Title of the course	**Critical Theory**		
Title of the Academic Programme	Philology/Comparative Literature and Linguistics		
Type of the course	Elective		
Prerequisites	Ability to read difficult theoretical texts in English.		
ECTS workload	4		
Total indicative study hours	Directed Study	Self-directed study	Total
	42	110	152
Course Overview	This course serves as an introduction to the ideas of some of the most important thinkers in the broad and dynamic field of modern "critical theory." Topics we will explore include: the mechanisms of ideology, the history of knowledge, the instability of signifying systems, conceptions of the social imaginary, the interrelationship between culture and imperialism, psychoanalysis and the subject under "late capitalism," as well as theories of the "post-human." We will examine theorists such as Slavoj Žižek, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Benedict Anderson, Edward Said, Jean Baudrillard, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Deleuze and Guatarri, Gayatri Spivak, Judith Butler, Donna Haraway, and others. *Readings and discussion in English.* In the first module the focus will be on ideological constructs, the social imaginary, and culture. In the second module the focus will be on subjectivities, the psyche, and the self.		
Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)	General objectives of the course include: • provide experience reading complicated theoretical work written in English (or English translation); • hone students' skills in discussion and critical thinking; • prepare the students who may be interested in graduate-level work in Anglophone countries for engaging in theoretically informed academic discourse; • convey the multiplicity of perspectives available for advanced work in the humanities.		
Teaching and Learning Methods	Lectures, seminars, presentations, reading and writing assignments, video screenings.		

Content and Structure of the Course

№	Topic / Course Chapter	Total	Directed Study		Self-directed Study
			Lectures	Tutorials	
1	Ideological Constructs, the Social Imaginary, Culture	77	10	12	55
2	Subjectivities, the Psyche, and the Self	75	10	10	55
Total study hours		152	20	22	110

| Indicative Assessment Methods and Strategy | **Take-home midterm test**: 20%
At the end of the first module. Short essay questions on key topics from the lectures. *Some sample questions:*
• Explain Edward Said's conception of Orientalism.
• How does Foucault critique the argument of Barthes' "Death of the Author?"
• What does Debord mean by "society of the spectacle?"

Oral seminar presentation: 20%
In either the first or second module. The presentations should demonstrate a clear understanding of the theoretical concepts involved; they should cite and analyze key passages from relevant texts; and they should offer a critical assessment. The presentation should conclude with a question (or two) addressed to the class for further discussion.
Some sample topics:
• Žižek's conception of the Big Other.
• The critique of Freudian psychoanalysis in Deleuze and Guatarri.
• Post-humanism as a new ethical imperative.

Participation in online forum: 20%
Throughout the course, students will respond vis LMS to assigned questions posted by the instructor or to the responses of other students. This is a more informal sharing of opinions, designed to stimulate more discussion in class.
Some sample questions for the online forum:
• Whose arguments are more convincing in the Foucault/Chomsky debate?
• Why is Derrida's method of deconstruction so influential and so controversial?
• What are the pros and cons of Haraway's conception of the cyborg?

Final examination paper: 40%
(about 2000 words in English): You are free to choose your own topic. The one requirement is that your analysis should draw on the work of at least two theorists that we have covered (or the equivalent). You may want to apply theoretical perspectives to analyzing a literary text. Or you may write on a purely theoretical topic—how different theorists approach some common problem.
Some examples of purely theoretical topics:
• Human beings and machines in Deleuze and Guatarri, Donna Haraway
• The rejection of the subject in Deleuze and Guatarri, Judith Butler
• Literary narratives in Said and Benedict Anderson
• Gender, sexuality, and social control in Foucault and Judith Butler
• The oedipal complex in Freud and Lacan
• Consumerism and desire in Baudrillard and Žižek
• The system of signs and differences in Derrida and Baudrillard |
| Readings / Indicative Learning Resources | <u>Mandatory</u>
1) LaCapra, D. *History, Literature, Critical Theory*. Cornell University Press, 2013. *ProQuest*
2) Rich, J. *An Introduction to Critical Theory*. Humanities-Ebooks, 2007. ProQuest

<u>Optional</u> |

	1) Osborne, T. *The Structure of Modern Cultural Theory*. Manchester University Press, 2008. *ProQuest* 2) Taylor, D. *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts*. Routledge, 2014. *ProQuest* 3) Wortham, S. M., and S. Morgan Wortham. *The Derrida Dictionary*. Bloomsbury, 2010. *ProQuest*
Indicative Self- Study Strategies	**Type** / **+/−** / **Hours**

