

INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL CRITICAL THEORY

Starting from summer 2017, we at the **Humboldt University Berlin** will organize a yearly international summer school in collaboration with the **Frankfurt Institute for Social Research**.

Each of these summer schools will take up a topic which is central to Critical Theory, politically relevant and systematically promising. In addressing its themes, the summer school confronts the approaches specific to a Critical Theory of society in the Frankfurt School tradition with conceptually and methodologically different perspectives.

The format mixes elements of workshops with text-based, advanced seminars. Over the course of at least one week, young researchers, graduate students and senior scholars will jointly discuss new systematic perspectives and “classic” texts from the Critical Theory corpus. A series of public round-tables will channel and sharpen the preceding exchange.

So far, the following topics are in preparation:

- ***Progress, Regression and Social Change*** (July 2017)
- *Ideology and Critique* (July 2018)
- *Social Unreason: Crises and Pathologies* (2019)
- *Critical Theories of Gender* (Summer 2020)
- *Social Theory and Political Economy* (Summer 2021)

CALL FOR PAPERS: INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL CRITICAL THEORY 2017 IN BERLIN (JULY 17TH TO JULY 21ST)

PROGRESS, REGRESSION, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Is there such a thing as moral or social *progress*? How do we understand phenomena that might be seen as instances of social *regression*? And how, after all, are we to conceptualize *social change*?

While some Critical Theorists hold that we need a notion of progressive social change (and its counterpart) in order to understand and evaluate the dynamics of the transformations we undergo, the very notion of progress (as it is entrenched in the self-understanding of western modernity) seems to be ambivalent and is strongly contested.

So, while it is not easy to see how progress – as a certain kind of “learning process” that has played a central role in Critical Theory from its very beginning – could be dispensed with, our understanding of it certainly needs to be reconstructed.

It is not only the normative question in the narrower sense, though, that is at stake here. By asking how we can possibly conceive of social transformations as “change for the better”, we are not only addressing the issue of normative standards for evaluation of “the good society”. If we want to rely on immanent rather than freestanding normative standards, we also have to re-investigate our concepts of history and social transformation. That means: we should take seriously the notion that “progress” as well as “regression” are bound up with some account of social change as a result of the erosion of institutions and social practices that have been outlived or de-legitimized. Whether this amounts to an accumulative process, as the terms

“regression” and “progress” seem to suggest, is one of a variety of questions that we mean to address at our summer school.

To apply for participation, graduate students and junior scholars are invited to submit short essays (3-5pages) representing their research interests which focus on the following themes or questions:

- Philosophies of history/dialectics (Hegel/Kant)
- Theories of revolution and social change (f.i. Historical Materialism)
- Progress and regression (Benjamin and Adorno, Foucault)
- Moral and institutional progress (as in Honneth, Anderson, Appiah)
- Naturalist accounts of progress and accounts of social evolution (f.i. Kitcher, Habermas)

Deadline for submissions: March 15th 2017, please email to: summerschool.CT@hu-berlin.de

Organizers: Rahel Jaeggi, Eva von Redecker, Isette Schuhmacher (Humboldt University Berlin) in cooperation with the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research and the New School for Social Research (Alice Crary)

Participants (amongst others): Amy Allen, Jay Bernstein, Hauke Brunkhorst, Axel Honneth, Rahel Jaeggi, Terry Pinkard, Alessandro Pinzani.