PHL 351
Social Philosophy
S1 External 2015
Dept of Philosophy

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**General Information**

Unit convenor and teaching staff  
Michael Olson  
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Contact via (61 2) 9850 6895  
W5C Room 723

Credit points  
3

Prerequisites  
39cp or admission to GDipArts

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description  
Continuing the inquiry commenced in PHL254, this unit explores in more depth how social transformations might both foster and hinder the realisation of our freedom and human potential. Economic growth is generally taken to be an unquestionable good but what are its costs at a social and environmental level? Modern technology is taken to be the key to the future but what impact does it have on our relationships with nature? A successful career is often accepted as essential to happiness but is contemporary work a fully rewarding experience? Are the economic inequalities generated by contemporary social and economic transformations justifiable in a democratic society? This unit addresses these questions first by examining the social philosophy tradition (the Frankfurt School of critical theory), focusing on key themes such as the economic rationalisation of society, the effects of this rationalisation on individuals and communities, and the prospects for social freedom in an economically rationalised world. The second part of the unit then turns to contemporary approaches in social philosophy (Axel Honneth) that offer critical analyses and possible alternatives to some of the most pressing issues we face, including economic and social injustice, the environmental crisis, and social pathologies arising from new work conditions and career demands.

**Important Academic Dates**

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at [http://students.mq.edu.au/student_admin/enrolmentguide/academicdates/](http://students.mq.edu.au/student_admin/enrolmentguide/academicdates/)
Learning Outcomes

1. A good understanding of the history and significance of European social and political philosophy.
2. A good understanding of the relevance of the theoretical approaches considered for broader philosophical, social, cultural, and political debates.
3. An ability to understand and analyse arguments and concepts in European social philosophy, and to evaluate different philosophical theories in relation to other relevant disciplinary approaches.
4. To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms of written and oral communication.
5. To participate actively in group and online discussion and in group learning activities during tutorials.

Assessment Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Quiz</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20/03/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textual Exegesis</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>14/04/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophical Essay</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>12/06/2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Throughout the term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Online Quiz

Due: 20/03/2015
Weighting: 10%

An online quiz to be completed in Week 4. This quiz will involve writing short answers to questions based on the topics covered in the first three weeks of the course. The quiz will be available online and accessible to students for one week; once a student commences the quiz, there will be a set period (30-45 minutes) to complete the quiz.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- A good understanding of the history and significance of European social and political philosophy.
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To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms of written and oral communication.

Textual Exegesis

Due: 14/04/2015
Weighting: 25%

This assignment, which is due at the end of Week 6, will test your ability to analyse and explain the central arguments of one of the authors we have discussed. You will be asked to summarise either Max Horkheimer or Jean-François Lyotard’s analysis of the breakdown of enlightenment ideals in the 20th century. In order to complete this assessment successfully, you will need to explain the arguments of the relevant texts as clearly, concisely, and cogently as possible. The aim of this assessment is to improve your writing and textual analysis.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

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Philosophical Essay

Due: 12/06/2014
Weighting: 40%

This major assignment aims to test your ability to engage with a topic in depth. Writing an essay tests your ability to express, analyse, and organise ideas clearly and systematically, and to develop an argument or position in a sustained, coherent, and persuasive manner. In this essay, you will articulate and defend your own position on a matter of your choosing vis-a-vis one or more of the texts we have considered during the term.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

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• A good understanding of the relevance of the theoretical approaches considered for broader philosophical, social, cultural, and political debates.
• An ability to understand and analyse arguments and concepts in European social philosophy, and to evaluate different philosophical theories in relation to other relevant disciplinary approaches.

• To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms of written and oral communication.

Tutorial Participation

Due: Throughout the term
Weighting: 25%

Tutorials are an important site of individual and group learning. Philosophy tutorials involve students in active discussion with the tutor and fellow students, raising and responding to questions, analysing problems, and engaging in any number of exercises with both students and tutors. In addition to contributing regularly to online discussions (these contributions will determine 80% of your tutorial participation grade, which is 20% of your total grade), students will be expected to prepare for and participate in writing and peer-reviewing exercises in Weeks 12 and 13 (these will make up the remaining 20% of your participation grade, which is 5% of your total grade). Students will be judged on the quality of their contributions rather than the sheer quantity. Nonetheless, students should expect to engage actively in online discussions and plan to contribute substantively at least 2-3 times per week.

Weekly tutorials begin in Week 2. The aim of tutorials is to raise and address questions that arise out of each week's reading and lectures. As such, students should come to tutorials with discussion questions prepared. These questions could address confusing passages or points in the reading, criticise an author's position or argument, or identify ideas or positions that require further elaboration or clarification. In addition to raising these questions each week, students are expected to lead the way in addressing these questions. The tutor will certainly participate in these discussions, but tutorials are primarily an opportunity for students to work through the material in a cooperative manner.

In Weeks 12 and 13, we will devote the tutorials to exercises intended to improve the quality of your final essays. In Week 12, we will discuss possible topics for the final essays. In Week 13, students will read and comment on drafts of each others' final essays. Further details about these activities will be provided as the time approaches.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

• A good understanding of the history and significance of European social and political philosophy.

• A good understanding of the relevance of the theoretical approaches considered for broader philosophical, social, cultural, and political debates.

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Delivery and Resources

Lecture and Times

There are two lectures per week:

Wednesday 10am-11am
Thursday 3pm-4pm

Students should listen to both lectures.

