

Ideals and Ideologies - Encouraging Critical Thinking

Type of course and reader: Reading seminar held by Jozef Zelinka, doctoral candidate.

Description of the course: After the postmodern turn the intensification of critical tendencies (Best/Kellner, 1997: 25) among with the increased cultural fragmentation and relativism (Johnson, 2008: 543) brought up new challenges for understanding and distinguishing between different spheres of social life, including its political dimension. Therefore, the need to develop analytical tools appropriate to current state of affairs is more than evident. The aim of the course, then, is to provide the participants with necessary theoretical skills and contemporary methods of critical inquiry. For that to happen, the works of two extravagant thinkers of our time will be discussed.

“What I’m really saying is that a lot of people nowadays cling to the idea of a slow evolution of human history – something I believe is more fantastic than the belief that God will raise us from the dead.” *John Gray*

“Many consider me to be a crazy Marxist who's waiting for the end of time. I may be a very eccentric, but I'm not a madman. I am a communist for lack of something better, out of despair over the situation in Europe.” *Slavoj Žižek*

Time and place: Thursday 8-10 a.m.; Room 100.124 - Scharnhorststraße 100

Preconditions: (i) Completing of the basic course “Introduction to the Political Theory”, or of other thematically related course;
(ii) English skills (B2/C1 levels of CEFR).

Evaluation: An academic essay on chosen topic (4000-5000 words).

Selected Literature:

- Gray, J. (2002): *Straw Dogs. Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals*. London. Granta books.
- Žižek, S. (1989): *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London/New York. Verso.
- Chosen articles from the *Journal of Ideology* (Louisiana State University) (<http://www.lsus.edu>)
- Chosen articles from the *Journal of the History of Idea* (University of Pennsylvania) (<http://jhi.pennpress.org/home/>)