

## PT112 Ideology: A thing of the Past?

Module: History of Political Thought  
Seminar Leader: Dr. Jan Völker  
Course Times: Mon 17:00- 18:30, Thu 15:15 - 16:45  
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### Course Description

The word “ideology” seems most often to be invoked to refer to monolithic political doctrines, such as the Communism of the Soviet Union. After the collapse of the latter, it was said that we had reached “the end of history”—that liberal democracy had triumphed, and there would be no other alternative, all-encompassing political belief systems. This view coexisted with a general distrust of any belief system or “metanarrative” asserting universal validity. The term “ideology” is sometimes used to denounce what are seen as oppressive universalizing claims. In fact, however, the history of the category “ideology” is more complex. Marx and Engels suggested that “ideology” first appears when a class of people emerge who are engaged exclusively in “mental labour,” or the production of ideas. An “ideology” is the set of beliefs that are necessary for the perpetuation of the way a society provides for its material needs. This raises the question of how far, and in what ways, we experience “ideology” today. What forces influence and reproduce belief? What is the role played by educational and other institutions, or by art and culture? What ideas remain “unthinkable” in our society? The course will introduce the key theories and historical struggles over the concept of ideology, and ask about its usefulness for analysing contemporary political commitments (or the lack thereof).

### Requirements

Attendance at every class is essential, as is full advance preparation of the course readings for each session of the seminar. There will be two essays, the first of 1800-2500 words or 5-7 pages, and the second of 8-10 pages, or 2800-3500 words, as well as in-class presentations which form part of the participation grade.

#### Attendance

Attendance at ALL classes is expected. More than two absences (that is absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester will significantly affect the grade for the course.

### Essay Deadlines

Mid-term essay: deadline Monday, 9 March.  
Final essay: deadline Wednesday, 13 May.

#### Writing Assignments

Mid-Term Paper 1800-2500 words, 5-7 pages.  
Final paper 2800-3500 words, 8-10 pages.

#### Policy on Late Submission of Papers

*Essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees*

to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C.

Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

## Grade Breakdown

Mid-term essay: 20%

Final essay: 30%

Seminar grade: 50% (20% presentation, 30% participation)

## Syllabus

Monday, 26 January

- Introduction

Thursday, 29 January

- Marx/Engels, *German Ideology*, in: Marx/Engels: *Collected Works, Vol 5, 1845-47*, pp. 23-64.

Monday, 2 February

- Marx, "The Fetishism of the Commodity and Its Secret", in: Marx, *Capital*, Vol I, London: Penguin 1976, pp. 163-177.

Thursday, 5 February

- Jacques Derrida, "What is Ideology", in: Derrida, *Specters of Marx, The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, New York / London: Routledge 1994, pp. 185-221.

Monday, 9 February

- Jean-Luc Nancy, "The Two Secrets of the Fetish", in: *Diacritics*, Volume 31, Number 2, Summer 2001, pp. 3-8.

Thursday, 12 February

- Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness. Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, Cambridge: MIT, pp. 83-110.

Tuesday, 16 February

- Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness. Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, Cambridge: MIT, pp. 149-185 (voluntarily: p. 217)

Monday, 19 February

- Adorno/Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception", in: Adorno/Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Stanford: Stanford UP 2002, pp. 94-136.

Thursday, 23 February

- Adorno/Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception", in: Adorno/Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Stanford: Stanford UP 2002, pp. 94-136.

Monday, 26 February

- Adorno, “Television as Ideology”, in: Theodor W. Adorno, *Critical Models. Interventions and Catchwords*, New York: Columbia University Press 2005, pp. 59-70.

Tuesday, 2 March

- Marcuse, “The defeated logic of protest”, in: Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man. Studies in the ideology of advanced industrial society*, London / New York: Routledge 1991, pp. 127-146.

Thursday, 5 March

- Marcuse, „Technological rationality and the logic of domination”, in: Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man. Studies in the ideology of advanced industrial society*, London / New York: Routledge 1991, pp. 147-173.

Monday, 9 March

- Marcuse: “Repressive Tolerance”, in: Wolff / Moore / Marcuse, *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*, Boston: Beacon Press, pp. 81-117.

Thursday, 12 March

- Habermas: “Technology and Science as ‚Ideology””, in: Jürgen Habermas, *Toward A Rational Society, Student Protes, Science, and Politics*, London: Heinemann Educational Books 1971, pp. 81-122.

Spring Break: 16 March – 20 March

Monday, 23 March

- Althusser: “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)”, in: Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy. And other Essays*, New York and London: Monthly Review Press 1971, pp. 127-162.

Thursday, 26 March

- Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)”, in: Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy. And other Essays*, New York and London: Monthly Review Press 1971, pp. 127-162.

Monday, 30 March

- Michel Pecheux: “The Mechanism of Ideological (Mis)recognition”, in: Slavoj Žižek (ed.), *Mapping Ideology*, London/New York: Verso 1994, p. 141-151.

Thursday, 2 April

- Balibar/Macherey: “On Literature as an Ideological Form”, in: Terry Eagleton / Drew Milne (ed.): *Marxist Literary Theory*, pp. 275-295.

Monday, 6 April

- Federal Holiday.

Thursday, 9 April

- Gramsci, “Hegemony, Relations of Force, Historical Bloc”, in: David Forgacs (ed.), *The Gramsci Reader. Selected Writings 1916-1935*, New York: New York UP 2000, pp. 189-221.

Monday, 13 April

- Michèle Barrett, "Ideology, Politics, Hegemony: From Gramsci to Laclau and Mouffe", in: Slavoj Žižek (ed), *Mapping Ideology*, London/New York: Verso 1994, pp. 235-264.

Thursday, 16 April

- Fredric Jameson, "Cognitive Mapping", in: Nelson, C./Grossberg, L. (ed), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, University of Illinois Press 1990, p. 347-360

Monday, 20 April

- Jameson, "Postmodernism and the Market", in: Slavoj Žižek (ed), *Mapping Ideology*, London/New York: Verso 1994, pp. 278-295

Thursday, 23 April

- Žižek, "The Spectre of Ideology", in: Slavoj Žižek (ed.), *Mapping Ideology*, London/New York: Verso 1994, p. 1-33.

Monday, 27 April

- Slavoj Žižek, „How did Marx invent the symptom?“, in: Slavoj Žižek (ed.), *Mapping Ideology*, London/New York: Verso 1994, p. 296-331

Thursday, 30 April

- Badiou, "The Democratic Emblem", in: Agamben / Badiou / Bensaid et. al., *Democracy at What State?*, New York: Columbia UP, pp. 6-15.

Monday, 4 May

- Badiou: "Philosophy and Desire", in: Alain Badiou, *Infinite Thought. Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, London / New York: continuum 2004, pp. 39-57.

Thursday, 7 May

- No Class – Bard Annual Conference

Monday, 11 May

15.15 – 16.45

- Žižek, "The Pervert's Guide to Ideology". Film screening and discussion.

Completion Week 13 May – 20 May