

## **GRADUATE COURSE PROPOSAL**

### **CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF THEORY AND CRITICISM**

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**Duration: One semester, once/week, 3hours**

**Title: On the Contemporary Possibility of Political Interiority**

**Type of Course: B Category**

#### **Description:**

Every major political theory and practice could be conceived of as needing to address two key human aspects: the external and internal. For example, Aristotle claimed that in order for the polis to thrive, it required that members of the city-state be provided with both material goods as well as those of the soul. Marx, with great acuity, analysed the nature and force of ideologies as well as the material and historical structures that produced class divisions. Contemporary political theory and practices struggle to address the aforementioned aspects of political and social organisation, but with a specific challenge in mind: current economic and technological advances (and failures) have created a social and political order that fundamentally undermines modern western liberal concepts, including individual personhood, freedom, rights, equality, private versus public, sovereignty, rule of law, democracy, property—all of which have deep material, historical (external) and psychological, spiritual (internal) foundations. This course looks at recent attempts to make sense of this shift by understanding, assessing and critiquing the philosophical and political projects of thinkers like Hannah Arendt, Roberto Esposito, Michel Henry, Simone Weil and Edith Stein, among others. Specifically, we will examine both the internal and external demands made by these recent thinkers.

Three questions will guide our inquiry: a) What has changed or died with respect to older, modern political paradigms and why? b) How can we respond to these changes and their effects? c) Does the model proposed by the theorist work and what are its limitations or positive possibilities?

Week I: Introduction: Explanation of thesis: Maurizio Lazzarato's *The Making of the Indebted Man*

Week II: Excerpts from Antonio Negri, Franco "Bifo" Berardi, Luce Fabbre and Paolo Virno: On the failures of capitalism and socialism

Week III: Hannah Arendt: *The Human Condition*, first half

Week IV: Hannah Arendt: *The Human Condition*, the second half

Week V: Hannah Arendt: *The Life of the Mind*, Thinking

Week VI: Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, Thinking and Willing

Week VII: Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, Willing and Judging

Week VIII: Simone Weil: *The Need for Roots*

Week IX: Edith Stein: *An Investigation Concerning the State*

Week X: Michel Henry, *La barbarie (Barbarism)*

Week XI: Roberto Esposito, *Immunitas*, first half

Week XII: Robert Esposito, *Immunitas*, second half

Week XIII: Roberto Esposito, *Communitas*

**Class Requirements:**

1 in class seminar plus written thesis (5-10pp): 25%

1 major research paper (20-30pp): 60%

Class participation in seminars: 15%