Type	+/−	Hours
Reading for seminars / tutorials (lecture materials, mandatory and optional resources)	+	60
Assignments for seminars / tutorials / labs	+	24
E-learning / distance learning (MOOC / LMS)	-	0
Fieldwork	-	0
Project work	-	0
Other (please specify)	-	0
Preparation for the exam	+	20

Academic Support for the Course	Academic support for the course is provided via LMS, where students can find: course syllabus, guidelines and recommendations for the course, discussion questions for seminars, and forum topics for online contributions.
Facilities, Equipment and Software	Classrooms must be equipped with computers, projectors, speaker systems, and screens for presentations. A web browser, MS Word, MS Powerpoint, and pdf-reading software must be installed. Computers must have access to the Internet.
Course Instructor	Vadim Shkolnikov

Appendix 1

Course Content

Module 1: Ideological Constructs, the Social Imaginary, Culture

1. Žižek and the Critique of Post-Ideology
Žižek on the difficulty of "escaping" ideology. Democracy and "the invisible system." Ideology and enjoyment, desire. Desire and the commodity. Ideology and violence. Žižek's notion of the Big Other.

2-4. Foucault, Derrida and the Principles of Post-Structuralism
Foucault vs. Barthes on the author. Foucault's conception of the episteme. Foucault's debate with Chomsky. Foucault and Deleuze: intellectuals and power, the de-centered self. The general principles of Derrida's method of deconstruction. The instability of signifying systems. The system and its "blind spot." Critique of the metaphysics of presence. Derrida's deconstruction as a cultural phenomenon.

5-6. The Social Imaginary
Benedict Anderson: the nation as an "imagined community." The psychological experience of nation-ness. Anderson on the origins of national consciousness. Literature as nation-builder. Anderson's framework in relation to Russian literary history.

7-8. Culture and Imperialism
The relationship between culture and imperial domination. Said's conception of Orientalism. The production of knowledge and the mechanisms of imperialism. Narrative and the power to dominate. A network of intertwined histories. Imperialist themes in Jane Austen, Kipling, Camus.

9-11. Consumer Culture and the Spectacle
The culture industry and social control. Debord's conception of "the spectacle." Consumer society and alienation. Baudrillard's conception of consumerism as a system of signs and differences. Consumerism and desire.

Module 2: Subjectivities, the Psyche, and the Self

12-14. Freud, Lacan and the Foundations of Psychoanalysis
Science, metaphysics, and the limits of interpretation in Freudian psychoanalysis. The struggle between the "sex instinct" and the "death instinct." The oedipal complex in Freud and Lacan. The imaginary, the symbolic, and the real in Lacan. Lacan's conceptions of desire, the mirror phase, the signification of the phallus.

15. Foucault: History of Sexuality
Foucault's rejection of the "repressive hypothesis." The proliferation and evolution of discourses on sexuality. The historical origins of the sexual subject. The "deployment of sexuality" as a form of social control. The modern "bio-political" regime.

16-17. Deleuze and Guatarri: Anti-Oedipus
The critique of Freudian psychoanalysis in Deleuze and Guatarri. The de-centering of the subject: a liberation both psychologically and economically. Overcoming the dualisms man/nature, nature/production. Desiring machines.

18-21. Gender, Identity, Post-Humanism
The difference between "sex" and "gender." Gender as a social construction. The problem of woman as subject. Judith Butler's critique of totalizing tendencies in feminist discourse. Butler's rejection of the "subject" and "identity." Butler's notion of subversive practice. Gayatri Spivak on the double bind of the colonized woman. Can the subaltern speak? The example of widow-sacrifice in colonial India. The epistemological violence of assimilation into Western narratives. Why post-humanism? Donna Haraway's notion of the "cyborg." The "organics of domination" and the "informatics of domination." The notion of "cyborg writing."

