

THE COLUMBIA CENTER FOR  
CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL THOUGHT

AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

SEMINAR ON CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL THOUGHT:  
HEGEL 13/13

CPLS 8866 & LAW 8866  
(SPRING 2026)

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WEDNESDAYS 6:15 PM TO 8:45 PM

SEMINAR DESCRIPTION

Each year, this seminar focuses on a different set of topics at the heart of contemporary critical thought. During the 2015-2016 academic year, the seminar focused on Michel Foucault's Collège de France lectures and produced the [Foucault 13/13 series](#). During the 2016-2017 academic year, the seminar focused on critical readings of Friedrich Nietzsche and produced the [Nietzsche 13/13 series](#). During the 2017-2018 academic year, the seminar focused on modalities of uprisings and produced the [Uprising 13/13 series](#). During the 2018-2019 academic year, the seminar focused on the relationship between critical theory and praxis, and produced the [Praxis 13/13 series](#). During the 2019-2020 academic year, the seminar returned to the fundamental texts of critical theory, and produced the [Critique 13/13 series](#). During the 2020-2021 academic year, the seminar went completely virtual due to the pandemic and focused on the history, theory, and future of abolition, and produced the [Abolition Democracy 13/13 series](#). During the 2021-2022 academic year, the seminar focused on the ideas and manifestos of 13 "worldly philosophers" who ignited revolutions, and produced the [Revolution 13/13 series](#). During the 2022-2023 year, we explored different experiments and models to reorganize society to address head on our current crises, and produced the [Utopia 13/13 series](#). During the 2023-2024 year, we focused on experiments in cooperation, and the seminar produced the

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[Coöperism 13/13](#) series. Last year, we turned to the writings of Karl Marx in a seminar titled [Marx 13/13](#).

This year, we will focus on the “inversions of Hegel” and create the public seminar [Hegel 13/13](#). The website is already available and has a lot of information and some videos already.

New philosophies and practices have so often emerged from a sharp confrontation with past ideas, especially, and curiously, from confrontations with Hegel’s paradigm. Whether it was Marx in the nineteenth century turning the *Phenomenology of Spirit* on its head, or Lenin closely annotating *The Science of Logic*, or C.L.R. James transforming the dialectic into a tool for decolonization, or Frantz Fanon or Jean-Paul Sartre inverting the master-slave dialectic, or Judith Butler turning subjectivity into desire, so many of the major contributions to critique and praxis in the past two centuries were born from an antagonistic struggle with Hegel’s thought.

From early on with Ludwig Feuerbach and the Young Hegelians, to Alexandre Kojève in the 1930s and his influence on post-war French philosophy but also on Allan Bloom and American conservative thought, or to the Johnson-Forest Tendency within the U.S. workers’ movement composed of CLR James, Raya Dunayevskaya, and Grace Lee Boggs, the contradictions in Hegel’s thought have given birth to some of the most important and impactful political ideas and practices.

It is time then, once again, to return to Hegel, not to think with him, but rather, as it has so often been more productive, to think against and beyond him. It is time for another round of agonistic confrontations with Hegel’s writings—*The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), *The Science of Logic* (1812-1816), the *Encyclopedia* (1817), and the *Principles of the Philosophy of Law* (1820).

This seminar “Inversions of Hegel 13/13” will explore the confrontations with Hegel’s writings that have shaped world history, with the ambition to develop a new critical praxis for today.

The graduate student seminar will be structured to frame a series of 13 formal seminars at which one or more guests, from different disciplines, will be invited to discuss the readings and present on the themes of the seminar. Each formal seminar will host contemporary critical theorists from across the disciplines. It will also frame and interrelate with a [Paris critical theory seminar at the EHESS](#) that will run alongside the seminar. The graduate student seminar thus will serve as the vehicle to enrich the formal 13/13 seminars and support the intellectual apparatus that will accompany those formal seminars. This seminar will function as an advanced graduate research seminar.

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We will be holding the formal 13/13 seminars on Wednesday evenings this coming year, generally from 6:15pm to 8:45pm EST, in the Jerome Greene Annex at Columbia University. Students will be expected to be present at the seminars at the seminar table, ready to go at least 5 minutes before the seminars start.

### BOOKS AND TEXTS

All reading materials will be posted on this syllabus and to the [Hegel 13/13 website](#).

### REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to read the assigned materials prior to the formal seminar and should be prepared to offer public comments to facilitate seminar discussion. There should be no absences. If a student has an excused absence, please e-mail Ricardo Orlando Lombera ([rl3343@columbia.edu](mailto:rl3343@columbia.edu)) by 10:00 a.m. of the day of the seminar.

For students who are registered in the 2-credit seminar, students should submit a fifteen to twenty page (double spaced; Times New Roman; 12-point) research paper on a topic of your choosing related to the seminar discussing an author who confronted Hegel's writings and developed an innovative political praxis. No use of AI. Please submit your written essays to Professor Harcourt and Ricardo Orlando Lombera ([rl3343@columbia.edu](mailto:rl3343@columbia.edu)) by May 1, 2026.

Professor Harcourt will hold office hours. Please contact his assistant, Ricardo Orlando Lombera ([rl3343@columbia.edu](mailto:rl3343@columbia.edu)), to schedule an appointment. Office hours are by appointment only.

### STATEMENT REGARDING ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The classroom is a space of academic freedom where every student should feel free to explore ideas and research with an open mind and without any constraints. There will be no censoring of ideas or research in our classroom or seminar readings, although everyone should be attentive not to emotionally harm, injure, or trigger any of our classmates in our discussions. I will not be modifying my seminar in any way that would restrict our free exchange of ideas. In order to create a free space for ideas and research, no student is allowed to tape or video other persons in the classroom and no one is allowed to share our classroom discussions outside of the classroom or on social media. Any violations of this will be considered a violation of the honor code and will be enforced.

## LAPTOP POLICY

Please note that you *may only use* your laptop for three purposes: (1) as a *word processor* to take and read notes; (2) as a *reader* to consult assigned course materials that are on-line or saved on your hard drive; or (3) to do any research directly related to our seminar. You *may not* use your laptop during the seminar, ever, to write emails, shop on-line, or for any other purpose that is not seminar related. If you are the kind of person who cannot resist temptation, please leave your laptop at home. It is *very distracting* to one's peers when someone else is shopping on-line. Please respect your peers and this policy.

## STATEMENT REGARDING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Columbia University Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit must be the student's own work. The complete Faculty Statement on Academic Integrity can be found at: <https://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity-statement> and the Columbia University Undergraduate Guide to Academic Integrity can be found here: <https://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/academicintegrity>

## DISABILITY STATEMENT

Columbia Law School is committed to the full inclusion of students with disabilities in the life of the University. In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), CLS provides accommodations and supports to students with documented disabilities on an individual, case-by-case basis. To request disability accommodations for this course, students must first be registered with Disability Services (DS).

Detailed information is available online (<https://health.columbia.edu/content/disability-services>) regarding the registration process, drop-in hours schedule, documentation requirements and important deadlines. Please allow for at least three weeks to complete the DS registration process. If you have already registered with DS, please contact the CLS DS liaison: Lauren Levy, Associate Director of Academic Counseling and Student Support, [ll3686@columbia.edu](mailto:ll3686@columbia.edu).

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### CREATING A POSITIVE THINKING SPACE

Please be mindful of helping to create a positive thinking and working environment to make sure that everyone can contribute. If you are the kind of person who doesn't talk much, please do speak up because it's good training for life. If you are the kind of person who speaks often, try to create a space for others to share. There are usually a lot of dynamics that you should be aware of by now that play out in the classroom. Let's work together to minimize their negative impact. This means especially being aware of the impact you are having on others' ability to contribute.

### POLICY STATEMENT ABOUT ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

You may not use artificial intelligence in any way to help you write your papers or do your thinking—with the exception of language translation and dictation transcription. You are not allowed to let any artificial intelligence think for you. All your work, reading, and thinking should be your own. I sincerely believe you will be better prepared for the real world if you do all your own work independently of artificial intelligence.

### GETTING READY FOR FIRST CLASS & BACKGROUND MATERIALS

I would recommend brushing up or doing some background reading on Hegel. You might want to read his entry in the [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#), or Peter Singer's introduction to Hegel in the [Oxford series](#), or some other reliable refresher on Hegel's work.

In addition, there is already a lot of material on the [Hegel 13/13 website](#), including videos and essays that will be useful to get into the readings.

