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Office hours: Weds. 3–5, or by appointment.

## THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF JÜRGEN HABERMAS

Political Science 24501 / 34501 / Fundamentals 21407

Autumn Quarter 2009

Tuesdays, 1:30 pm–4:20 pm, Foster 505

What can “politics” mean in an age governed pre-eminently by the rationalities of the market and the bureaucratic state? What are the prospects, under these circumstances, of such ideals as publicity, citizenship, legitimacy, the rule of law, and democracy? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches to these problems established by earlier thinkers, including especially Marx, Weber, and their twentieth-century followers? Since the 1950s, questions like these have guided the work of the philosopher, social theorist, and political theorist Jürgen Habermas. In this seminar, we shall study how Habermas has posed and answered these questions over the decades by reading substantial portions of three of his most important and challenging works: *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962), *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1981), and *Between Facts and Norms* (1992), along with a few supplementary essays by Habermas and others. In the last week of the seminar we shall also zero in on a contemporary political issue discussed across all of these works—the crisis of the postwar welfare state—using this issue as a case study in the power and the limitations of Habermas’s critical social theory. *Note: This is a limited-enrollment, by-consent seminar, open to advanced undergraduates and to graduate students; in the event of a scarcity of places, priority may be given to undergraduates.*

**TEXTS:** The following books have been ordered through the Seminary Coop Bookstore. *All other readings will be on e-reserve through the course’s Chalk site.*

1. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (MIT) [ST]
2. Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1 (Beacon) [TCA1]
3. Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2 (Beacon) [TCA2]
4. Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms* (MIT) [BFN]

**WRITING ASSIGNMENT:** A seminar paper of approximately 15 pages, due on **Wednesday, December 9, 2009**, on a topic of your choice, approved in advance by me (by November 13).

**GRADES:** Your grade for the seminar paper will determine your grade for the course. However, any student who is absent for three or more sessions of the seminar (except in cases of medical or other documentable emergency) *will only be graded on a pass-fail basis.*

**LATE PAPERS AND INCOMPLETES:** Unless you have arranged prior to the due date for an extension or to take an incomplete, late papers (except in cases of medical or other documentable emergency) will be penalized 2/3 of a letter grade/day, e.g. an A paper 2 days late becomes a B-.

**PLAGIARISM** is grounds for failing the course.

## **WEEKLY MEETINGS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:**

### **September 29: Introduction**

No reading.

### **October 6: The idea of the public sphere.**

1. *ST*, preface, 1–140.
2. Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Calhoun, 109–142.

### **October 13: The deformation of the public sphere.**

1. *ST*, 141–250.
2. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, “The Public Sphere and Experience: Selections,” *October* vol. 46 (Autumn 1988): 60–82.
3. Jürgen Habermas, “Further Reflections on the Public Sphere,” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Calhoun, 421–61.

### **October 20: Action and rationalization.**

1. Jürgen Habermas, “Technology and Science as ‘Ideology’,” in *Toward a Rational Society*, 81–122.
2. *TCA1*, 84–101, 143–56, 243–95, 339–99.

### **October 27: Lifeworld and system.**

1. *TCA2* 113–97.
2. Thomas McCarthy, “Complexity and Democracy: or the Seductions of Systems Theory,” in Axel Honneth and Hans Joas, eds., *Communicative Ethics*, 119–39.

### **November 3: The past and future of critical theory.**

1. *TCA2* 301–403.
2. Axel Honneth, “The Social Dynamics of Disrespect: On the Location of Critical Theory Today,” in *Disrespect: The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*, 63–79.

### **November 10: The nature of law.**

1. *BFN* preface, 1–81.
2. Niklas Luhmann, “*Quod Omnes Tangit*: Remarks on Jürgen Habermas’s Legal Theory,” in Michel Rosenfeld and Andrew Arato, eds., *Habermas on Law and Democracy: Critical Exchanges*, 157–72.
3. Ulrich K. Preuss, “Communicative Power and the Concept of Law,” in Rosenfeld and Arato, *Habermas on Law and Democracy*, 323–35.

**November 17: Rights and democracy.**

1. *BFN* 82–193.
2. Jürgen Habermas, “Constitutional Democracy: A Paradoxical Union of Contradictory Principles?” *Political Theory* 29, no. 6 (December 2001): 766–81.
3. Bonnie Honig, “Between Decision and Deliberation: Political Paradox in Democratic Theory,” *American Political Science Review* 101, no. 1 (February 2007): 1–17.

**November 24: The public sphere revisited.**

1. *BFN* 287–387.
2. William E. Scheuerman, “Between Radicalism and Resignation: Democratic Theory in Habermas’s *Between Facts and Norms*,” in *Habermas: A Critical Reader*, ed. Peter Dews, 154–77.

**December 1: Habermas and the welfare state: a case study.**

1. *BFN* 388–446.
2. Claus Offe, “Some Contradictions of the Modern Welfare State,” in *Contradictions of the Welfare State*, 147–61.
3. Nancy Fraser, “Struggle Over Needs: Outline of a Socialist-Feminist Critical Theory of Late-Capitalist Political Culture,” in Linda Gordon, ed., *Women, The State, and Welfare*, 199–225.
4. Barbara Cruikshank, “Welfare Queens: Ruling by Number,” in *The Will to Empower*, 104–21.
5. Sanford Schram, “Where the Welfare Queen Resides: The Subtext of Personal Responsibility,” in *After Welfare: The Cultural of Postindustrial Social Policy*, 27–58.