The course will be divided into five modules, four hours each. Each of them will be devoted to one particular “missing issue” of social theory: theory itself, subjectivity/agency, criticism, change, reflexivity. Each of them will be presented from a point of view of different theoretical orientations, understood very broadly: as paradigms of thinking, rather than sociological theories “of something.” The course will emphasize interactions between different theoretical orientations and the role of theoretical legacy of social thought in shaping contemporary problems and their solutions.

ONE.
In search of theory.

1. Theorizing theory.

From 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-functionalist “paradigm.” Theory as an art of seeing. Theory as an art of interpretation. Theory as an art of translation. Theory between chaos and order. Criteria for a good theory. Why do we need theory?

2. Historical character of social theory.

The social construction of theory. Liminality and the origins of social theory. Types of theory. The forming moments of social theory. Social theory as a product of modernity.

Seminar readings:


Recommended readings:


TWO.
In search of subjectivity/agency.


Seminar readings:


Recommended readings:


4. Phenomenological sociology and Ethnomethodology.

Phenomenology as “de-socialization” and “re-socialization.” Alfred Schutz: life-world, natural attitude, and sociology as a puppet show. Ethnomethodological field of studies. Reflexive
character of daily life: “account-ability” of activities. Ethnomethodology as a foundational challenge for sociology.

Seminar readings:


Recommended readings:


THREE.

Transformations of the revolutionary spirit: in search of the lost utopia?


Seminar readings:

Jurgen Habermas, *The Task of a Critical Theory of Society; Social Action and Rationality; The Concept of the Lifeworld and the Hermeneutic Idealism of Interpretive*

Recommended readings:


Critical theory and contemporary world: “emancipation in the age of global social movements.” Feminism and critical theory. Politics of identity, politics of difference

Seminar readings:


Recommended readings:


FOUR.
Mainstream strikes back: in search of transforming order and ordered transformation.

7. From Functionalism to Neofunctionalism. Jeffrey Alexander, Paul Colomy. [dodac eisenstadta]
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).

Seminar readings:


Recommended readings:


Richard Munch: structure—action dilemma. General theory of action: symbolic complexity and action contingency. Niklas Luhmann: types of systems and their modes of reproduction; temporality of social systems; communication as an elementary unit of sociological analysis.

Seminar readings:

Recommended readings:


FIVE.
In search of the conceptualization of our time.


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; linguistic turn: the postmodern conception of fact; localization of truth; limited methodology and methodological polycentrism. Sociologist as an anti-foundational, self-critical, interpreter.

Seminar readings:


Recommended readings:


10. Postmodernism and Social Science.


Seminar readings:


Recommended readings:


