

# Phil. 506

Dr. Andrew Feenberg

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This is a course on 20th century existentialism, Critical Theory, and postmodernism. The main philosophers covered include Heidegger, Lukacs, Adorno and Horkheimer, Habermas and Foucault. The theme is the response to the crisis of scientific-technical rationalism and the breakdown of traditional concepts of individuality and history. This response at first takes the form of attempts to create "concrete" philosophies that focus on the personal and socio-historical dimensions of human life. The century is ending with new developments related to the turn to language through communication theory or linguistics

These thinkers employ the elaborate conceptual tools evolved in the Western philosophical tradition to analyze and explain phenomena philosophy had never before treated as central, such as personal relations, language, political action, technology. Unfortunately, some of the readings are difficult and technical. No one should take this course without having previously taken at least two courses in philosophy. The best introduction would be familiarity with both ancient and modern philosophy (especially Kant). It would be helpful to have had some exposure to Marxism as well.

The grade will be based equally on three essay tests. Dates to be announced. Special arrangements to write longer research papers can be made upon request.

I will hold office hours Tues. 5:00-6:00 p.m. My office room number is AH4140. Tel. 858-459-0625 and during office hours, 619-594-2403. My email is feenberg@sdsu.edu and my web page address is [www-rohan.sdsu.edu/faculty/feenberg](http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/faculty/feenberg). This syllabus will be posted on my web page. You are welcome to come in for help with the course whenever you need it.

The readings will be drawn from the following books:

Syllabus available in the Copy Center of SDSU Bookstore; Heidegger, *Basic Writings (BW)*; Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment (DE)*; Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness (HCC)*; Habermas *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action (MCCA)*; Foucault, *Power/Knowledge(P/K)*. We will spend about three weeks on each author.

The Assignments follow. Numbers correspond approximately to classes.

## **Assignments**

### I. Lukacs V. Foucault

1. HCC, 83-110 12. P/K, 78-133
2. HCC, 110-149 13. P/K, 134-165
3. HCC, 149-209

### II. Heidegger

4. BW, 37-89
5. BW, 92-141
6. BW, 144-187

### III. Adorno and Horkheimer

7. DE, ix-xvii, 3-42
8. DE, 43-80
9. DE, 120-167

### IV. Habermas

10. MCCA, 43-115
11. MCCA, 116-194

### V. Foucault

12. P/K, 78-133
13. P/K, 134-165