



## **Call for Applications**

International Critical Theory Summer School 2024

JULY 1-5, 2024

Centre for Social Critique  
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

## **Social Critique and Economics**

The economy is irrefutably social. The division of labor, the distribution of social wealth, the modes of production and exchange are defining features of every society. What is more, economic practices depend on social and political institutions as well as cultural understandings without which the interactions of economic agents would become unstable or fail altogether. In other words, what we call "the economy" boils down to human activity and, as such, is subject to historical change. However, the precise relationship between economic practices and the other forms of social, political, and cultural agency is rather difficult to conceptualize. The economy seems to presuppose social dispositions (as the analyses of Max Weber and Louis Althusser suggest) as well as the social reproduction of human life and labor power (as feminist theorists have insisted). And - as the neoliberal era has amply shown - economic logics are capable of transforming and "colonizing" (Habermas) other social spheres, such as education and health care, science and art, and are embedded in historically entrenched relations of domination, dispossession, and extraction on a global scale (as postcolonial critics have argued). Weak versions of economic determinism could point to the dependence of all other social spheres on resources provided by the economy exemplified by the dependence on the economy's dominant medium: money.

Conversely, the dependence of economic practices on social, political, and cultural background conditions, as well as on functioning ecosystems and sustainable access to natural resources, implies the possibility of dissonance, and thus conflict, between divergent social rationalities. Contrary to social theories that conceptualize the economy as a particular social system with definite boundaries and a

specific rationality, the complex interactions and interdependencies of social spheres suggest the need for a wider, more social concept of the economy. Economy and society permeate each other and form a compound of socio-economic practices - a form of life. Such a wide concept of the economy revives core claims of classical Critical Theory. Social critique must address the material foundations of society, i.e. the ways in which society reproduces itself. The International Critical Theory Summer School 2024 aims at the renewal of such an overarching concept of society without which social critique is in danger of deteriorating into mere moral appeals.

The summer school will involve plenary lectures and discussions, reading sessions, small group discussions and panel debates. Only the panel debates will be open to the broader public. We will explore classical approaches on society and economy, e.g. by Karl Marx and Jürgen Habermas, while also engaging with the work of leading contemporary theorists: Lisa Herzog, Rahel Jaeggi, and Ingrid Robeyns.

To apply for participation, graduate students and junior scholars are invited to submit a précis of their take on core issues in the debate on social transformation and a CV (max. 1 page per document). The précis should show which particular background knowledge and systematic positions the applicants would contribute to our joint discussions. Please submit your application in a single PDF document and make sure that the title of your precis summarizes its content.

**Deadline for applications: February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

Students at the Berlin Universities may apply until April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Please apply by using the form provided on our website.**

Participation in the Summer School is free of charge. Please note that there is no funding available for this year's summer school. Unfortunately, we are therefore not able to provide any travel funds for international students, but recommend getting in touch with your home institutions about possible financial support for attending the summer school. Participants are responsible for independently organizing their travel and accommodation.

Please check our website for updates and further information:

<http://criticaltheoryinberlin.de/summer-school/>

**Instructors:**

Lisa Herzog (University Groningen)

Rahel Jaeggi (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin)

Ingrid Robeyns (University Utrecht)

**and**

Robin Celikates (Freie Universität Berlin)

Christian Schmidt (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin)