

Syllabus

RELIGION AND SOCIAL ETHICS

COMPARATIVE RELIGION 3320

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A. Course Description

Our course will compare different forms of religious and secular ethics and social ethics, personal and social morality from ancient moral codes through medieval ethical systems to contemporary modern and post-modern ethical systems (See Road Map A, B, C, D on my website, under Web Publications and Course Syllabi: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>). It will deal with the creative ideas, problems and attitudes toward the social world intrinsic to these different ethical norms and values. While our discourse will emphasize the variety of ethical and moral responses to social problems in family, society, state and international relations provided by the religions of the world as well as to secular approaches it will pay particular attention to problems raised and solutions proposed by the critical theorists of society from the Frankfurt School about issues in antagonistic civil society such as divorce, abortion, pro-life position, pro-choice position, negative artificial birth control, artificial insemination, stem cell research, eugenics, euthanasia, homosexuality, lesbianism, gay marriage, abstinence, premarital sex, race, gender, class, war and peace, hunger, poverty and ecological catastrophes, etc (See Road Map A, B, C, D, on website). Our course and discourse will stress the most advanced communicative or discourse ethics, the discourse theory of human and civil rights and obligations, and of the democratic constitutional state, Our discourse aims at a post-modern global ethos, in which the former religious and secular ethical and socio-ethical systems are concretely superseded: i.e. critically negated, but also preserved, elevated, and possibly fulfilled.

Critical Theory of Society and Religion

While our discourse will emphasize the variety of ethical and socio-ethical responses to social problems provided by the world religions as well as by secular approaches, it will pay particular attention to problems raised and solutions proposed by the critical theory of society and by the new dialectical theory of religion about issues such as: stem cell research, liberal eugenics, negative artificial birth control, abortion, euthanasia, race, gender, class, poverty, war and peace, ecological catastrophes, etc. (See Road Map A, B, C, D, on website). We shall emphasize the communicative ethics, and the discourse theory of human and civil rights and of the democratic constitutional state, intrinsic to the dialectical theory of society and to the new dialectical religiology. We shall aim at a universal ethos grounded in the world religions as well as in modern enlightenment movements and their attempts to constitute a secular ethics. The critical theory of society is a social theory which emphasizes the antagonisms in society as well as their dialectical resolution (See Road Map C). The critical theory of religion is a social theory, which stresses most of all the modern contradiction between the sacred and the profane and seeks to resolve it on the secular side in terms of an inverse cipher theology: it inverts e. g. the second and the third commandment of the Mosaic Decalogue, i.e. the prohibition against making images of and naming the Absolute, into the secular philosophical prohibition against the penetration of human reason into the realm of the Thing – in - itself, i.e. God, Freedom and Immortality by penalty of the most confusing antinomies particularly concerning the theodicy problem, or the myth of the fall of man which inverse theology translates into the curse or spell of finitude, which seems to hold captive antagonistic modern society, history, etc. That the critical theory does emphasize the antagonism between the religious and the secular in modern civil and socialist societies, does not mean that it neglects in any way the many other contradictions e. g. between the genders, the races, the classes, etc. From each antagonism originate at least two perspectives on religion: men see religion differently from women; Semites from Arians, workers from the bourgeoisie, etc. The critical theory of religion tries to do justice to all the perspectives arising from all the antagonisms in modern industrial society.

Different Forms of Ethics

The aim of our critical discourse on religion and social ethics is to explore, how different forms of religious and secular ethics and social ethics converge today in an attempt to achieve a universal discourse-, or communicative- or responsibility ethics (See Road Map A, B, C, D, on website). Such discourse ethics may or may not be grounded in religion. It may as secular global ethics allow semantic and semiotic elements, particularly of an ethical nature, to migrate into the modern discourse of the expert cultures, and through it into communicative and even economic and political praxis of modern and post-modern individuals, societies and states. Why should the Golden Rule, which all still living world religions have in common, not still remain valid for secular-humanistic people?

Communicative Action

We understand our critical discourse as a privileged form of communicative action inside or outside a religious community (See Road Map A, B, C, D, on website). Such communicative or mimetic action is the opposite of instrumental or functional action. While the instrumental action takes place between a human subject and an object through the mediation of tools, the communicative praxis takes place between two or more persons via language. It is about a certain text. It is located in a particular situation or context. It is structured in terms of the propositional content of the text, and of its performative aspect. It aims at a particular goal. These five components of communicative action can guide our attempts to understand religious as well as secular ethicists and compare them. Instrumental action and rationality is rooted in the human potential of language and memory. Communicative action is based in the evolutionary universal of work and tools. Religion and ethics are mainly grounded in communicative praxis and rationality. If communicative praxis is repressed by instrumental action, religion and ethics lose their ground and become more and more implausible, unacceptable, obsolete and irrelevant, and may die. This is a real danger as modern society moves toward post-modern alternative Future I – a totally administered society based on instrumental and functional rationality and action (See Road Map D).

Discourse

In our comparative perspective, when such communicative action in a religious faith community or in a secular-humanistic community, e. g. marriage and family, becomes problematic, a discourse is necessary in order to reflect upon it and to resolve what ever problem has occurred. (See Road Map A & B) We understand discourse as argumentative dialogue. It is rooted in the human potential of language and memory as well as in the evolutionary universal of the struggle for recognition. It can be a religious discourse, which remains in touch with the religious community's revelation experience and cultic praxis. It can also be a theological discourse, which creates an interconnection and exchange between the religious contents of the faith community and the surrounding secular expert-cultures and - discourses. It can also be a secular-humanistic discourse, which has emancipated itself from all religious and theological revelatory presuppositions, but may still rescue in itself religious insights, and connect them with scientific facts and data, and their functional interconnections. We define our discourse more specifically as future-oriented remembrance of human happiness and suffering, with the practical intent to increase the former, and to decrease the latter.

Religious, Philosophical and Scientific Discourses

Our religiological discourse concretely supersedes in itself - as scientific discourse - other, historically earlier forms of discourse: theological and philosophical discourses. It likewise concretely sublates other forms of scientific discourse: particularly psychological, sociological, and anthropological discourses. In the history of discourse is at work the power of creative destruction. One paradigm of discourse determinately negates the previous one: it not only critically negates previous discourse models, but also preserves, elevates and fulfills them. We may look at great masters of discourse: e. g. Jesus of Nazareth of religious discourse; Socrates of philosophical discourse; and Albert Einstein of scientific discourse. Past discourse masters do not necessarily lose all their validity in later discourse paradigms. They may retain a certain plausibility and acceptability even in later discourse models.

Dialectical Method: Determinate Negation

Our critical, discourse is guided by the dialectical method: determinate negation. This method is not only rooted in Greek philosophy - in Heracleitos, Socrates, and Plato - but also in Jewish religion - in the second and third commandment of the Mosaic law: the prohibition against making images of or naming the Infinite, Absolute, Unconditional, Ultimate Reality: or the totally Other than the horror and terror of nature and history (See Road Map B). The entirely Other is the determinate negation of the perils of human existence: evil, suffering, pain, loneliness, abandonment, guilt, and meaninglessness, fear of illness, aging, dying, and death. The longing for the totally Other is the longing for the solution of the theodicy problem in all world religions and philosophies: the antagonism between the justice of the Gods or of God on one hand, and the horrible injustices in their world, on the other. The theodicy problem means power without right, and right without power. It means the powerlessness of God and the abandonment, injustice, meaninglessness, alienation, illness, and death of men on earth. Continually we encounter theodicy experiences: the Tsunami in the Indian Ocean, the Hurricane in New Orleans, the earthquake in Pakistan, the death of the 12 miners in Tallmansville, W. Virginia, etc. They affect deeply people's religion and their ethics and social ethics. When on January 4, 2006 the Baptist community in Tallmansville heard after first having believed that a miracle had happened and that their 12 miners had been rescued, heard that they had died in the mine accident, one expressed her theodicy experience by saying that there was no Lord! However, the longing for the totally Other than this by far not the most perfect world is so deeply rooted in man as he has evolved since he separated himself from the chimpanzees 7 million years ago and particularly since he began to settle in villages and towns and city states 10 000 years ago and practiced always higher levels of economic exchange, that it survives not only the greatest tragedies but also all religions and their many god-hypostases.

