotter

Prereq. so, jr, or permission of instructor;

Gateway course for minor in Conceptual Foundations of Science; 4 credits

250f Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion

(Same as Philosophy 226fs, Religion 226) An introduction to some of the great critical voices of the nineteenth century. We will explore the ideas of such mutinous thinkers as Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, focusing on the style as well as the substance of their works and the circumstances that provoked them to write and/or that their writings helped provoke. The course will highlight the tension between appearance and reality, the dialectic of domination and subordination, and the place of reason and irrationality in social life.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

J. Grayson

4 credits

***251s Twentieth-Century Theory and Its Discontent: Psychoanalytic Theory**

(Speaking-intensive course; Same as Psychology 225) An introduction to the contested terrain of psychoanalytic theory, which has so hugely influenced twentieth-century thinking. Reading widely across Freud's work and that of his colleagues, we will situate key ideas—repression, desire, masochism, neurosis, sublimation, etc.—within a range of interpretive frameworks. Our goal will be to analyze the varied implications of psychoanalytic theory for contemporary thinking about individuals and society.

Meets Social Sciences III-A requirement

G. Hornstein

Prereq. so, jr, sr. One prior course in either Psychology or CST; 4 credits

252fs Art and Politics: Histories of Performance I

(Same as Theatre Arts 251) A survey of world performance history, including: the evolution of human language and consciousness; the rise of oral, ritual, and shamanic performance; religious and civic festivals; and imperial theatre practices that position the stage at

the dangerous intersection of religious worship, public taste, royal patronage, and government censure. Understanding performance as both artistic practice and social institution, this course emphasizes the role performance has played in changing audiences and as a cultural and political force in various societies. We explore not only how performances were created—in terms of design, dramaturgy, architecture, and acting—but also for whom, and why.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets

Humanities I-A requirement

E. Rundle

4 credits

***253s Critical Race Theory**

(Same as African American and African Studies 208) This course examines the discursive relationship between race and law in contemporary U.S. society. Readings examine the ways in which racial bodies are constituted in the cultural and political economy of American society. The main objective is to explore the rules and social practices that govern the relationship of race to gender, nationality, sexuality, and class in U.S. courts and other cultural institutions. Thinkers covered include W.E.B. DuBois, Kimberle Crenshaw, Derrick Bell, and Richard Delgado, among others.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Social Sciences III-A requirement

L. Wilson

Prereq. so, jr, sr. Critical Social Thought 248, 249, or 250 recommended but not required, or permission of instructor; 4 credits

254s Postcolonial Theory:

Postcolonialism/Postructuralism

(Same as English 254) Postcolonial theory probes the centrality of colonialism and imperialism to modernity, and examines vital forms of anticolonial insurgency as models for critiques of domination and hegemony. This course will explore these imperatives from Marxist, poststructuralist, feminist, and psychoanalytic perspectives, paying particular attention to nationalism, the state, globalization, identity, and alternative political formations in the context of empire. Theorists read will include Lenin, Fanon, Spivak, Lloyd, Rose, and Chakrabarty.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

A. Martin

Prereq. so, jr, sr. Critical Social Thought 248, 249, or 250 recommended but NOT required, or permission of instructor; 4 credits

***255f Human Agency and Historical Transformation: Pivotal Moments in the Development of Capitalism**

(Same as Economics 204, History 301) This seminar examines evidence and theories on the origins, development, and dynamics of capitalism and the modern state. We shall focus on the transition to (agrarian) capitalism in early modern England, the industrialization of production in nineteenth-century Europe and the United States, and the political and economic crisis of the 1930s depression. As we ask how fundamental changes in human communities come about, we shall consider the relative contributions of individual agency and social determination to the creation of a world so many now regard as either natural or inevitable.

Does not meet a distribution requirement

J. Christiansen

Prereq. jr, sr, or permission of instructors; 4 credits

295fs Independent Study

Does not meet a distribution requirement

The department

Prereq. so, jr, sr. or permission of department; 1-4 credits

350f Seminar in Critical Social Thought

(Speaking- and writing-intensive course) A seminar for CST seniors in which they present their independent research, respond critically to one another's work, and lead discussion. In support of that research, this course will explore the history of critical method, from the Enlightenment through 20th-century critical theory and post-colonial studies. Every student will produce a substantial essay on a question in the broad field of social thought. Students will present their work publicly and cultivate agility in speaking, arguing, and writing.

Does not meet a distribution requirement

L. Wilson

Prereq. Critical Social Thought sr; other jr and sr with permission of instructor; seniors who intend to write a thesis must take 4 credits of Critical Social Thought 395 in the fall, in

addition to this course; 4 credits

395fs Independent Study

Does not meet a distribution requirement

The department

Prereq. so, jr, sr. or permission of department; 1-8 credits