



The Frankfurt School Beyond Its Centenary: Exploring Contemporary Critical Social Theory and its Critique of Political Economy

Sponsored by BSA Theory Study Group

6 November 2024 (4-6pm GMT)
Online

Guest Speakers

- Stephan Lessenich
- Chris O’Kane
- Cecilia Sebastian
- Esteban Torres

About the Event

We are excited to invite you to the next BSA Theory event – celebrating contemporary Critical Theory that is furthering the legacy pioneered by Frankfurt School members such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, and developing new perspectives on contemporary conjunctures, contradictions, crises, and opportunities for collective emancipation.

The event will explore the Frankfurt School’s Political Economy and Critical Social Theory. In particular, we will consider early and contemporary critical theorists’ contributions to the critique of political economy, discuss the proposals put forward in the Institute for Social Research’s Perspectives for future research (published on the occasion of the IfS’ centenary, in December 2023), and highlight recent scholarship that illustrates how the anti-fascist and abolitionist critique of incarceration has been developed in close dialogue with the work of the Frankfurt School.

In the words of the IfS Perspectives’ authors,

With an eye on the opposing tendencies and practices of resistance to the ill functioning, Critical Theory today re asserts: Things need not be so, people can change them, the conditions to do so are at hand. And yet, by the same token, the conditions are equally in place for the regressive, authoritarian, violent perpetuation of the current state of affairs, as well as for the emergence of new forms of regression, authoritarianism, and violence.

We hope that this event will provide the opportunity for good conversations and collective thinking around critiquing, resisting, and mobilising beyond processes of oppression and exploitation in their current and future forms.

About the Speakers

- **Stephan Lessenich**
Professor for Social Theory and Social Research, Goethe University Frankfurt, and Director of the Institute for Social Research (IfS), Frankfurt, Germany. 2013-2017 President of the German Sociological Association (DGS). Most recent publication in English: Stephan Lessenich (2023), Doubling Down on Double Standards: The Politics of Solidarity in the Externalization Society, *Journal of Political Sociology* 1(1):15-32.
- **Chris O’Kane**
I am an adjunct who teaches in the Social Sciences in the greater New York City area. My most recent academic publication in English is ‘The Marx Revival and State Theory: Towards a Negative-Dialectical Critical Social Theory of the State’ in *Marxism and the Capitalist State: Towards a New Debate*, 231-252. I have published academic and public writings on Frankfurt School Critical Theory and The Critique of Political Economy in venues such as *Capital & Class*, *Constellations*, *Critical Historical Studies*, and the *Journal of the History of Ideas* blog. I am a co-editor of *The SAGE Handbook of Frankfurt School Critical Theory*, *Adorno and Marx: Negative Dialectics and the Critique of Political Economy*, and the Critical Theory and Critique of Society book series.
- **Cecilia Sebastian**
Cecilia Sebastian received her PhD in German Studies from Yale University in 2022, after which she held a postdoctoral International Fellowship at the Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut - Essen (KWI) and a lectureship at the University of Konstanz. Her most recent publication in English is “Angela Davis and Critical Theory, from Kant to Abolition,” *Polity* 56, no. 2 (April 2024): 207-29. Further academic and public writings have appeared or are forthcoming in *Jacobin*, *New German Critique*, and *The Oxford Handbook on Theodor W. Adorno*.
- **Esteban Torres**
Professor of Sociology and Social Theory at National University of Cordoba (UNC) and Researcher at the National Scientific and Technical Research Council of Argentina (CONICET). Director of the Research Program “World Social Change”, CONICET-UNC. Permanent Fellow of the Institute for Social Research (IfS), Frankfurt, Germany. Most recent publication in English on the topic of the event: (2023). Towards a Critical Theory of World Society, *Global Dialogue*, 13, 3: 26-28.

Registration

This event is free of charge but registration is required.

About the Group

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