

Mar 25th, 9:00 AM

Session: Introduction to Critical Theory

Critlib Unconference 2015 Session 1 Attendees

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Session 1, 9:30-10:30:

Hi Folks! Lydia here! This is the really quick and dirty critical theory overview presentation file that I made for this session:

<https://www.haikudeck.com/critical-theory---some-basics-education-presentation-OSAXY6MvD2>

PLEASE refer to it and embellish, add, detract, critique, etc!

Lydia introduces herself and notes she volunteered to do this. She notes its an honor to present in front of so many people she respects!

Very broad review of some basics of critical theory - in under 6 minutes!

Basic concepts:

Structuralism - idea that our experiences are in relation to something bigger than us

Post-structuralism - 60s, 70s - more than structures that assign meaning to us, but multiple structures that can layer meaning

Violent hierarchies - black/white, teacher/student - all reductivist

De-construct paired meanings, expose complexities/gray areas, destabilize what they mean through investigation

Time matters when talking about meaning - signs change over time; between cultures

Cultural meanings attached to our experiences; but different to everyone

Baudrillard - simulacrum

Foucault - panopticon

70s, early 80s - contemporary feminist theories

Judith Butler and gender theory - gender performativity; archetypes that are created and performed

Queer theory - gender is disruptive and how do we embody the deviant, perverse; deviate from the established; reassigning multiple signs/multiple signifiers on something

Critical race theory - premise that institutions/structures are founded on history of colonialism, white supremacist, racist, based on slavery

Read The New Jim Crow book - recommendation from participant; Playing Indian recommended as well

Intersectionality - combining all of the topics in one space

What is the definition of praxis: the wedding of theory and practice - apply what you learn to what you do (instruction perspective); reflection to apply what you learn

Can you do it by yourself?

Let's add more to post-structuralism

Poststructuralism - looking really focused at systems of power and class; there are multiple signs that can mean things; example of panopticon - e.g. prison - physically a prison but can represent power

Structuralism was all about ordering, structuring, pinning things down; post-structuralism destabilized that, systems are messy and the way we understand things isn't clean and easy; it adds the idea of context to understanding things

Default; codification - embedded in our thinking - e.g. man = white man with masculine presence

e.g. "childhood" - Intended and unintended consequence

Jacques Derrida is a prominent post-structuralist interested in the destabilizing of vocabulary and language structures

Critlib twitter - excludes people who don't have the vocabulary;

is there a way to be more approachable?

how do you have theoretical understanding vs. action/roots in social justice without the theoretical foundation (more intuitive/ lived experience)

Theorists were able to gain recognition by using powerful language

Call out culture online - not educational space?

This, right here, is an educational space

<https://xkcd.com/1053/>

learning happens in discomfort

black geek twitter; black intellectual twitter - exist side-by-side - interesting space to observe

additional conversation about experiences; started participating stopped taking notes :(

Define neoliberalism - a set of processes that applies a free market orientation to the far majority of human existence

What are the differences between liberalism and neoliberalism - freedom in the free market sense/ deregulation ; liberalism -classical economics - john smith the free hand of the invisible market

NO PLACE FOR IMPOSTER SYNDROME!!!

These are both economic principles... not political:

Liberalism = creating maps, defining public and private spaces

Neoliberalism = trickle down economics

Fun alternatives to dense theory:

<http://www.buzzfeed.com/chrisr414d8a71a/post-structuralism-explained-with-hipster-beards-2-xwfv#.unQmewKd2> , <-- Hipster Beards explain

Post-Structuralism

<http://binarythis.com/2013/05/23/judith-butler-explained-with-cats/> <-- Judith Butler with cats

<http://www.theonion.com/articles/grad-student-deconstructs-takeout-menu.85/> <--Onion article critical theory parody

<https://xkcd.com/1053/> <--XKCD not knowing things

<https://www.zotero.org/groups/critlib/items> <-- ZOTERO GROUP TO ADD RECOMMENDED READINGS (request for graphic novels, documentaries and visual media)

BOOK GROUP LEARNING COMMUNITY request

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

Critical Journeys by Robert Schroeder! Library Juice Press, 2014. Interview subjects' recommended readings will keep us all busy for a long time.