1. Theorizing theory.

Social theory as a conceptualization of ‘the social.’ Social theory and modernity: four paradigms (Alexander). Historical character of theory: when does contemporary social theory begin? From the rejection of theory to the end of ‘crisis talk.’ What happened in social theory in the last thirty years. Types of theoretical reactions to the crisis of structural functionalism. ‘Four paradigms’ revisited: the matrix for contemporary social theory.

Seminar readings:


Recommended readings:


Subjective reaction to the modernization process. What is symbolic about interactionism? The structure of the Self. Deterministic and indeterministic interpretations of the Self. Symbolic interactionism between ‘situations’ and ‘structures.’ Goffman’s synthesis: the interaction order.

Seminar readings:


Recommended readings:


3. Phenomenological sociology and Ethnomethodology.


Seminar readings:


Recommended readings:


4. The “social” is not what people think it is? Transformations of the revolutionary spirit: in search of the lost utopia? Jurgen Habermas and Critical Theory.


Seminar readings:


Recommended readings:


Seminar readings:


Recommended readings:


6. The “social” is what it is? From Functionalism to Neofunctionalism. Jeffrey Alexander, Paul Colomy. The “German Branch:” Niklas Luhmann, Richard Munch.

New philosophy of social sciences. Post-Parsonian period in sociology. Fields of reconstruction and continuation (action, order, equilibrium, ideology). Neofunctionalist research programs in sociology of culture (Alexander) and in sociology of social change (Colomy). Luhmann: types of systems and their modes of reproduction; temporality of social systems; communication as an elementary unit of sociological analysis. Richard Munch: structure—action dilemma. General theory of action: symbolic complexity and action contingency.

Seminar readings:


Recommended readings:


7. There is no “social”? Postmodernism and social theory.

Postmodernism as a way out, as an attitude, as a transition. Postmodernism and modernity. Postmodernism and ambivalence. Deconstructing narratives in the era of simulation (Derrida—Lyotard—Baudrillard). Postmodern conceptions of social sciences: discontinuity and dissemination. Postmodern deconstruction of “society”: the end of agency, the end of resistance, the end of history.

Seminar readings:


Recommended readings:


8. The return of history in social theory.


Seminar readings:

**Recommended readings:**


**9. The return of the “social.”**


**Seminar reading:**


**Recommended readings:**


Seminar readings:


Recommended readings:


Bauman, Liquid


