

Theory of contemporary culture

Academic Year: (2023 / 2024)

Review date: 01-06-2023

Department assigned to the subject: Humanities: Philosophy, Language, Literature Theory Department

Coordinating teacher: ALMAZAN GOMEZ, MANUEL ADRIAN

Type: Electives ECTS Credits : 6.0

Year : Semester :

REQUIREMENTS (SUBJECTS THAT ARE ASSUMED TO BE KNOWN)

Good reading skills and familiarity with working with philosophical essays. Basic knowledge of political philosophy and critical ability

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the course is for the student to come into contact with different theories on contemporary culture that have addressed the connection between culture, nature and social power. In particular, they will try to internalize and be able to handle a broad notion of social imaginary that will help them to critically approach many cultural and political phenomena of the world in which they live. In order to do so, he/she must acquire a series of knowledge, abilities and attitudes.

Among the knowledge, he must become familiar with some authors and theories that:

- Have theorized in an open way culture understood both from a materialistic perspective and as a vector of social power.
- The consequences of that open notion of culture in fields such as:
 - Our relationship with nature
 - Technology and its social role
 - The State
 - Postcolonialism and globalization

The capacities to be acquired refer to:

- Follow both abstract argumentations and their correspondence in contemporary social imaginaries.
- Read texts of transdisciplinary theorists of our time.
- Interpret, with a high theoretical level and from various perspectives, the phenomena of contemporary culture, in their ethical, political and ideological implications.
- High capacity of oral and written expression on complex and high level theoretical issues, but referring to the concrete social world.
- Link what they have learned in this course with all the cultural knowledge and interpretative skills they have acquired throughout their undergraduate studies.

In terms of attitudes, at the end of the course, the student should:

- Increase their capacity for critical reflection on the world in which they are trained and will work.
- Distance themselves from today's dominant imaginaries, amplified by the media and other cultural production entities.
- Become aware of the complexity and multiperspectivity of the interpretations of today's world.

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS: PROGRAMME

BLOCK 1: Culture, ideology, power

UNIT 1: CULTURE, NATURE, SOCIETY

- Global Ecosocial Crisis and Ecological Humanities
- Culture: six meanings

UNIT 2: CULTURE, POWER AND IMAGINARIES

- Culture is ordinary: Raymond Williams

- Ideology in Terry Eagleton
- Imaginaries as social structure : Cornelius Castoriadis

UNIT 3: CRITIQUE OF DOMINANT IMAGINARIES

- The mechanization of nature
- The neutrality of technique and technology: against technololatr
- The State as a natural form of organization
- Subhumans on the other side of the abyssal line

BLOCK 2: Alternatives to the dominant imaginaries

UNIT 4: IMAGINARIES: PROPOSALS FOR ALTERNATIVES

- Towards a Gaian culture
- Humble techniques
- Autonomy and ecofeminism (of subsistence)
- Epistemologies of the south

LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND METHODOLOGY

This is a course with a strong theoretical character, based on:

- Lectures by the professor, introducing the relevant theories.
- Readings by the student of key books on the phenomena studied.
- Readings by the student of essays and articles in seminar format.
- Tutorials with the professor
- Final oral exam

ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The evaluation will be based on:

- Weekly tests on the texts worked on in the seminar (50%).
- Final oral exam (50%)

In order to pass the course, it will be mandatory to achieve at least a 5 in both parts of the evaluation.

% end-of-term-examination:	50
% of continuous assessment (assignments, laboratory, practicals...):	50

BASIC BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Alonso, A. y Arzo, I. El desencanto del Progreso. Para una crítica luddita de la tecnología, Dykinson, 2021
- Berlan, A. Terre et liberté. La quête d'autonomie contre le fantasme de délivrance, La Lenteur, 2021
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- Graeber, D. y Wengrow, D. El amanecer de todo, Ariel, 2022
- Latour, B. Dónde aterrizar., Taurus, 2019
- Margulis, L. Planeta simbiótico, Debate, 2002
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- Riechmann, J. Autoconstrucción. La transformación cultural que necesitamos, Catarata, 2015
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- Williams, R. Historia y cultura común. Antología., Catarata, 2008