Definition of Religion

In the critical theory of religion we define religion as longing for the totally Other than what is the case in nature and history and their often cruel laws of evolution(See Road Map B). All world religions have this insatiable longing in common in many different forms, and are based in it, and are carried and driven on by it in their development. It is the longing that the finitude of finite life may not be the last word of biography and history. It is the longing for perfect justice and unconditional love, which both have no place yet in history. It is the longing that the murderer shall not triumph over the innocent victim: at least not ultimately. It is the longing that the theodicy problem may be resolved eschatologically in one form or the other.

Life Forms

In our comparative discourse, the dialectical method means concretely, that the completeness of the different religious or secular ethical life forms results through the necessity of their progress and interconnection. Each following ethical life form is the "truth" of the previous one. The movement of the ethical life forms is not a merely negative one. To take it as a merely negative one would mean skepticism, cynicism, or even nihilism. However, skepticism, cynicism, or nihilism is he or she merely incomplete ethical life forms. As such they are to be superseded on the way to the still unknown universally true ethical life form. Ethics is as much an incomplete or still open human project as religion or secular enlightenment.

Skepticism

In our religiological view, skepticism sees in the result of each movement from one ethical system toward the other always only the pure nothingness. The skeptic abstracts from the fact, that this nothingness is determinately the nothingness of the ethical life form, from which it has resulted. It is, therefore, itself determinate, and as such has a content of its own. It is a new, more concrete, richer ethical system. The skeptic, who ends up with the abstraction of nothingness or emptiness, cannot precede any further from this his negative result. He rather must await, if something new will offer itself to him, in order then to throw it once more into the same abyss of obsolete ethical life forms. Skepticism has – since it always looks forward to negative results – has a conservative function. It is better to hold on to what one has, even if it is far from being perfect, instead of having nothing at all.

New Ethical Systems

However, according to the critical religiologist, things are differently with dialectics. As the dialectician conceives of the result of the movement of the past ethical life forms, as it is in truth - namely as a series of determinate negations - thereby a new ethical system has originated, and in the negation the transition has been made, through which the progression results through the complete series of ethical life forms. The negative is also the positive! For the dialectician the goal of the whole movement of ethical systems is posited with the same necessity as its sequence of ethical life forms. As we apply determinate, positive, concrete, or mediated negation, we see religious as well as secular ethical systems superseding each other toward the still unknown goal of the complete, global ethical life form.

Positivism

In the comparative-religiological perspective, while the positivist can teach us to identify reality, the dialectician teaches us not to acquiesce with the unethical reality, but to transcend it in sorrow and in longing and hope. Positivism is the metaphysics of what is the case in the world of nature and history. Positivism without dialectics is inhuman. If the positivist is right, the world is an inescapable hell. No religious person can be a positivist, and vice versa. No positivist can tell us, why it is better to love than to hate, except that to love may be better for business. But what if the hate of racial minorities may be better for business, like in fascist Germany? The positivists Adolf Hitler and Dr. Josef Goebbels gave the answer: the aristocratic principle of nature! Auschwitz I, II and III, and cyclone B were the consequence. If Hitler and Goebbels had won, they would have been praised as the most outstanding positivists. Up to the present the positivists cannot tell us why it is bad to torture or to kill or to murder, if doing so is in the interest or for the pleasure of the individual or the nation.

Deep-Structure of Religion

In our critical discourse, religion is the longing for the entirely Other as source of unconditional meaning and validity claims (See Road Map B). We understand the deep- structure of religion as differentiating itself into its ontic, normative, and expressive aspects: the concept of the Divine, the religious-ethical relationship, and the cult. For us the normative element of the religious deep-structure is most important: the religious-ethical relationship, which climaxes in the theodicy (theos - God; dikae - justice) problem - the justice of the Gods or of God, and the injustice of their or of his world. We are also very much interested in the ethical and socio-ethical transition from the cultic praxis of the religious community to the secular personal and social world: the spheres of free subjectivity and inter-subjectivity, private right, personal morality and social morality, i.e. marriage and family, civil and socialist society, constitutional state, political history and international relations and affairs, and culture including art, religion, philosophy and science. While religion belongs to the cultural world, ethics and social ethics refer to the social and personal world.

Religious Worldviews

In our comparative, discourse, we explore a variety of religious world views, or religious systems of interpretation of reality and orientation of action, as they follow each other in the world-historical process: the African Religion of Magic and Fetishism, the Chinese Religion of Measure, the Indian Religions - Hinduism as Religion of Imagination and Buddhism as Religion of Inwardness - the Persian Religion of Light and Darkness, the Syrian Religion of Pain, the Egyptian Religion of Riddle, the Jewish Religion of Sublimity, the Islamic Religion of Law, the Greek Religion of Beauty and Fate, the Roman Religion of Utility and the different forms of the European Religion, i.e. of Christianity as the Religion of Becoming and Freedom (See Road Map B). In the process of the history of religions, each religious worldview goes through and realizes itself in different paradigms, and through its self-realization dissolves itself again, and thus has its own determinate negation for its own result. Each religious system of interpretation and orientation does, thereby, go over into higher forms of religion. The higher form of religion is the truth of the lower one. All religions are true on their level of evolution.

Contradictions

In order to gain scientific progress in our critical religiological discourse, we must comprehend the simple insight, that in the history of religion the negative is likewise the positive (See Road Map B & C). No matter, how great the contradictions may be in a religious worldview, they do not dissolve themselves into mere zero or abstract nothingness, but rather into the negation of its particular content. Such negation of a religious system is not all negation or the negation of religion as such, but the negation of the determinate religion, which dissolves itself, because of its own inner contradictions. It is, therefore, determinate negation. Thus, the result, the new religion, contains essentially the old religion, which the former negated, and from which it resulted: e. g. Buddhism from Hinduism, or Christianity from Judaism, or Protestantism from Catholicism. This is really a tautology, because otherwise the new religion would be something immediate, and not the result of the previous, i.e. the older religion. Each new religion combines old and new elements in it.

The System of Religions

In our comparative religiological view, as the resulting new religion is as the negation of the old religion determinate negation, it has a positive content (See Road Map B & C). As such it is not only a new religion, but also a higher and a richer one than the previous old religion. The new religion has been enriched through the negation and the opposition of the old religion. Thus, the new religion contains the old religion, but also more than it, something new. The new religion is the unity of itself and of its opposite, the old religion. In this way, the system of the world-religions constitutes itself. The system of religions completes itself in an irresistible and pure process, which takes nothing from outside into itself. In the history and in the system of religions nothing is lost.

The Goal

While in terms of our critical discourse each new religion constitutes the determinate negation of the previous one, the goal of the whole dialectical process of the history of religion remains indeterminate and unknown and open (See Road Map B, C, & D). The idealistic idea of the absolute religion only reminds us, that none of the stages in the history of religion so far has been the absolute truth. The history of religion has not yet come to its end. The last religious man or woman has not yet appeared. We shall concentrate our attention on the relative religious as well as ethical and socio-ethical guidance, which each of these world religions have provided to humankind and continue to do so.

Reconciliation of the Particular and the Universal

In our comparative discourse, we define ethics as the reconciliation of the universal and the particular, the collective and the individual, solidarity and autonomy (See Road Map C). The socio-ethical deep-structure differentiates itself into abstract right - including property, contract, and punishment of crimes against life and property; personal morality, including personal intent and personal guilt, personal purpose and personal well-being, personal goodness and personal conscience; and social morality, including familial, economic, political, international and cultural ethics. We trace the dialectical process of the different types of religious and secular ethics from the Orient to the Occident, from Antiquity through the Middle Ages to Modernity, and Post-Modernity.