External students will be required to participate in online tutorials where set questions and questions raised by students will be discussed and interaction between students will be encouraged throughout the semester. I will also participate in these discussions from time to time, mainly in a facilitating role.

Readings

For those interested in purchasing the books, the following editions are recommended for this unit:


All required readings will also be made available through the library and iLearn.

Unit Schedule

Week One: Defining the Enlightenment in France

Week Two: Defining the Enlightenment in Prussia

- J.K.W. Möhsen, “What is to Be Done Toward the Enlightenment of the Citizenry?,” in What is Enlightenment?, 49-52.
- Immanuel Kant, “Answer to the Question: What is enlightenment?,” in What is Enlightenment?, 58-64.

Week Three: Enlightenment Politics—Rationality and Progress


Week Four: Instrumental Reason and the Dialectic of Enlightenment


Week Five: Language as a Barrier to Universality

- Jean-François Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition

**Weeks Six: Reaffirming the Enlightenment**


**Week Seven: Enlightenment and Critique: Michel Foucault**

- Michel Foucault, “What is Critique?,” in *What is Enlightenment?* 382-398.

**Week Eight: False Universality? The Enlightenment and Race**


**Week Nine: The Enlightenment and Race, continued**

- Frederick Douglass, “The Meaning of the Fourth of July for the Negro.”

**Week Ten: False Universality? The Enlightenment and Gender**

http://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/48267/unit_guide/print
• Robin May Schott, “The Gender of Enlightenment,” in *What is Enlightenment?* 471-487.

*Week Eleven: Rethinking Freedom and Equality—Étienne Balibar*


*Week Twelve: Rethinking Autonomy—Cornelius Castoriadis*

• Optional: Castoriadis, “The Greek Polis and the Creation of Democracy,” *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, vol. 9, no. 2 (Fall 1983) 79-115.

*Week Thirteen: No Lectures*

Students will work on peer-reviewing exercises for their final essays in tutorials this week.

**Policies and Procedures**

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:


In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/) of Policy Central.

**Student Code of Conduct**

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: [https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/)

**Results**

Results shown in iLearn, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in eStudent. For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au).

**Student Support**

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit [http://students.mq.edu.au/support/](http://students.mq.edu.au/support/)

**Learning Skills**

Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://www.mq.edu.au/learningskills)) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Workshops
- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module for Students
- Ask a Learning Adviser

**Student Enquiry Service**

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au)

**Equity Support**

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disability_service/policy.html) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

**IT Help**


When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](http://informatics.mq.edu.au/acceptable_use_policy). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.
Graduate Capabilities

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- A good understanding of the history and significance of European social and political philosophy.
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments and concepts in European social philosophy, and to evaluate different philosophical theories in relation to other relevant disciplinary approaches.
- To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms of written and oral communication.

Assessment tasks

- Online Quiz
- Textual Exegesis
- Philosophical Essay
- Tutorial Participation

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- A good understanding of the history and significance of European social and political philosophy.
A good understanding of the relevance of the theoretical approaches considered for broader philosophical, social, cultural, and political debates.

An ability to understand and analyse arguments and concepts in European social philosophy, and to evaluate different philosophical theories in relation to other relevant disciplinary approaches.

To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms of written and oral communication.

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**Assessment tasks**

- Online Quiz
- Textual Exegesis
- Philosophical Essay
- Tutorial Participation

**Problem Solving and Research Capability**

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcome**

- To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms of written and oral communication.

**Assessment tasks**

- Online Quiz
- Textual Exegesis
- Philosophical Essay
- Tutorial Participation

**Effective Communication**

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess,
write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcomes**

- To articulate ideas clearly, cogently, and convincingly through critical analysis, interpretation, and appropriate forms of written and oral communication.
- To participate actively in group and online discussion and in group learning activities during tutorials.

**Assessment tasks**

- Online Quiz
- Textual Exegesis
- Philosophical Essay
- Tutorial Participation

**Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens**

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcomes**

- A good understanding of the history and significance of European social and political philosophy.
- A good understanding of the relevance of the theoretical approaches considered for broader philosophical, social, cultural, and political debates.
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments and concepts in European social philosophy, and to evaluate different philosophical theories in relation to other relevant disciplinary approaches.
- To participate actively in group and online discussion and in group learning activities during tutorials.

**Assessment tasks**

- Online Quiz
- Textual Exegesis
Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcomes**

- A good understanding of the history and significance of European social and political philosophy.
- A good understanding of the relevance of the theoretical approaches considered for broader philosophical, social, cultural, and political debates.
- An ability to understand and analyse arguments and concepts in European social philosophy, and to evaluate different philosophical theories in relation to other relevant disciplinary approaches.

**Assessment tasks**

- Online Quiz
- Textual Exegesis
- Philosophical Essay
- Tutorial Participation

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcomes**

- A good understanding of the relevance of the theoretical approaches considered for broader philosophical, social, cultural, and political debates.
- To participate actively in group and online discussion and in group learning activities during tutorials.
Assessment tasks

• Philosophical Essay
• Tutorial Participation

Changes from Previous Offering

Since last being offered, this unit has undergone the following changes:

• revision of learning activities, outcomes, and assessment tasks;
• revision of curriculum mapping of relationship between activities, outcomes, and graduate capabilities;
• addition of new content, including new topics and weekly readings.

Changes since First Published

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18/02/2015</td>
<td>I changed the order of a couple of readings and corrected a typographical error.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>