## SEMINAR SCHEDULE AND READINGS

**NB:** Unless otherwise indicated, the seminar will meet in [Jerome Greene Annex](#) at Columbia University, at 6:15 PM New York time (EDT, UTC/GMT -5)

**NB:** All readings are tentative and will be updated closer to the seminars.

### January 21, 2026:

This seminar will be a closed seminar just for the students enrolled in the seminar. We will introduce ourselves to each other and Professor Harcourt will give a background lecture on Hegel and on the Hegel 13/13 seminar.

During the semester, we will mostly be reading authors who are writing *about* Hegel, rather than reading Hegel himself, who is often hard to decipher. For this first seminar between us, though, I think it would be helpful for you to wade through some Hegel. Know that it can be challenging. As Simone de Beauvoir noted when she tackled Hegel in July 1940 (she already had passed the French *agrégation* in philosophy in 1929 and come in second place, and studied Hegel in the late 1920s), “I went to the Bibliothèque nationale de France. I took a card and I began to read some Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*; for the moment, I understand practically nothing.” So you are in good company if you find it difficult. But please try your best and remember to read as a graduate student, not a freshman in college—I will explain.

### Readings:

G.W.F. Hegel, “Preface” to *Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), p. 1-13 (available online with some typos here: <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/pr/preface.htm>)

G.W.F. Hegel, *Introduction: Reason in History. Introduction to the Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* (1822-1828 and 1830-1831 versions), trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975) (these are two different introductions to his lectures on the philosophy of history; the first version is here online: <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/hi/history0.htm>).

G.W.F. Hegel, ¶¶ 178-196 of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); or trans. George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) (Cambridge Hegel Translations) (this is the famous lord-bondsman dialectic that Kojève would privilege in his reading of Hegel).

**January 28, 2026:**

**This seminar will also be closed, just for the enrolled seminar students, and we will use it to get ready for the upcoming Benhabib and West seminars.**

For the Marcuse seminar with Seyla Benhabib, please read Marcuse's first book: Herbert Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*, trans. Seyla Benhabib (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), available in PDF at the hyperlink. Please make sure to read Professor Benhabib's [introduction to Marcuse's 1932](#) work. You may also find the Glossary that Professor Benhabib prepared and published at the end of the book helpful for the seminar.

Please also read as much of his *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* as possible. There is an [online version here](#). I am putting additional resources for reading Marcuse here: <https://hegel1313.law.columbia.edu/11-13/>

For the Nietzsche/Foucault seminar with Cornel West, please familiarize yourself with Hegel's philosophy of history. The published version is a few paragraphs in G.W.F. Hegel, §§ 341-360, *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952). That is the most official version, it is in a published book. Hegel also gave introductions to his lectures on the philosophy of history: G.W.F. Hegel, *Introduction: Reason in History. Introduction to the Lectures on the Philosophy of World History (1822-1828 and 1830-1831 versions)*, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

For Nietzsche on Hegel, please read §8 of his Second Untimely Meditation, "On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life," where he attacks Hegel. One online version is here: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/38226/38226-h/38226-h.htm>. We might also discuss Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1989), his most developed mature work on history really.

For Michel Foucault, please read "[Nietzsche, Genealogy, History](#)," p. 76-101, in Foucault, *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984). I just published all his lectures on Nietzsche, but that is not translated into English yet. It is here: Michel Foucault, *Nietzsche: Cours, conférences et travaux*, ed. Bernard E. Harcourt (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2024). And I am putting additional resources on Hegel, Nietzsche, and Foucault on this page here: <https://hegel1313.law.columbia.edu/6-13/>

**February 4, 2026: Hegel – Marcuse – with Seyla Benhabib**

In this seminar, Seyla Benhabib will discuss Herbert Marcuse's earliest work on Hegel, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity* (1932), which she introduced and translated for the English-speaking world, as well as Marcuse's later work, *Reason and Revolution* (1941). Please make sure to read Professor Benhabib's [introduction to Marcuse's 1932](#) work. You may also find the



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Glossary that Professor Benhabib prepared and published at the end of the book helpful for the seminar.

