

Seminar: Rethinking *False Consciousness*

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Course Description

Drawing on the current Israeli socio-political terrain, especially the persisting gap between the universalistic message of the liberal-left and the social particularity of its adherents and opponents, the seminar offers a theoretical investigation into the relevance of *false consciousness* as an analytic tool. Although few contemporary critical sociologists would admit to using the concept, the idea of *false consciousness* continues to shape our thinking. The Israeli case will provide a window to a broader discussion of the concept. The issues to be explored include: What are the concept's historiosophical roots? How does *false consciousness* manifest itself as a building block of critical theory? What groups have been characterized as exhibiting *false consciousness*, by whom and in what contexts? Our investigation into *false consciousness* will enable us to delve into core issues of interpretation and understanding (*verstehen*) in the social sciences and to rethink the interpretive space occupied by contemporary critical sociology. Selected cases from the US will provide points of comparison.

Requirements and Grading

1. Before each class session, every student must submit as an attachment to email an analytical summary of the main argument found in each of the required readings. Following the summary, the student will propose 2-3 questions/subjects for class discussion (detailed instructions for preparing the summary are found below). The summary's length should not exceed **3 pages**. The deadline for submission is Friday 8pm, two days prior to the upcoming class session. Students presenting during the session will not be required to submit the analytical summary in advance.
2. Each student will make one class presentation during the semester on one of the topics covered. The presentation will be based on the readings assigned for that week. Presenters will be encouraged to incorporate their own research interests when leading the session's group discussion.
3. Distribution of grading weights: class participation (including weekly assignments) – 20%; individual presentation – 20%; final seminar paper – 60%.

Instructions for weekly preparation of the analytic summary of the readings

The summaries will include a short but comprehensive description of each of the required readings while responding to the following questions:

1. What is the main argument (in the case of a theoretical reading) or research hypothesis (in the case of empirical research)?
2. How does the author substantiate his argument (references to the research and theoretical literature, the research methodology)?
3. What theoretical or empirical conclusions does the author reach?
4. What does the respective work contribute to understanding the seminar's subject (indicate the work's weak points, strong points, and sources of inspiration, etc.)?

Seminar Sessions and Required Readings

Week 1. August 29 - Introduction

Week 2. September 12 - Mapping the Context I: Zionism, Demography, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict

- Kimmerling, B. 2001. *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness: State, Society, and the Military*. Berkeley: California University Press, pp. 16-39; 61-67.
- Morris, B. 2001. *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001*. New York: Vintage Books, pp. 676-694.
- Peled, Y. 1998. "Towards a Redefinition of Jewish Nationalism in Israel? The Enigma of Shas." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 21(4):703-727.
- Shavit, A. 2013. *My Promised Land*. New York: Spiegel & Grau, pp. 3-70.

Week 3. September 19 - Mapping the Context II: Social Boundaries, Stigmatization, and Social Inequality in Israeli Society

- Lamont, M. et al. 2016. *Getting Respect, Dealing with Stigma and Discrimination in the United States, Brazil, and Israel*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, Chapter 3: Israel.
- Mizrachi, N. and Herzog, H. 2012. "Participatory Destigmatization Strategies among Palestinian Citizens of Israel, Ethiopian Jews and Mizrahi Jews in Israel." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 35(3):418-435.
- Smootha, Sammy. 2008. "The mass immigrations to Israel: A comparison of the failure of the Mizrahi immigrants of the 1950s with the success of the Russian immigrants of the 1990s." *The Journal of Israeli History* 27 (1): 1-27.
- Swirski et al. 2012. *Israel: A Social Report*. Tel Aviv: Adva Center.

Week 4. September 26 - On the Gap between Israeli Sociology and the Subject of Research

- Fischer, Shlomo. 2016. "Two Patterns of Modernization: An Analysis of the Ethnic Issue in Israel." *Israel Studies Review* 31 (1), 66-85.
- Mizrachi, N. 2012. "On the Mismatch between Multicultural Education and Its Subjects in the Field". *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 33(2), 185-201.
- Mizrachi, N. 2016. "Sociology in the Garden: Beyond the Liberal Grammar of Contemporary Sociology." *Israel Studies Review* 31 (1), 36-65.

Recommended Readings:

- Frank, T. 2005. *What's the Matter with Kansas: How Conservatives Won the Heart of America*. New York: Henry Holt, pp. 1-10.
- Greenberg, S. B. 1996. *Middle Class Dreams: The Politics and Power of the New American Majority*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Lipset, S. M. 1963. "Working Class Authoritarianism". In Lipset, S. M., *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

October 3, Rosh Hashanah - No class

Week 5. October 10 - What is False Consciousness: Histories and Subjectivities

- Engels, F. 1978. "The Peasant War in Germany". 1978. In *The Collected Works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Volume 10*, New York: International Publishers, pp. 397–482, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1850/peasant-war-germany/>
- Lukács, G. 1971. "Class Consciousness". In *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Marx, K. 1845. "The Illusion of the Epoch". In *The German Ideology*: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01b.htm>
- Meyers, A. P. 2006. "Speaking Truth to Ourselves: Lukács, 'False Consciousness' and the Dilemma of Identity Politics in Democracy." *International Review of Sociology—Revue Internationale de Sociologie*, 16(3), 549-589.

