



Seventh Seminar Series in Critical Theory and Politics

Readings in Contemporary Critical Theory

READING COURSE

Venue: Pavilion Parade, Staff Common Room

January to June 2015

This research seminar hosted by CAPPE and the **College of Arts and Humanities** is aimed at staff and research students interested in contemporary politics, philosophy, ethics and critical theory. Each year we focus on different issues and theorists. This year, in preparation for the annual Political Studies Association Conference (hosted by CAPPE and colleagues in Politics) we read the work of a number of contemporary authors who will be visiting Brighton in March. Visitors include Simona Forti (on evil), Sam Chambers (on understanding the social formation), Jodi Dean (on crowds and parties) and Todd May (on non-violent resistance.)

In the summer term we turn to the works of Fred Moten, and to contemporary Italian feminist and bio-political theories, in preparation for two conferences over the summer. All members of the Universities of Sussex and Brighton are welcome to participate. Times of the sessions vary through the year so please do check. Each session will begin with an introductory overview of the arguments followed by close scrutiny of passages in the texts under discussion.

If you would like to attend please email the academic coordinator of these sessions Dr Clare Woodford on c.woodford@brighton.ac.uk.

Professor Chambers, a visiting Leverhulme scholar from Johns Hopkins will also be hosting two research seminars the first titled 'Queering Theory', the second on the recent work of Judith Butler and Jacques Ranciere, later this term. Details of these seminars will be circulated later in the week. Please email m.devenney@brighton.ac.uk if you would like to participate in these events.

CRITICAL THEORY READING COURSE OUTLINE

Session 1: Simona Forti: New Demons: Rethinking Power and Evil Today

**Part 1: Wednesday 3rd of February, Pavilion Parade,
10.30-13.00**

Chapters 1 to 3

Professor Simona Forti will be a guest of the University in March of this year, and we will host a special session to talk about her recently translated book New Demons: Rethinking Power and Evil Today. For the first three sessions we read this extraordinary text on Evil. Professor Forti is an expert in the work of Hannah Arendt, has contributed to the rethinking of contemporary bio-politics, and has taught at the University of Eastern Piedmont, the New School, New York, and at Northwestern. In New Demons she develops a novel conceptualisation of evil, through close engagement with debates in modern philosophy, and the politics of the past two decades.

Session 2: Simona Forti: New Demons: Rethinking Power and Evil Today

**Part 2: Wednesday 10th of February, Pavilion Parade,
10.30 – 13.00**

Chapters 4 and 5

Session 3: Simona Forti: New Demons: Rethinking Power and Evil Today

**Part 3: Tuesday 16th of February, Pavilion Parade,
15.30-18.00**

Chapters 6-9

Session 5: Jodi Dean: Crowds and Party

**Tuesday 23rd of February, Pavilion Parade
15.30-18.00,**

First half of text.

We turn next to consider Jodi Dean's *Crowds and Party*. Professor Dean joins us from the US for a roundtable about her recent research. She will also deliver a one day workshop for those interested on Sunday the 17th of March. This is an opportunity to talk through this text with the author. Professor Dean is a well know critical theorist, having written about Zizek's politics, about neoliberalism, and about techno-cultures. We are very pleased to be welcoming her to Brighton.

Session 6: Jodi Dean: Crowds and Party

Tuesday 1st of March, Pavilion Parade

15.30 - 18.00

Second half of text

Session 7: Todd May: Nonviolent Resistance

Tuesday 8th of March, Pavilion Parade

15.30 - 18.00

First half of Book

Todd May is a political philosopher, best known for his development of a version of post-structuralist anarchism. Professor May will join us for a workshop on contemporary theory, reflecting on his recent work on non-violence as a form of resistance. He has written many texts on contemporary theory, including works on Ranciere, Deleuze and Foucault. .

Session 8: Todd May: Nonviolent Resistance

Tuesday 15th of March, Pavilion Parade,

15.30-18.00

Second half of book

SPECIAL SESSIONS: EASTER VACATION

Sunday 20th of March: Day long workshop with Professor Jodi Dean on her new book Crowds and Party.

Monday 21st of March: Workshop with Professor Simona Forti: New Demons: Rethinking Power and Evil Today (part of PSA conference)

Wednesday 23rd of March: Workshop with Clare Woodford, Jodi Dean, Sam Chambers and Todd May, on the Politics of Critique today. (special session at PSA conference)

SUMMER TERM 2016

In the summer term the reading Group on Contemporary Critical Theory continues. We focus on the work of Fred Moten (a guest at the University in June). Professor Moten is author of *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*, and co-author of *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* among many other texts. His current projects include two critical texts, *consent not to be a single being* (forthcoming from Duke University Press) and *Animechanical Flesh*, which extend his study of black art and social life. Details will be circulated at a later date.

We will also continue engagement with contemporary feminist and bio-political theories, developed in contemporary Italian philosophy.