### Core Readings

Herbert Marcuse, [\*Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity\*](#), trans. Seyla Benhabib (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987)

Herbert Marcuse, [\*Reason and Revolution\*](#) (Boston: Beacon Press, 1941)

### Resources

Robert B. Pippin, "Marcuse on Hegel and Historicity," *Philosophical Forum* 16 (3):180 (1985)

### February 11, 2026: Hegel – Nietzsche – Foucault – with Cornel West (JGH 101)

In his untimely meditations "On the Use and Abuse of History for Life" (1873), Nietzsche confronts Hegel's philosophy of history, introducing a strong element of contingency into Hegel's historical account and severely criticizing Hegel's Germanic end-of-history approach. Nietzsche there begins to develop a genealogical method that would come to full fruition in *On the Genealogy of Morals* a few years later (1887). Foucault developed his method of genealogy in conversation with both Nietzsche's and Hegel's writings. In this segment, we explore with Cornel West Hegel's philosophy of history through the inversions that Nietzsche and Foucault operated on it. We do so to gain better purchase on our contemporary times.

### Core Seminar Readings

G.W.F. Hegel, §§ 341-360, [\*Hegel's Philosophy of Right\*](#), trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952)

G.W.F. Hegel, *Introduction: Reason in History. Introduction to the Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* ([1822-1828](#) and [1830-1831 versions](#)), trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975)

Friedrich Nietzsche, "[On the Use and Abuse of History for Life](#)" (1873), especially §8

Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1989).

Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire," p. 136-156, in Foucault, *Dits et Écrits 1954-1988, Tome II 1970-1975*, text no. 84, eds. Daniel Defert, François Ewald, and Jacques Lagrange (Paris: Gallimard, 1994); "[Nietzsche, Genealogy, History](#)," p. 76-101, in Foucault, *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).

Michel Foucault, *Nietzsche: Cours, conférences et travaux*, ed. Bernard E. Harcourt (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2024).



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**Additional Readings**

G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E.S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, in three volumes (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1892)

Michel Foucault, *L'ordre du discours. Leçon inaugurale au Collège de France, prononcée le 2 décembre 1970* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).

Bernard E. Harcourt, "Situation," pp. 335-393, in Michel Foucault, *Nietzsche: Cours, conférences et travaux*, ed. Bernard E. Harcourt (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2024).

**Additional Resources**

Rebecca Comay, *Mourning Sickness: Hegel and the French Revolution* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2010)

Bernard E. Harcourt, "On Critical Genealogy," *Contemporary Political Theory* (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41296-024-00715-y>.

Colin Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problems of Modernity* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013).

Jean Hyppolite, *Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire de Hegel* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1983 [1948]); *Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of History*, trans. Bond Harris and Jacqueline Bouchard Spurlock (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996).

Daniele Lorenzini, "On Possibilising Genealogy," *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy* (2019), OnlineFirst: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174X.2020.1712227>.

Pierre Macherey, "Did Foucault Find a 'Way Out' of Hegel?" *Theory, Culture & Society*, 40(1-2), 19-36 (2022), available at <https://doi.org/10.1177/02632764221084903>.

Martin Saar, *Genealogie als Kritik: Geschichte und Theorie des Subjekts nach Nietzsche und Foucault* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2007).

**February 18, 2026:**

**This seminar may also be closed, unless things change, and we will use it to get ready for the Spivak and Butler seminars.**

Please read the materials for the Spivak and Butler seminars.

**February 25, 2026: Hegel – Marx – with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak**

**Readings:**

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G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Karl Marx, *Capital, Vol. 1*, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin Classics, 1992)

**March 4, 2026: Hegel – Butler – with Judith Butler**

**Readings:**

Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012 [1987]).

**March 11, 2026: NO SEMINAR**

**Friday, March 20, 2026 in Paris: Hegel – Deleuze – with Jean-Baptiste Vuillerod**

**Readings:**

Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994 [1968]) (principal thesis for the *Doctorat D'État*).

Jean-Baptiste Vuillerod, *La révolution trahie : Deleuze contre Hegel* (Villeneuve d'Ascq : Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2023)

**April 1, 2026:**

**April 8, 2026: Hegel – Fanon – with Susan Buck-Morss**

**Readings:**

Susan Buck-Morss, “Hegel and Haiti,” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Summer, 2000), pp. 821-865

Susan F. Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009)

**April 15, 2026:**

**April 22, 2026: Hegel – Adorno – with Bruno Bosteels**

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**Readings:**

Theodor W. Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993)

Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1973)

**April 29, 2026: Hegel – with Homi Bhabha**