Week 6. October 17 - Intellectuals as Public Opinion Makers

- Boltanski, Luc. 2011. *On Critique: A Sociology of Emancipation*. New York: Polity. Selected chapters.
- Bourdieu, P. 1986. "The Forms of Capital". In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood, pp. 241-258, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/bourdieu-forms-capital.htm>
- Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. New York: International Publishers.
- De Tocqueville, Alexis. 1983(1955). *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, Gilbert, S. (Tr.). New York: Doubleday.

Week 7. October 24 - On the Religious-Secular Divide in Israel

- Fischer, S. 2014. "The Crises of Liberal Citizenship." In Seligman, A. (Ed.), *Religious Education and the Challenge of Pluralism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Liebman, S. C. 1995. "Religion and Democracy in Israel." In Deshen, S. et al. (Eds.), *Israeli Judaism*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. pp. 347-366.
- Mirsky, Y. 2014. *Rav Kook: Mystic in a Time of Revolution*. New Haven: Yale U. Press.
- Revitzky, Aviezer. 1996. "A Cultural War? Religious and Secular Israelis." *The Jewish Quarterly* Vol. 43, Number 3 (163): 5-9.
- Segev, Tom. 1986. *1949: The First Israelis*. New York: Free Press. Pp. 195-262.

Week 8. October 31 - On the Religious-Secular Divide

- Benjamin, W. 2009. *On the Concept of History*. New York: Classic Books America.
- Habermas, J. 2006. "Religion in the Public Sphere". *European Journal of philosophy*, 14(1), 1-25.
- Taylor, C. 2011. "Why We Need a Radical Redefinition of Secularism". In Mendieta, E. & Vanantwerpen, J. (Eds.), *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*. New York: Columbia University Press, http://books.google.com/books?id=4n_DNWAdxUEC&lpg=PP1&pg=PA34#v=onepage&q&f=false.

Week 9. November 7 - Critical Sociology and Modes of Hermeneutics

- Boltanski, Luc. 2011. *On Critique: A Sociology of Emancipation*. New York: Polity. Selected chapters.
- Eisenstadt, S. N. 2000. "Multiple Modernities." *Daedalus*, 129(1), 1-29.
- Hughes, H. Stuart. 2008[1958]. *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, p. 183-200.
- Ricoeur, P. 1970[1965]. *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, D. Savage (Tr.). New Haven: Yale University Press, Chapter 2.

Week 10. November 14 - The "Problem" of Culture

- Abu-Lughod, L. 1990. "The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power through Bedouin Women". *American Ethnologist*, 17(1), 41-55.
- Boltanski, Luc. 2011. *On Critique: A Sociology of Emancipation*. New York: Polity. Selected chapters.
- Montgomery, H. 2001. "Imposing Rights? A Case Study of Child Prostitution in Thailand". In Cowan, J. K, Dembour, M. & Wilson, R. (Eds.), *Culture and Rights*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 80-101.
- Patterson, O. "A Poverty of the Mind." *New York Times*, March 26, 2006.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/26/opinion/26patterson.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>
- Small, M. L., Harding, D. J. & Lamont, M. 2010. "Reconsidering culture and poverty." *ANNALS of the AAPSS*, 629(6), 6-27.

Week 11. November 21 - Rethinking Consciousness-Raising

- Duncan, L. E. 1999. "Motivation for Collective Action: Group Consciousness as Mediator of Personality, Life Experiences, and Women's Rights Activism." *Political Psychology* 20(3), 611-635.
- Enns, C. Z. 1997. *Feminist Theories and Feminist Psychotherapies: Origins, Themes, and Variations*. Philadelphia, PA: Harrington Park Press/The Haworth Press, Introduction and Chapter 1.
- Berger, P. L. 1975. "The False Consciousness of Consciousness Raising". *Worldview*, 33-38.
- Montero, M. 1994. "Consciousness Raising, Conversion, and de-Ideologization in Community Psychosocial Work." *Journal of Community Psychology* 22(1), 3-11.
- Sarachild, K. 1975. "Consciousness-raising: A Radical Weapon". In Redstockings of the Womens Liberation Movement, *Feminist Revolution: An Abridged Edition with Additional Writings*. New York: Random House.

Week 12. November 28 - Post-liberal Imagery

- Fischer, S. 2014. "Liberalism and Religious Groups: The Perspective of Radical Orthodoxy." Proceedings of The Interdisciplinary Symposium *Religious 'Others,' Schooling, and the Negotiation of Civic Identities Interdisciplinary Symposium*, 25– 28 June 2014, Hanover, Germany, pp. 36-38.
- Fischer, S. 2016. "Post-Kookism and neo-Hasidut". In *The Orthodox Forum*, New York: Yeshiva University (forthcoming).
- Milbank, J. 2006. *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*. Oxford: Blackwell, Introduction and Chapter I.
- Mizrachi, N. 2014. "Translating Disability in a Muslim Community: A Case of Modular Translation". *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 38(2), 133-159.