

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY (INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORIES)

CRITICAL THEORY

6th lesson

EFOP-3.6.2-16-2017-00007

SZÉCHENYI  2020



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LEARNING GUIDE

- Lesson length: **6** slides
- Content:
 - Frankfurt School
 - The basics of critical theory
 - Postcolonialism



- Recommended minimum duration for review: 30 minutes
- Suggested minimum time for learning: 1 hour and 30 minutes
- The learning of the curriculum is aided by a course book and self-assessment questions.
- Recommended minimum duration of this full lesson: 2 hours

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- Critical theory has been very influential amongst IR scholars.
- Critical Theory has its roots in the work of the [Frankfurt School](#), a group of thinkers including Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas.

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- Among the key concerns of critical theorists is the **emancipation**, and in particular, the **human capacities** and **capabilities** appealed to in calls for emancipatory action.
- Several different understandings of emancipation have emerged from the Critical Theory tradition.
- *The first generation of the Frankfurt School equated emancipation with a reconciliation with nature.*

- Habermas has argued that emancipatory potential lies in the realm of communication and that radical democracy is the way in which that potential can be unlocked.
- Andrew Linklater has developed on critical theory themes to argue in favour of the expansion of the moral boundaries of the political community and has pointed to the European Union as an example of a post-Westphalian institution of governance.

THE BASICS OF CRITICAL THEORY

- Although critical theory reworks and, in some ways, supersedes Kantian and Marxian themes, both authors remain at the base of the theory's lineage.
- Critical theory ended in numerous theories:
 - Frankfurt School
 - Neo-Gramscinism
 - Feminism
 - International Political Economy (IPE)
 - Etc.

THE BASICS OF CRITICAL THEORY

- We won't have time and space to analyse all the theories during the rest of the semester. However, few words here should be mentioned about ***postcolonialism***.
- Postcolonialism is the critical academic study of the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism.
- The formerly colonised territories (states) are in the spotlight.
- It sets the focus on:
 - Colonial forms of power, and
 - continuing existence of racism in world politics.

POSTCOLONIALISM

- Main topics:
 - Hierarchy
 - Concentration of power
 - Domination (as power relations)
 - Classism and racism
 - North-South gap (the issues like the ‘Third World’)
 - Global (social) inequality
 - Islam (as both cultural and religious question: clash of civilizations; see [Edward Said](#))
 - Women of colour (feminist postcolonialism)
- The theory is established mainly by non-Western scholars.

ABOUT THIS LESSON

The images used in the curriculum can be found online and are freely accessible.

The curriculum is for educational purposes only.

Compulsory and recommended literature sources for the given course were used as sources for the lesson.

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