Theodicy

In our critical discourse, we concentrate on the core problem of all world-religions: the theodicy problem (See Road Map B & C). It deals with the contradiction between the justice of God, and the injustice of his world. It deals with God's perfect justice in the face of the suffering of the innocent victims of history. It deals with the defeat of the good cause. Good people have it bad, and bad people have it good. It means the inability of God or man to unite power and right in perfect justice and non-possessive love. If a religion can give a plausible answer to the theodicy problem on a certain level of human evolution as learning process, it will rise. If on a certain level of evolution a positive religion can no longer answer the theodicy problem, it falls into a crisis, and may very well move into a niche of world-history, or disappear completely. In any case, a religion, which can no longer give a plausible theodicy answer, will be superseded by another religion, which offers an answer more adequate to the experience and thought of the people, on a new level of evolution. Thus, the insufficient theodicy answer of Zoroastrianism as the Religion of Light and Darkness gave birth to the Syrian religion of pain. The insufficient theodicy answer of the Egyptian Religion of Riddle gave birth to the Jewish

Religion of Sublimity. A theodicy answer of a religion becomes entirely aporetic (no way), when its attempt to defend its God leads to a cruel and monstrous god, who deserves no further devotion. In any case, also the positive religions participate fully in the fury of disappearance, which characterizes all of world history. The theodicy problem offers occasion for the struggle between man and the gods or God, as e. g. in the Torah-story of Jacob's struggle with God at the Jabok River. Theodicy is the very beginning of theology. Unfortunately, theologies tend to forget their beginning.

Rationalization Process

In our comparative discourse, we trace the process of determinate negation as rationalization process from one of these particular world religions to the other, as well as inside of each of these particular religions, from one of their paradigms to the other (See Road Map B). We shall see, to what extent this rationalization of religious worldviews has led by itself toward a universal communicative ethics, which may or may not make these religions obsolete. We shall pay particular attention to the crucial question, if a universal, communicative or discourse ethics as responsibility ethics - particularly in case it would be able to supersede the world religions - can at all be stabilized in the long run, without any sufficient, solid theological foundation.

Theology

In our critical discourse, we understand theology less in the strong sense as science of the Divine or even of God, but rather in the weaker sense, as the longing for the totally Other as absolute justice and non-possessive love (See Road Map B). We understand theology as the hope that the murderer shall at least ultimately not triumph over the innocent victim. The fundamental ethical question is: why should I be ethical in an unethical world? We must ask, if anybody can really be ethical in an unethical world without theological motivation? Our question is, if a discourse ethics can work without such theological motivation? Our general experience suggests a negative answer to this question. But we could be wrong. We understand theology as the attempt to answer the theodicy question.

Modernity

In our comparative discourse, we concentrate on religious and secular social ethics particularly as they have developed in Modernity (See Road Map B and C). To what extent does modern secular ethics supersede religious ethics with inner necessity? We are particularly concerned with "us," with our own socio-ethical problems. We shall study intensely the transition from traditional to modern society, from traditional to modern worldviews, from traditional to modern ethics. In this way also ethical systems from Antiquity and Middle Ages are taken seriously and respected as older forms in which fragile human life was protected.

Five Human Potentials and Five Human Worlds

The critical theory of religion remembers, that traditional men and women saw the universal human potentials of language and memory, work and tools, sexual and erotic love, struggle for recognition, and nationhood, as well as the world of nature and the personal, social, cultural and linguistic worlds in mythical unity, centered in the God, the Absolute, and the Unconditional, from whom these potentials and worlds derived, and to whom they will return again (See Road Map A and B). Contrary, modern men and women stress the difference between these 5 human potentials and these 5 worlds, and see them in a de-centralized way.

Decentralization

In critical, religiological perspective, the secular, modern worldview is indeed extremely decentralized (See Road Map A and B). That means, that the different attributes of God - being, truth, beauty, goodness, justice - have been abstracted from him and have been institutionalized in culture, in science, or art, or in society, in the personal and social morality of the life world. The different cultural and social elements, into which God's attributes have been "incarnated", are struggling with each other. The modern world has become polytheistic again. In consequence of the cultural and social abstractions, the modern God-concept has become completely indeterminate and empty. God can no longer be known! Bourgeois agnosticism! Or God is dead: bourgeois and socialist atheism! In any case, the center does no longer hold! As a matter of fact, the modern world has lost its center. Of course, what can always die is the particular conceptualization of the totally Other in a specific historical context, not the Infinite or the Absolute in itself and as such, which was to be conceptualized. One can not speak about the finite and mortal at all, if one does not at the same time have in mind some finite concept of Infinity, and vice versa.

Modern System of Human Condition

In critical view, this decentralization of modern civil or socialist society makes all the difference for the ethical implications of traditional religious worldviews. (See Road Map A, B and C) In any case, the ethical aspects of our own modern system of human condition and action system, particularly of our life world, will be of greatest interest and importance to us. How is social ethics, religious or secular, related to the individual speaker and actor in his or her particular life world? We shall be concerned with the modern split between life world and system. We shall see, to what extent religious or secular social ethics can help to resist the further colonization of our life world by the economic and political subsystems, by further monetarization and bureaucratization. We shall see, to what extent ethically driven protest movements from the periphery of the human action system can resist such colonization.

Rationality and Reality

In our religiological discourse, we shall discuss thoroughly the fundamental socio-ethical principle: what is rational is real; and what is real, is rational (See Road Map A, B and C). Is this statement true? Only too often we see in advanced capitalistic and socialistic society a deep dichotomy between what is ethically ideal and the empirical reality: between what is, and what ought to be. Can this dichotomy be overcome in personal life, friendship, marriage, family, economy, state, history, and culture? Why or why not? Can the theory-praxis dichotomy, which the modern world inherited from the world religions, be conquered? Can people become sincere and honest concerning their ethical convictions, no matter if they are religious or secular?

Fragments of Communicative Rationality

In our critical discourse, we search for the fragments of communicative rationality in the present world-historical transition period from the old European to the new post-European, post-modern, post-bourgeois American and Slavic worlds (See Road Map A, B, C, and D). We are all sons and daughters of our own time: particularly religiously and ethically. We can neither lag behind our time, nor can we jump over it. We shall certainly resist any kind of false traditionalism or false utopianism. We shall not escape into the past or into the future. Our time is our responsibility, as long as it lasts. We shall try to discover divine and/or communicative reason as the rose in the cross of our antagonistic social and historical situation, in order thus to enjoy it in spite

of everything: Hic Rhodus, hic saltus - here is the rose, here dance! Only insofar as we recognize the ethical substance of our present social world, can we practically commit ourselves to it, and thus achieve in it our personal freedom and reconciliation. We are fully aware of course of the fact that communicative rationality sometimes represses anamnestic rationality. Communication is afraid of not being able to control certain memories: images of slavery, lynching, genocide, concentration camps, saturation bombing, etc. To the contrary, communicative rationality must be guided by anamnestic rationality.

Utopian Anamnesis: Alternative Futures

However, while in our religiological discourse we emphasize the present, we shall not forget the past or the future(See Road Map D). Religiological discourse is utopian anamnesis and eschatological memoria of the innocent victims of society and history: the slaves, the serfs, and the wage laborers. We shall not forget the animals, which we left behind in our evolution. They are fragile life forms as we are ourselves. Also they deserve ethical consideration and protection. We entertain the impossible hope, that someday the lion shall stop eating the lamb, and they shall live in friendship with each other. While we shall emphasize the past, we shall stress even more so the alternative futures: alternative Future I - the totally administered society; alternative Future II - conventional wars and civil wars, NBC wars, and ecological destruction; and alternative Future III - the liberated and reconciled society. The socio-ethical decisions of the past and particularly of the present shape the future: a valley of tears or a world, which is worth living in for humans and animals and plants alike. The critical theory of religion promotes the migration of ethical semantic and semiotic potentials from the depth of the mythos into the secular discourses of present-day expert cultures as well as into profane communicative, particularly political praxis to resist the rebarbarization of late civil society, and to initiate social programs to diminish human suffering, and to protect them against fascist conservative- or counter- revolutionary measures.

