The Political Philosophy of Jürgen Habermas
POL 460/2006
Thursday 2-4
Larkin 213

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Jürgen Habermas is arguable one of the most important political and social philosopher of the 20th century. His corpus is huge, his writing style extremely difficult. This course will introduce students to Habermas but it is not an introductory course. In this course we will methodically work through his most important arguments and reconstruct his philosophy piece by piece. Habermas has contributed to many different fields of thought: linguistics, law, moral philosophy, sociology, religious studies, art theory and aesthetics, communications, philosophy of science, social science methodology, international relations, and these do not exhaust the list. Despite the breadth of his interests, Habermas works with a central paradigm that goes with him wherever his interests and research take him. He is the quintessential hedgehog. So we will begin the course with getting a handle on the central theoretical paradigm that informs all his work: communicative action theory. For this reason we begin about ¼ of the way into his career at the linguistic and communicative turn in his thought.

REQUIREMENTS

Undergraduates
Participation 15%

Take home exam
Due February 6 25%

5,000 words term paper
Due April 11 60%

MA students
Participation 15%

Take home exam
Due **February 6** 25%

Research paper 7,500-8,000 words
Due **April 11** 60%

**PhD students**
Research paper 10,000 words
Due Date: **Negotiable** 100%

**Strict word limit will be enforced**

**READINGS**
The following books have been ordered at the University of Toronto Book Store. Most other readings will be available on line or on Blackboard.


We are reading about 50% of each of these volumes maybe even a little less. So borrowing and copying is an option. They are also easily available in second hand book stores.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

1. **January 9:** Introduction.
   - Introductory stuff

2. **January 16: Universal Pragmatics**

   Recommended Further Reading (RFR)

3. **January 23: Rationalization**

RFR

4. January 30: Communicative versus Strategic Action


RFR

5. February 6: System/Lifeworld/Colonization

• *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. II*
  Chapter 5, sect. 3: pp. 77-111; chapter 6; chapter 8, sects 2&3: pp. 332-405.

RFR

6. February 13: Postmetaphysical Thinking


RFR

FEBRUARY 17-21: READING WEEK
7. February 27: Discourse Ethics


RFR

8. March 6: Law, Morality, and the State


RFR


RFR

10. March 20: Human Rights and Cosmopolitanism
• “Kant’s Idea of Perpetual Peace: At Two Hundred Years’ Historical Remove.” Inclusion of the Other. Cambridge MIT Press. 2001: 165-202. [Blackboard]

RFR

11. March 27: Religion

• “Awareness of What is Missing” in An Awareness of What is Missing: Faith and Reason in a Post-Secular Age. 15-23. [Blackboard]
• “Religion and the Public Sphere: Cognitive Presuppositions for the ‘Public Use of Reason’” in Between Naturalism and Religion. 114-148. [Blackboard]

RFR

12. April 3: Religion continued

TBA