

Call for Applications
International Critical Theory Summer School 2019
JULY 1 – 6,



DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL UNREASON

HSC Center Berlin/Humboldt-University

Democracy is in crisis. Various phenomena such as the electoral success of authoritarian leaders, distrust in public institutions and media, rising social tensions, neo-nationalism and reactionary family politics certify this. But what are the underlying reasons for such developments? Is this crisis democracy's own crisis, or does it originate elsewhere in the social order?

In the early Frankfurt School, analyses of regressive tendencies aimed at tracing political pathologies back to underlying social contradictions, questioning the very compatibility of liberal democracy and late capitalism. Even critiques of individual aspects, such as the authoritarian character, were primarily meant to criticize the societies which produce such effects. Irrationality, as well as reason itself, was attributed not just to individual persons, but also to their collective way of organizing life.

But what does it mean to speak of actual and potential reason in society? The idea originated in Hegel's reconstruction of ethical life and influenced later materialist and sociologist theories of society, which located rationality in societal differentiation, cooperation and integration. However, both the assumption of a systemic cohesion of society in its totality and the ideal of a fully rational order are theoretically demanding and have on various occasions been questioned by critical theorists themselves.

In the face of evident unreason, a new assessment of our frameworks for theorizing modern societies and their ensuing criteria for rationality seems pressing and can draw from the strengths of both social and political analyses. Besides classics such as Hegel, Marx, Durkheim, Horkheimer and Adorno we will study contributions by leading contemporary theorists of democracy and society, several of which will be present as instructors.

The summer school will involve plenary lectures and discussions, reading sessions, smaller group discussions and panel debates. Only the latter will be open to the broader public.

To apply for participation, graduate students and junior scholars are invited to submit a precis of their take on core concerns of democracy, social pathologies and irrationality and a CV (each document 1 page max.).



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The precis should show which particular background knowledge and systematic positions the applicants would contribute to our joint discussions.

Deadline for applications: March 15th 2019, by email to: CTsummerschool@hu-berlin.de

There is no fee for the Summer School, but participants have to fund their own travel, accommodation and catering.

Instructors: Andrew Arato (New School, NY), Jean Cohen (Columbia University), Fabian Freyenhagen (Essex University), Rahel Jaeggi (HU Berlin), Regina Kreide (Universität Gießen), Frederick Neuhouser (Columbia University, NY).

Organizers: Rahel Jaeggi, Eva von Redecker, Isette Schuhmacher, Susann Schmeißer (HSC/Humboldt-University Berlin) in cooperation with the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research and the New School for Social Research (Alice Cray).

For more information please visit our website:
www.criticaltheoryberlin.de/summer_school/



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