Three Ethical and Socio-Ethical Imperatives

In our critical discourse, we shall not only anticipate the alternative Futures I, II, and III, but we shall also concentrate on the corresponding three ethical and socio-ethical imperatives of action: to mitigate as much as possible alternative Future I; to resist with all our energies alternative Future II; and to work as passionately as possible for alternative Future III(See Road Map D). While Michael Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost peace movement has somewhat reduced the possibility and probability of alternative Future II - global nuclear war, alternative Future I - the entirely monetarized, computerized, robotized, and bureaucratized society remains as possible and probable as it had been before the breakdown of the "really existing" or state socialism in Eastern Europe in 1989, and maybe even more so, because of the new waves of often religiously masked neo-nationalism and neo-fascism, and the corresponding new victory of the social-Darwinistic aristocratic principle of nature, over the Messianic law of the lion, who eats straw rather than the lamb: the very inversion of social Darwinism, as essential source of fascism.

Approximation to Rightfulness

In our comparative discourse, while we resist irrational traditionalism and utopianism, we shall also not be satisfied with a mere approximation to the socio-ethical rightfulness, as Zoroastrians and Kantians do(See Road Map B and D). Such an approximation is neither warm nor cold. It is luke warm, and as such it is to be spit out! We shall also not yield to any form of cold, neo-conservative or deconstructionist despair, which admits that in this transitory temporal life things are bad or at best mediocre, but that we can not get anything better, and that, therefore, we must make peace with and resign ourselves to the unjust world.

Birth Time

In terms of our religiological discourse, religious and socio-ethical knowledge grants a warmer peace with reality, by demonstrating that it is a dialectical succession of life forms, of which each later one negates not abstractly, but concretely the contradictions of the previous one, not toward nothingness, but toward the goal of the absolute truth as the determinate negation of all previous unjust conditions, no matter how this goal may be imagined or conceived of in the different world religions, and even in the different genuine enlightenment movements(See Road Map A, B, C and D). We are certainly living in a birth time: a world-historical transition period from the modern European world to alternative Future III - new post-European, post-modern, post-bourgeois American and Slavic worlds, and beyond that a universal communication community, characterized by the conjugation of personal autonomy and universal, i.e. anamnestic, present, and proleptic solidarity, if of course this qualitative transition will not be interrupted by alternative Future I - the totally monetarized and administered society, or by alternative Future II - conventional national or civil wars, N. B. C. wars, and/or total ecological disaster.

The Religious and the Secular

In our critical, discourse, we shall be most intensely concerned with the first cardinal problem of modernity: the dichotomy between the religious and the secular(See Road Map B and C). It cuts right through the middle of the socio-ethical dimension. How can this dichotomy be overcome? We could go back to the "religions of the fathers", and to their social ethics. Attempts in this direction are made not only in Islamic countries. The Jewish and Christian fundamentalists aim in the same direction, as the Islamic fundamentalists. We shall discuss the probability, possibility, and desirability of such a fundamentalist return to the old religion.

Secular Society

In our comparative discourse, we could also move forward, where we have never been, toward a totally secular society(See Road Map A, B, C, and D). Today, many people aim at an entirely secular universal, communicative - or discourse - or responsibility - ethics. But is such an ethics without religious foundation for its values and norms, decisions and actions, possible at all in the face of the will to life and its blind, and overwhelming erotic and aggressive aspects? Is it really possible, to stabilize socio-ethical values through discourse and mutual understanding in mutual respect alone? Where will the motivation and strength come from for individual actors and speakers to overcome their instinctual demands, and to make sacrifices for socio-ethical values, if indeed they require such renunciation of selfishness? Is such a totally secular ethics not extremely "harmonistic"? We shall see, how probable, possible, and desirable a totally secular society and ethics may be.

Reunion of the Religious and the Secular

In our critical discourse, we shall try another solution: a new reunion of the secular and the religious (See Road Map B, C, & D). Maybe it is possible to reconstruct the religious worldviews in such a way that they shall be once more able to support social and personal identity, but now in extremely differentiated modern and post-modern systems of human condition and action systems. What would that mean in terms of subjectivity and inter-subjectivity, private right, personal morality, marriage and family, society as production and exchange process, political state and history? We shall see.

Individual and Collective

In our religiological discourse, we shall study intensely the second cardinal problem of modernity: the contradiction between the individual and the collective (See Road Map A, B, C, and D). Our approach to this second modern problem will be individualistic as well as collectivistic. We shall appreciate the importance of the individual speaker and actor in his or her life world, as well as the human action system with all its subsystems, particularly the economic and political subsystems. We shall compare traditional, capitalistic, and socialistic systems. Capitalistic systems emphasize the economic system, market and money, but cannot do without state intervention: welfare state class compromise, public works, protective tariffs, etc. The socialistic societies emphasize the state, but cannot do without economic incentives. Our main question will be, what these action systems are doing to the humanum of the individual speaking, remembering, working, loving and recognition-seeking person in his or her life world? The dichotomy between the individual and the collective is without doubt the core problem of all forms of modern social ethics today.

Recollectivization

In critical perspective, there exists today a strong trend toward re-collectivization not only in socialistic but also in capitalistic societies: toward Future I - the totally administered society(See Road Map A, B, C, and D). The sheer quantity of population, as well as the growth of industry, and the always-new scientific discoveries and technological inventions requires more and more administration. The price for this bureaucratization is the loss of the individual.

Bourgeois Individualism

In our comparative view, there exists today also a trend toward the old bourgeois individualism, particularly in the low middle classes(See Road Map A C, D). The old entrepreneur is to be resurrected in the midst of the age of multinational monopolies and oligopolies. Selfishness is good! Greed is good! Me-generation! Disloyal post-modern generation X. However, today this bourgeois individualism is very much ideology: i.e. false consciousness, the masking of national and class interests, the legitimization of irrational power structures, shortly the untruth. With genuine bourgeois individualism also secular and religious existentialism and personalism is retreating before the all-powerful forces of positivism, structuralism, functionalism, neo-conservatism, and deconstructionism.

Reconciliation

Thus, in our religiological discourse, we shall not recommend a return to older forms of individualism or collectivism, nor shall we suggest any future extremely atomized or collectivized society(See Road Map A, C, and D). We shall rather try to come to a new reconciliation between the individual person and the community in the framework of a religious grounded universal communicative - or discourse - or responsibility - ethics: the individual shall gain his freedom and dignity precisely by giving himself or herself lovingly and creatively to the community. The individual comes home to him or herself, and is precisely thereby emancipated in his solidarity with others. We shall stress the interest in Future III - the free and reconciled society, based on mutual understanding and mutual recognition. We shall find support for our interest in the new conjugation of personal autonomy and universal solidarity in the critical theory and in the progressive critical political theologies of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.

Reconciliation of Personal Autonomy and Universal Solidarity

In our critical discourse, we point beyond the antagonism in modern civilization between bourgeois individualism and socialistic collectivism(See Road Map A, C, and D). We think of a post-modern family, society, state and history, in which the individual will lovingly and creatively devote himself or herself to the solidarity with others, and will precisely thereby be enhanced in his or her own self-formative process in terms of the actualization of his or her fundamental human potentials of language and memory, work and tools, sexual and erotic love and struggle for recognition, in relation to his or her natural, personal, social, cultural and linguistic worlds, in direction of alternative Future III - the free and reconciled American and Slavic worlds, and the universal communication community. Personal autonomy or sovereignty and universal solidarity are reconciled. We shall test each traditional and modern form of religious or secular ethics in terms of this goal!