Appendix 2

Assessment Methods and Criteria

Assessment Methods

Types of Assessment	Forms of Assessment	Modules			
		1	2	3	4
Formative Assessment	Test	*			

	Essay				
	Report/Presentation	*	*		
	Project				
	In-class Participation				
	Other (participation in online forum)	*	*		
Interim Assessment (if required)	Assignment (e.g. written assignment)				
Summative Assessment	Exam (essay)		*		

Assessment Criteria

Online contribution

Grades	Assessment Criteria
«Excellent» (8-10)	The student submits most of the forum assignments on time and responds to other students' activities. The content of messages is relevant and insightful, and it provokes further discussions online and in class.
«Good» (6-7)	The student submits most of the assignments after a short delay and does not respond to other students' messages. The content of messages is relevant, but does not provide much room for discussion.
«Satisfactory» (4-5)	The student submits some of the weekly assignments, but does not respond to other students' messages. The content of messages is not always relevant, and it initiates no discussions.
«Fail» (0-3)	The student never, or hardly ever, contributes.

Oral presentations

Grades	Assessment Criteria
«Excellent» (8-10)	Presents a well-structured, original argument. Demonstrates a very strong understanding of texts/materials involved. Answers to follow-up questions reveal a good range and depth of knowledge beyond that covered in the presentation and show confidence in discussion.
«Good» (6-7)	Clearly organized analysis, showing evidence of a good overall knowledge of the topic. Chooses appropriate discussion questions.
«Satisfactory» (4-5)	Takes a very basic approach to the topic, using broadly appropriate material but lacking focus. Knowledge of the topic is limited and there may be evidence of basic misunderstanding.
«Fail» (0-2)	Fails to demonstrate any appropriate knowledge.

Written Assignments (Essay)

Grades	Assessment Criteria
Excellent (8-10)	The argument is substantial and relevant. The paper addresses the topic indicated in its title adequately and contains a strong analytical component. The material is structured coherently, and the writer's ideas are clear. The paper size accords to the course requirements. The style agrees with academic writing conventions; minor language errors may rarely occur. References are duly formatted.
Good (6-7)	The argument is relevant. The paper addresses the topic indicated in its title adequately, but analysis is sporadic. There are some issues with structuring the argument, and the writer's ideas are not always very clear. The paper size goes slightly beyond what is required. The style does not always agree with academic writing conventions; some language errors may occur. References are formatted with some inconsistencies.
Satisfactory (4-5)	The argument is marginally relevant. The paper addresses the topic in the title only on the surface, and the analytic component is weak. Presentation of ideas is not properly structured, while the ideas are obscure. The size requirement is severely neglected. The style is often inappropriate; there are plenty of language errors. References are accidental and misleading.
Fail (1-3)	The paper fails to communicate information adequately. There is either no title or no clear indication of its relevance to the content of the paper. The material is presented chaotically, and the writer's ideas are confusing. The size of the paper is ridiculous. The style is embarrassing; language errors hinder comprehension. There are no references provided.
Fail (0)	The paper is plagiarized or not submitted. **Plagiarism in the final paper (exam) nullifies the course grade.**

Plagiarism Policy
Plagiarism is <u>any</u> amount of ideas and/or phrasings featured in the text submitted by the student with no reference to their source. If the term paper (exam) is plagiarized, the student fails the entire course, so that all other results of the course assessment components are blocked. Double submission (handing in the same paper for two different courses) counts as plagiarism, unless its terms and conditions are discussed with and endorsed by the course instructor well in advance. To retake the exam, the student must write a different paper on a different subject, which needs to be approved by the course instructor in advance, during the reexamination period. If the new essay contains no plagiarism, it is marked according to the normal assessment scale, and the previous coursework assessment items are restored.

Recommendations for essay

An essay is a written self-study on a topic offered by the teacher or by the student him/herself approved by teacher. The topic for essay includes development of skills for critical thinking and written argumentation of ideas. An essay should include clear statement of a research problem; include an analysis of the problem by using concepts and analytical tools within the subject that generalize the point of view of the author.

Essay structure:
1. *Introduction and formulation of a research question.*
2. *Body of the essay* and theoretical foundation of selected problem and argumentation of a research question.
3. *Conclusion* and argumentative summary about the research question and possibilities for further use or development.

Special conditions for organization of learning process for students with special needs

The following types of comprehension of learning information (including e-learning and distance learning) can be offered to students with disabilities (by their written request) in accordance with their individual psychophysical characteristics:

1) *for persons with vision disorders:* a printed text in enlarged font; an electronic document; audios (transferring of learning materials into the audio); an individual advising with an assistance of a sign language interpreter; individual assignments and advising.

2) *for persons with hearing disorders: a* printed text; an electronic document; video materials with subtitles; an individual advising with an assistance of a sign language interpreter; individual assignments and advising.

3) *for persons with muscle-skeleton disorders: a* printed text; an electronic document; audios; individual assignments and advising.