



Department of Cultural Studies

General information		
Name of the course	What is Modernity?	
Course instructor	Ozren Pupovac, PhD	
Study programme	Undergraduate 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
This course provides an introduction to debates on modernity and postmodernity by focusing on the very core of the polemic around the topic of «grand narratives», namely, the dispute concerning the possibilities of the very concept of history, which marked the famous confrontations of the paradigmes of «humanism» and «antihumanism» in twentieth-century philosophy.
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 a relatively 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
A key moment in the history of debates concerning modernity and postmodernity is likely to be found in the polemic concerning the very possibility of the concept of history, a polemic oriented around the confrontation of that which had been named as paradigms of “humanism” and “antihumanism” in twentieth-century philosophy. Is there something like universal human history, and is its multiplicity reducible to the narrative of the unity of a rational human subject? Or does history necessarily unfold rupturally, sequentially, locally, carried by multiple subjects and characterised by insurmountable and irreversible discontinuities? Tracing the stakes and the conceptual conditions of this polemic, we will follow the genealogy of the figure of “universal history” in the philosophy of German Idealism all until Young Marx, as well as its rejection among thinkers like Nietzsche, but also the contemporary radical suggestions of writing “singular” histories with Foucault, Deleuze, Althusser and Badiou. Furthermore, we will explore why the

phenomenon of modernity appears in philosophy primarily in the form a question: as a questioning of the grounds and the conditions of historical contemporaneity, that is, as a critical attitude, which, as a ceaseless critique of given societal conditions also implies an inevitable responsibility towards one's own historical present. In this way, finally, we will also provide an orientation into some of the central terms of philosophical and cultural theory today, such as "subject", "totality", "discourse", "universality", singularity", etc.

1.5. Manner of instruction

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