Fundamental Socio-Ethical Dimensions

In our comparative discourse, we concentrate in detail on the fundamental socio-ethical dimensions: subjectivity and inter-subjectivity, private right, personal morality, marriage and family, society, state and history(See Road Map A and D). It is more difficult to discover the positive content of these socio-ethical regions than to be resentful toward their obvious deficiencies. We must appreciate the positive first, before we can concentrate effectively on the negative. We must honestly identify the negative, of course, in order to be able to overcome it. Social ethics is fundamentally concerned with reconciliation, and reconciliation, as freedom is essentially the product of the negation of the negative. Thus we shall intensely discuss the most important problems in these different socio-ethical areas: (1) In the dimension of subjectivity and inter-subjectivity - all forms of damaged inter-subjectivity and damaged life. - (2) In the sphere of private right - the unfair distribution of property, private ownership of the means of production, private appropriation of collective surplus value, deficiencies in the penal codes and prisons, capital punishment, labor disputes, domination of man by man, general unbrotherliness and unsisterliness, lack of solidarity, etc. - (3) In the region of personal morality - loss of objective standards in personal conscience, insecurity in who is to say what is right or wrong, relativism, subjectivism, probabilism, triumph of arbitrary opinions and convictions, loss of truth, hypocrisy, modern and traditional irony, naturalistic fallacy, etc. - (4) In the dimension of marriage and family - masturbation, premarital sex, unsafe sex, divorce, abortion, negative artificial birth control, juvenile delinquency, annulment, one-parent families, breakdown of family authority, values, and education, extramarital sex, concubinage or cohabitation, old men and young girls, old women and young boys, new forms of the Oedipus - and Electra complex, incest, child abuse, wife beating, homosexuality, lesbianism, etc. - (5) In the sphere of civil society - Wall street scandals, bank collapses, economic recessions and depressions, the military - industrial complex, unemployment, stress, suicide, mental illness, entrepreneurial miscalculations, police brutality, corruption in the administration of justice, multinational corporations, lack of planning, inflation, insufficient predictions, incompetent capitalistic and bureaucratic functionaries, limits and decline of productivity, contradictions between man and nature, men and women, individual and collective, producers and consumers, owners and workers, rich and poor classes, luxury and misery, religious and secular, hunger, destruction of environment, alienation, conflicts between the races, etc. - (6) In the region of the political state - political oppression, concentration camps, massacres in Lebanon, El Salvador, Guatemala, Rwanda, Haiti, political corruption, preparation of World War III, turmoil in the Slavic world, possibility of N. B. C wars, possibility of ecological destruction, lack of competent statesmen, charisma instead of real knowledge and communicative action, political dys-function of the Christian Right, the prophets of deceit, colonial wars for the removal of the obstruction of the market, support for fascist governments, etc. - (7) In the dimension of world history and international relations - poverty in the third and fourth world, antagonism in Western civilization, civilization crisis, Eastern empire collapse, neoconservative counter-revolutions, conservative Islamic revolutions, terrorism, misery in Central and Latin America, tension between North and South America, failure of UN, and

EC, and NATO to secure peace in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, etc. - (8) In the dimension of culture - mass culture, commercialization, loss of the Golden Rule, loss of the categorical imperative, unleashing of the will to life, triumph of the death drive over eroticism, reification, forgetfulness, etc.

Humanistic Faith Community

In our religiological discourse, we shall ask if religious faith communities can possibly create a new social ethics, which can suggest new alternatives to political agents of change, as they struggle with the economic, political, and cultural problems on a world scale? (See Road Map A, B, C, D, on website) Or must a humanistic faith community replace it? A faith in man instead of a faith in the messianic God in Judaism, Islam and Christianity? We shall stress very much the difference between feudal, bourgeois, and messianic religion. Bourgeois religion and ethics may be obsolete! Messianic religion and ethics may not be obsolete! We shall have to come to a conclusion and decision. We must take very seriously the question, if humanism is indeed religion in inheritance? We shall listen to what religious people, and humanists, and religious humanists, and humanistic religious people have to say about the obsolescence of religion, its inability to support personal and social identity in complex modern societies, because of the lack of an adequate theodicy answer. We shall come to our own practical conclusions and decisions.

Critical Futurology

We understand our critical discourse as interdisciplinary and pluralistic (See Road Map A, B, C, & D). We shall emphasize particularly the connection between religious and secular social ethics on one hand, and critical futurology, on the other. What contribution can religious or humanistic social ethics make to fundamental aspects of critical futurology: prognosis, planning, philosophy of the future; pedagogic of the future; politics of the future. What contribution can they make to the resolution of the fundamental futurological problems: war, hunger, political oppression, environmental destruction, and alienation. What contribution can they make to the achievement of alternative Future III, and to the prevention of alternative Futures II and II? What contributions can critical futurology make to the further development of a secular, universal communicative - or discourse - or responsibility ethics, which could possibly supersede in itself the religious intentionality ethics? What contributions can critical futurology make to a universal communication community?

Alternative Futures I, II, and III

In our, comparative discourse, we shall try to determine, to what extent different forms of religious and humanistic social ethics can indeed help to mitigate at least Future I - the totally administered, computerized, cybernetic, militaristic, neo-cesaristic society; to resist Future II - N. B. C. wars or the global ecological destruction; and to promote passionately the Future III – the reconciled society of reason and freedom, classless democracy, victimless society, just society, peace society, humanistic world federation, communication community, communication without domination, society without masters and without exploited servants, realm of freedom on the basis of the realm of necessity(See Road Map D). We shall penetrate to the manifest or latent theological glowing fire in social ethics as well as in critical futurology: the longing, that the murderer may not triumph over the innocent victim, be it in the sphere of subjectivity and inter-subjectivity, private right, personal morality, marriage and family, society, state or history: at least not ultimately.

Faith and Knowledge

In October 2001, the critical theorist Jürgen Habermas gave a speech at the occasion of his acceptance of the peace prize of the Stock Exchange Association of the German Book Trade in Frankfurt, a. M. Germany, in which he traced the dialectic of the religious and the secular, faith and knowledge, from Kant and Hegel through Weber to Horkheimer and Adorno and to himself and the social and historical situation in which he found himself (See Road Map B, C, D). This situation was characterized by two forms of the antagonism between the religious and the secular: the struggle between the churches and organized science about stem cell research and the attack of the Islamic fundamentalists from the Near East against the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington DC.

Obscurantism and Naturalism

Concerning the first form of the contemporary struggle between the religious and the secular the scientists were afraid of obscurantism and a science-skeptical conservation of archaic residuals of feeling (See Road Map B and C). The believers, on the other hand, turned against the scientific belief in progress in terms of a crude naturalism, which undermined morality. The struggle concerning the gene technology demonstrates clearly, that also in Europe and America, to which history gave centuries in order to find a sensible attitude toward the Janus - head of modernity, secularization is still connected with strong ambivalent feelings. For modern man the lost hope of resurrection leaves behind a palpable emptiness. The unbelieving sons and daughters of modernity seem to believe that they owe each other more and that they themselves need more than what is open to them from the religious tradition in translation. It seems to be so as if the semantic potentials of the religious traditions had not yet been completely exhausted.

Fundamentalism and Modernity

Concerning the second form of the contemporary struggle between the sacred and the profane, on September 11, 2001 the tension between secular society and religion exploded in a completely different way. (See Road Map C). The suicidal murderers, who transfunctionalized civil airplanes into military rockets and steered them against the capitalist citadels of the Western civilization, were - as Atta's testament and Osama Bin Laden's pronouncements make quite clear - motivated through strong religious convictions. For them the symbols of the globalized modernity embodied and personified the Great Satan, whom they attacked through an apocalyptic event. However, in spite of its religious language the fundamentalism is an exclusively modern phenomenon. Concerning the Islamic actors right away a noncontemporaneity became visible between the religious-fundamentalist motives and the modern technological means. In this is mirrored a noncontemporaneity of culture and society in the home countries of the actors, which only came about in consequence of an accelerated and radically uprooting modernization. Decisive is the through feelings of humiliation blocked spiritual transformation, which expresses itself in the separation of religion and state. For secular man there is no devil. But the fallen archangel is up to mischief nevertheless and does its dirty work in the perverted good of the monstrous deed as well as in the unrestrained urge for retaliation, which follows it immediately.

