



Department of Cultural Studies

General information		
Name of the course	Contemporary French Theory	
Course instructor	Ozren Pupovac, PhD	
Study programme	Graduate Study Programme in Cultural Studies	
Status of the course	elective	
Year of study	2022-2023	
Language	English	
ECTS credits and manner of instruction	ECTS credits	5
	Number of class hours (Lectures + Exercises + Seminars)	30+0+15

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION
1.1. Course objectives
The course problematizes some key moments in contemporary French philosophy through the prism of the tension between, on the one hand, the specifically “French” legacy of rationalist philosophy and, on the other, the idea of “intellectual engagement” which characterises existentialist thought.
1.2. Course enrolment requirements and entry competences required for the course
There are no specific requirements.
1.3. Expected course learning outcomes
Set at an advanced level, the course will primarily enable the development of skills of conceptual analysis and synthesis – by working through primary and secondary sources of text -- as well as by guiding the students into developing their unique paths of individual research. Moreover, by demonstrating an approach to a historical field through a precise conceptual framework, it will also train skills of interdisciplinary problematisation, while at the same time enabling the connection between contemporary approaches and classics in the field.
1.4. Course content
Foucault somewhere famously detected a line cutting across philosophy in France in the twentieth- century, a line dividing a philosophy of the concept, of reason and necessity on the one hand, and, on the other, a philosophy of consciousness, of the subject and of existence. We might also add, a line distancing Spinoza from Hegel: with those such as Cavailles and Bachelard, but also the group around Les Cahiers pour l'Analyse, developing themes of immanent necessity and logical structure; with those such as Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, Kojève and Hyppolite, but also Derrida, tracing problems of historicity, contingency and otherness. And yet, despite the irreducible difference in their objects and approaches, there also seems to be an irresistible dialectical reciprocity shared between the two trajectories: with those allied to the concept thinking their problems through figures of production, movement and history; with those evoking consciousness seeking to erect structures of the transcendental, of the necessary and the timeless.

It is against the backbone of these unlikely encounters that this course will attempt to unravel several key moments in the development of contemporary French thought:

- 1) the genealogy of the programmes of “structuralism” and “post-structuralism” caught in a productive tension with the existentialist thematic of “engagement” and “commitment”;
- 2) the legacy of the project of the historical critique of science in contemporary proposals for the formalization of the dynamics of politics (Althusser, Badiou, Rancière),
- 3) the development of a peculiar doctrine of truth and necessity (Lacan, Badiou) not opposed to but in fact stemming from the horizon of historical contingency.

1.5. Manner of instruction

- ✓ Lectures
- ✓ Seminars and workshops
- ✓ Individual assignments and research
- ✓ Mentorship
- ✓ Other: consultations