Course Proposal, 2018-19: Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism

Course Title: Reading Marx and the Marxist Tradition

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Description and Rationale:

This course will consider what are widely recognized to be major texts in the tradition of Marxist thought. Beginning with Marx’s own work, this course will provide students with the opportunity to understand texts that often serve as foundational references for contemporary left thought, but which are often more “alluded to” than rigorously examined. The emphasis in the readings and seminars will be on the Marxist tradition from Marx to the middle of the twentieth century, although students can expect the discussion to be more wide-ranging.

Syllabus (Draft):

Week 1 Introduction


Week 4 Lenin: from What is to be Done; from The State and Revolution; “Letters from Afar”; “Farewell Letter to the Swiss Workers” and “The Third International and Its Place in History.”


Week 6 Georg Lukacs, from History and Class Consciousness; and from Tailism and the Dialectic.

Week 7 Antonio Gramsci, from The Prison Notebooks.

Week 8 Walter Benjamin, from Charles Baudelaire: The Lyric Poet of High Capitalism; Leon Trotsky, from Literature and Revolution.

Week 9 Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer, from Dialectic of Enlightenment.
Week 10

Week 11

Week 12
Louis Althusser, from For Marx; from Reading Capital; from Essays in Self-Criticism; and from Philosophy of the Encounter.

Week 13
Final Week.