The Open Dialectic of Secularization

There exist hardened religious Orthodoxies in the West as well as in the Near and Far East, among Christians and Jews as well as among Muslims (See Road Map B & C). Who ever want to avoid a war among cultures must remember the still open dialectic of the secularization process. In the face of the globalization,

which asserts itself through opened up markets, Habermas and other critical theorists of the second and the third generation and their disciples and friends had hoped for a return of the political in another form: not in the Hobbesian original form of alternative Future I - the globalized security state, i.e. in the dimensions of police, secret service, military, special forces, Green Barrettes, Delta forces, but as world wide civilizing power of qualitative transformation. However, in this historical moment there remains nothing else than the pale hope in what Hegel called the cunning of reason and a little bit of self-reflection. The search for good reasons which aims at universal acceptance would only then not lead to an unfair exclusion of religion from the secular public and it would only then not cut off the profane society from important resources of meaning - foundation, if and when also the secular side would preserve for itself a sense for the power of articulation of the religious language. In any case, the boundary between secular and religious reasons is always flowing. Therefore, the determination of the controversial boundary between the sacred and the profane should always be understood as a cooperative task, which demands from the religious and the secular side to take up also the perspective of the other side in every new situation. In the face of the origin of its moral foundations the liberal constitutional state should take into consideration the possibility that what Hegel called the culture of the common understanding of man may before completely new challenges not be able to catch up with the level of articulation of its own history of origin. The all-penetrating language of the market is not good enough. What is needed is the secularizing and at the same time rescuing deconstruction of the truths of faith. The post-secular society continues the work, which the religion has done concerning the mythos in the past, now concerning the religion itself. Admittedly, this should not happen out of the arrogant intent of a hostile takeover, but rather out of the interest, to work in its own house against the creeping entropy of the scarce resource of meaning. A secularization, which does not negate abstractly, takes place in the mode of translation or inversion of religious semantic material into the secular discourse of the expert cultures and through it into communicative and political praxis in order to stem and resist the rebarbarization of modernity. That is what the West as the worldwide secularizing power can learn from its own history.

Lectures and Discussions

Finally, our critical discourse shall consist of lectures, discussions, readings, excursions, analyses of relevant audio-visual material, and time diagnoses of news reports as presented daily by radio, television, and newspapers. The more discussions there will be in class, the better our course on religion and social ethics and their interconnections and consequences shall develop. More precisely, our discourse will be structured in terms of 1. background reading and depth study, 2. time diagnosis, 3. content analysis of relevant movies, 4. excursions, and 5. discussions of substantial issues.

Quality Level

It is obvious from the above course description and from the material and tasks contained in it and to be performed in our three -hundred -level course, that it must necessarily be a four - credit hour course. As such our course moves on a qualitatively higher level than any one - hundred or two - hundred - level courses. No longer are we only concerned with information about historical data concerning the world religions as on the 100 level. Nor are we merely concerned with different theoretical approaches to religion as on the 200 level. On the three hundred levels we apply several theories to specific data from the history of religions. Most importantly we apply the critical theory of religion. Here a new logic and vocabulary have to be learned which go beyond the language of the market. Here critical comparisons take place between particular structures and functions in different world religions. Here the question of truth will come up and can no longer be put under epoche: truth understood as the negation of illusions, delusions, prejudices, ideologies and mythologies. Here the modern dichotomy between the world religions and the project of modernity is discussed in its whole depth dimension: the contradiction between faith and knowledge, faith and society, faith and history, faith and secular

enlightenment, faith and revolutions and counterrevolutions. Here the empirical aspect of the comparative science of religion is emphasized in the form of three visits in different faith communities and discourses with rabbis, priests, monks, ministers and imams. Here education is more important than training. All these activities and processes are enormously time consuming. All these goals, tasks and requirements, not to speak of the amount of background- and depth - study readings lift this three - hundred - level - course qualitatively far above the 100 and 200 course level. All these activities and processes are enormously time- consuming. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that this 300- level- course should and must be a four - credit - hour course. However, our 300 level courses do not have any 100 or 200 level course for its obligatory precondition. You will be provided in this 300 level course with whatever preconditions are necessary.

B. Main Discourse Themes

Each of our class sessions constitutes one critical-religiological discourse. During each discourse session, we shall discuss one or more of the following themes. All themes are interconnected and can be understood only through each other.

1. The critical theory of society: the ethical and socio-ethical dimension.
2. The logic or the fundamental categories of the new critical theory of religion or dialectical religiology: nature, subject, family, civil society, political state, history, and religion.
3. Individual, family, and civil society as subsystems of the political state and of religion.
4. Individual, family, state and religion as functional subsystems of civil society.
5. Fundamental personality types: family member, bourgeois, citizen, religious believer, revolutionary or democratic personality, authoritarian or fascist personality.
6. From the myth of origin to its concrete eschatological-apocalyptic negation.
7. Different Forms of Ethics: Toward a discourse ethics.
8. Communicative action.
9. Discourse as future-oriented remembrance of human suffering with the practical intent to diminish it.
10. Religious, Philosophical and Scientific Discourses.
11. The dialectical tradition and method.
12. Necessary conditions for a successful practical discourse.
13. Life forms.
14. Skepticism.
15. New Ethical Systems.
16. Positivism.
17. Longing for the entirely Other.
18. Religious worldviews.
19. Contradictions.
20. The system of religions.
21. The goal of the history of religions.
22. Reconciliation of the particular and the universal.
23. Theodicy.
24. Rationalization process.
25. Theology and ethics.
26. Modernity.
27. The five human potentials.
28. The five-world-model.
29. Decentralization.
30. The Modern system of human condition.

31. Rationality and reality.
32. Fragments of human rationality.
33. Utopian anamnesis: Alternative Futures.
34. Three ethical and socio-ethical imperatives.
35. Approximation to rightfulness.
36. Birth time.
37. The Religious and the secular.
38. Secular society.
39. Reunion of the sacred and the profane.
40. Individual and collective.
41. Recollectivization.
42. Bourgeois individualism.
43. Reconciliation of person and community.
44. Reconciliation of autonomy and solidarity.
45. Fundamental socio-ethical dimensions.
46. Humanistic faith community.
47. Critical futurology.
48. Alternative Futures I, II, III.
49. Concrete positive utopias from Thomas More's Utopia to Max Horkheimer's L'île heureuse.
50. The concrete negative utopias from George Orwell's 1984 to Aldous Huxley's Brave New World.
51. Scientific apocalypses and the absence of the Messiah: destruction without absolution.
52. Alternative global futures and their desirability, possibility, and probability.
53. Toward a world ethos: no survival without it.
54. World-religions and world-ethos.
55. No world peace without peace among the world-religions.
56. No peace among the world-religions without practical discourse among them.
57. Practical discourse between the world-religions and world-humanisms.
58. Alternative definitions of religion.
59. The structure of religion and the location of ethics.
60. Alternative paradigms of the history of religions.
61. The difference between the legitimization and the application of ethical and socio-ethical norms.
62. Alternative definitions of ethics and social ethics.
63. Different dimensions of ethics and social ethics and their particular problems: private right, personal morality, family ethics, economic ethics, and political ethics.
64. The history of ethics and social ethics: From Antiquity through the Middle Ages to Modernity.
65. Different forms of the Golden Rule in all living world-religions.
66. The Decalogue: legitimation and application.
67. The Sermon on the Mount: legitimation and application.
68. The Five Pillars: Legitimation and application.
69. The religious and secular natural law traditions.
70. Formal ethics: the categorical imperative.
71. Situation ethics: legitimation and application.
72. The communicative or discourse ethics: legitimation and application.
73. The discourse theory of human and civil rights as well as the democratic constitutional state: legitimation and application.
74. The dialectic of religion and enlightenment; the dialectic of religion; the dialectic of enlightenment: the future of religion and religious ethics and social ethics, and the future of enlightenment and a secular ethics and social ethic.
75. The eschatologies of the great world religions and their ethical relevance.

C. Background Reading

We shall read one book every two weeks in the order from the list below. The purpose reading the books is to make us familiar with the form of our discourse: the critical theory of religion, particularly its discourse - or communicative ethics. Please, read chapters as assigned in each discourse session. It will make our discourse and lectures more fruitful. On the other hand, our discourse and lectures will make the readings easier to comprehend. Please, keep up with your reading! It is very important! These books shall be necessary and helpful not only for our weekly discourses, but also for our three tests, and for the final voluntary extra-credit paper:

Required:

1. Siebert, From Critical Theory to Critical Political Theology: Personal Autonomy and Universal Solidarity.
2. Siebert, Hegel's Philosophy of History: Theological, Humanistic and Scientific Elements.
3. Siebert, Horkheimer's Critical Sociology of Religion: The Relative and the Transcendent.
4. Siebert, Hegel's Concept of Marriage and Family: The Origin of Subjective Freedom.
5. Siebert, The Development of Moral Consciousness toward a Global Ethos.

Recommended:

1. Siebert, The World Religions in the Global Public Sphere: Towards Concrete Freedom and Material Democracy.
2. Jensen, Walter. 2015. Sociology of Religion: A critical primer. (See chapter 3 for an overview of my work)

D. Depth Study

Please choose one book every two weeks from the list below. While the background reading introduces us into the form of our discourse, the depth study makes us familiar with its material and content. You shall become a specialist concerning these books. They can be helpful to you concerning your own position in the discourse, the three tests, and the final voluntary extra-credit paper. You can choose books outside this list as long as they belong into the field of religion and social ethics.

1. A. Arato, P. Breines, The Young Lucaks and the Origins of Western Marxism
2. A. Arato, The Critical Theory and Authoritarian State Socialism
3. A. Edgar. The Philosophy of Habermas
4. A. Hitler, Mein Kampf
5. A. Honneth, Pathologies of Reason. On the Legacy of Critical Theory
6. A. Huxley, Brave New World
7. A. Schopenhauer, Aphorisms to the Wisdom of Life
8. A. Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation
9. A. Speer, Inside the Third Reich
10. A. Speer, Spandau. The Secret Diary
11. Adorno, Kant's Critique of Pure Reason
12. Adorno, Metaphysics. Concept and Problems
13. Adorno, Problems of Moral Philosophy
14. Aristotle's, The State
15. Augustine, Confessions
16. Augustine, The City of God

17. B. Brecht, Galileo
18. B. Brecht, St. Joan of the Stockyards
19. B. Hamper, Rivethead. Tales from the Assembly Line
20. C. Torres, Revolutionary Writings
21. D. Bell, The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism
22. D. Bell, The End of Ideology
23. D. Berrigan, America is hard to find
24. D. Berrigan, Uncommon Prayers
25. D. Bonhoeffer, Ethics
26. D. Bonhoeffer, Letters from Prison
27. D. Claussen. Theodor W. Adorno: One Last Gebnius
28. D. Jeffreys. Hell's Cartel. IG Fraben and the Making of Hitler's War Machine
29. D. Jenemann. Adorno in America
30. D. Riesman, Individualism Revisited
31. D. Riesman, The Lonely Crowd
32. D. Riesman, Thorestein Veblen
33. D. Sherman. Sartre and Adorno: The Dialectics of Subjectivity
34. D. Sölle, Political Theology
35. D. Sölle, Suffering
36. E. Bahr. Weimar on the Pacific: German Exile Culture in Los Angeles and the Crisis of Modernism
37. E. Bloch, On Karl Marx
38. E. Bloch, The Philosophy of the Future
39. E. Bloch, Thomas Münzer
40. E. Bloch, Utopia
41. E. Durkheim, Division of Labor
42. E. Durkheim, Elementary Forms of Religious Life
43. E. Fromm, Escape from Freedom
44. E. Fromm, Man for Himself
45. E. Fromm, The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness
46. E. Fromm, The Dogma of Christ
47. E. Fromm, The Revolution of Hope
48. E. Fromm, They Shall be Like Gods
49. E. Fromm, To Have Or To Be
50. E. H. Erickson, Identity and Lifestyle
51. E. Hammer. Adorno and the Political
52. E. Mendieta, Frankfurt School on Religion. Key Writings by Major Thinkers
53. F. Fukuyama, The End of History. The Last Man
54. F. Jameson, Aesthetics and Politics
55. F. Jameson. Late Marxism. Adorno or the Persistence of the Dialectic
56. F. Neumann, Behemoth. The Structure and Practice of National Socialism 1933 - 1944
57. F. Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morality
58. F. Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra
59. F. Schelling, The Ages of the World
60. F. Schelling, The Unconditional in Human Knowledge
61. Fromm, Socialist Humanism
62. G. Baum, Man Becoming
63. G. Baum, Sociology and Human Destiny
64. G. Gutierrez, Liberation Theology
65. G. H. Mead, Fragments about Ethics
66. G. H. Mead, Mind, Self, Society

67. G. Lukacs, History and Class Consciousness
68. G. Orwell, 1984
69. G. Piaget, Piaget's Theory
70. G. W. F. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit
71. G. W. F. Hegel, Philosophy of Religion
72. G. W. F. Hegel, The Philosophy of Right
73. G. W. F. Hegel, The Science of Logic
74. G. Winter, Social Ethics
75. H. Arendt, The Human Condition
76. H. Arendt, The Life of Mind
77. H. Küng, Toward a Global Ethics
78. H. Marcuse, Eros and Civilization
79. H. Marcuse, Negations
80. H. Marcuse, Reason and Revolution
81. H. Marcuse, Soviet Marxism
82. H. Marcuse, The One-Dimensional Man
83. I. Kant, Critique of Practical Reason
84. I. Kant, On Eternal Peace
85. I. Kant, On the Foundation of Morality
86. I. Kant, Religion in the Boundaries of Pure Reason
87. J. B. Metz, Beyond Bourgeois Religion
88. J. B. Metz, Faith in History and Society
89. J. B. Metz, Political Theology
90. J. Boehme, The Way to Christ
91. J. G. Fichte, Theory of Science
92. J. Habermas, Autonomy and Solidarity
93. J. Habermas, Legitimation Crisis
94. J. Habermas, Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action
95. J. Habermas, Reflections on the Discourse Ethics
96. J. Habermas, Religion and Rationality. Essays on Reason, God, and Modernity
97. J. Habermas, Texts and Contexts
98. J. Habermas, The Catching-up Revolution
99. J. Habermas, Theory of Communicative Action
100. J. Habermas, Validity and Facticity
101. J. Holloway, etc. Negativity and Revolution. Adorno and Political Activism
102. J. Reimer (ed), The Influence of the Frankfurt School on Contemporary Theology: Critical Theory and the Future of Religion. Dubrovnik Papers in Honor of Rudolf J. Siebert
103. K. Baier, The Moral Point of View
104. K. Marx, The Paris Manuscripts
105. K. Marx, Theses on Feuerbach
106. K. O. Apel, The Common Presupposition of Hermeneutics and Ethics
107. K. O. Apel, Three Dimensions of Understanding in Analytical Philosophy
108. K. Volker, Brecht Chronicle
109. L. Jäger. Adorno. A Political Biography
110. L. Kohlberg, The Cognitive Development of the Child
111. M. Barker, Kant as a Problem of Weber
112. M. Gorbachev, The August Coup
113. M. Horkheimer and Th. W. Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment (2002)
114. M. Horkheimer and Th. W. Adorno, The Dialectics of Enlightenment or The Study on Mythology
115. M. Horkheimer, The Critical Theory

116. M. Horkheimer, The Eclipse of Reason
117. M. Pensky. The Actuality of Adorno: Critical Essays on Adorno and the Postmodern
118. M. Weber, Sociology of Religion
119. Meister Eckhart, The Sermons
120. N. Baldwein. Henry Ford and the Jews
121. O. Ecco, The Name of the Rose
122. P. Apostolidis, Stations of the Cross. Adorno and Christian Right Radio
123. P. Breines (ed), New Left Perspectives on Herbert Marcuse: Critical Interruptions
124. P. L. Berger, Dialectic of Religion and Society
125. P. Tillich, Morality and Beyond
126. P. Tillich, The Courage To Be
127. Plato, The Laws
128. Plato, The State
129. R. Döbert, The Role of Stage Models within a Theory of Social Evolution
130. R. H. Stone/ M. L. Weaver, Against the Third Reich: Paul Tillich's Wartime Radio Broadcasts into Nazi Germany
131. R. J. Bernstein, Praxis and Action
132. R. N. Bellah, Beyond Belief
133. R. N. Bellah, The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial
134. R. Niebuhr, Faith and Politics
135. R. Niebuhr, Marx and Engels on Religion
136. R. Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society
137. R. Reuther, Faith and Fratricide
138. R. Reuther, Liberation Theology
139. R. Reuther, New Women, New Earth
140. R. Wolin. The Frankfurt School Revisited
141. S. Buck-Morss. Dreamworld and Catastrophe
142. S. Freud, Civilization and its Discontent
143. S. Freud, The Future of an Illusion
144. S. H. Barnes, M. Kasse, Political Action
145. St. Müller-Doohm, Adorno: A Biography
146. T. Parsons, Belief, Unbelief, Disbelief
147. T. Parsons, Religion in Post-Industrial Society
148. T. Parsons, The Problem of Order in Society
149. Th. W. Adorno, Minima Moralia
150. Th. W. Adorno, Negative Dialectics
151. Th. W. Adorno, The Authoritarian Personality
152. Th. Wheatland. The Frankfurt School in Exile
153. The Book Exodus
154. The Book Job
155. The Koran
156. The Papal Social Encyclical Letters from 1891 - 1995
157. Thomas Aquinas, Against the Pagans
158. Thomas More, Utopia
159. U. Ecco, Foucault's Pendulum
160. U. Ranke-Heinemann, Eunuchs for the Kingdom
161. V. Hugo, Le Miserable
162. W. Benjamin, Illuminations
163. W. Benjamin, Reflections
164. W. Benjamin. Archive. Images. Texts, Signs.

- 165. W. Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche*
- 166. W. Jensen, *Sociology of Religion: A Critical Primer* — 2015
- 167. W. Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*
- 168. W. Reich, *The Murder of Christ*

E. Grading

Grading is based on a 200-point scale, divided as:

- a. In accordance with contemporary discourse philosophy, we shall have as much lecture in each class session as necessary and as much discourse as possible. At the end of each class, when I take attendance, I will evaluate your oral participation and assign it a value. In other words, being late and/or leaving early will cause your oral participation grade to suffer. The total oral participation points a student can earn during the semester is 80.
- b. Three times this semester, I will test your knowledge on the background reading, depth-study, in class time diagnosis discussions, audiovisual material, and the information learned during the excursion(s). You will be given at least one week's notice of the next exam. Don't worry, those with strong oral participation grades seem to do well on the exams. Each test is worth a maximum of 40 points, making for a maximum of 120 points for the semester.
- c. A week before the end of the semester, you may turn in a voluntary extra-credit paper. This paper will give a brief summary of one of your background readings and a critique of its content, in the spirit and nature of this class. The exact particularities of the paper (page length, format style, method of citation, etc.) will be discussed closer to the end of the semester. The extra credit paper will be worth 10 points.
- d. Exam make-up policy: In the case of illness, exams can only be made up with a written note from a doctor, or in the case of family emergencies, with a note from the Dean of Students.

The grading scale is as follows: A (200 - 185), BA (184 - 173), B (172-159), CB (158-145), C (144 - 131), DC (130-119), D (118-105), and E (104 and below).

F. Objectives of our Religiological Discourse

It is the purpose of our critical, comparative, religiological discourse:

- 1. To introduce the students to the ethical and socio-ethical dimension of the critical theory of religion.
- 2. To make the students familiar with different types of religious and secular ethical and socio-ethical systems, which are available to us today.
- 3. To introduce the students to the problematic of present ethics and social ethics, religious or secular, in terms of legitimation and application of norms.
- 4. To direct the student's attention to the all-pervasive dichotomy between the religious and the secular, particularly as it pertains to ethical and socio-ethical problems.
- 5. To make the students aware of the modern contradictions between the individual and the collective: personal autonomy and universal solidarity.
- 6. To promote the students' self-knowledge concerning their own ethical and socio-ethical norms and values, their religious or non-religious, humanistic legitimation, and the motivation for practical application.
- 7. To help the students, to decide - particularly in relation to positivism and destructionism - why one should behave ethically at all and why one should not simply say: "everything goes."
- 8. To teach the students, how to initiate critical, comparative, religiological discourses on religion and ethics and social ethics with friends, in the family, in church groups, in political parties, etc.
- 9. To show the student discursive ways to approach questions of ethical, socio-ethical, and religious truth.

10. To show the student the essential connection between social ethics and theology as the longing for the totally Other, and as the hope, that the murderer will at least ultimately not triumph over his innocent victim.
11. To show the students the ethical and socio-ethical deficiencies of all forms of positivism, neo-positivism, reform positivism, cognitivism, etc.
12. To help the students, to find their way out of the jungle of ethical and socio-ethical skepticism, cynicism, relativism, and nihilism.
13. To help the students to discover ethical and socio-ethical problems in the three theories of modernity: neo-conservatism, deconstructionism, and praxis philosophy.
14. To help the students, to overcome anomie - as consequence of the unleashed will to life - and its disastrous effects for themselves and others.
15. To help the students, to overcome mere subjectivism in ethical and religious matters, in terms of a dialectical phenomenology of the subject-object relationship.
16. To introduce the student into the new communicative or discourse ethics as a form of responsibility ethics.
17. To teach the students skills in the art and science of critical, comparative, religiological discourse as future-oriented remembrance of human happiness and suffering, with the practical intent to increase the former, and to diminish the latter.
18. To show the students, how to identify ethical problems in different sociologies, particularly in the different system theories, and in the critical theory.
19. To help the students, to see the necessary connection between ethics and social ethics in their religious and secular forms, and the different types of futurology.
20. To help the students, to learn to appreciate social scientists and philosophers, who can guide them out of skepticism, relativism, cynicism, subjectivism and nihilism, in matters of religion and ethics and social ethics?
21. To make the students familiar with the critical theory of religion and ethics as alternative to the structural-functional system theory of religion and ethics.
22. To encourage the students to gain ethical energy and motivation in order to be able in the present to mitigate at least the trend toward Future I; to resist with all his energies the trend toward Future II; and passionately to promote Future III.
23. To show the students, that there is no such thing as a "value-free" social science.
24. To give the students competence in discussing norm and value questions.
25. To show the students, that all human knowledge is based on interest.
26. To help the students to choose and develop the most universal interest to base their knowledge on: the liberation and reconciliation of all humans.
27. To help the students, to understand and practice the dialectical method or determinate negation toward society and history, and thus to defend themselves against skepticism, relativism, positivism, and nihilism in matters of religion and ethics and social ethics, as well as concerning other vital issues of communicative, human existence.
28. To give the students the opportunity to study some of the religious - or humanistic-ethical; and socio-ethical forms by means of which people have reflected upon and represented human experiences and the plurality of human conditions.
29. To help the students to deal with contingency - theodicy - or anthrodcy problems, particularly in the ethical and socio-ethical dimension.
30. To help the students to expand their critical and emphatic capacity, particularly in ethical and socio-ethical matters in family, society, and polity.
31. To instruct the students, how to discover religious or secular ethical or socio-ethical problems in the arts, e. g. in architecture, sculpture, painting, music, epics, lyrics, or drama.

G. Academic Honesty

Students are responsible for making themselves aware of and understanding the University policies and procedures that pertain to Academic Honesty. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. The academic policies addressing Student Rights and Responsibilities can be found in the Undergraduate Catalog at <http://catalog.wmich.edu/content.php?catoid=24&navoid=974> and the Graduate Catalog at <http://catalog.wmich.edu/content.php?catoid=25&navoid=1030>. If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s) and if you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with your instructor if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test.

Students and instructors are responsible for making themselves aware of and abiding by the “Western Michigan University Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Violence, Intimate Partner Violence, and Stalking Policy and Procedures” related to prohibited sexual misconduct under Title IX, the Clery Act and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Campus Safe. Under this policy, responsible employees (including instructors) are required to report claims of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator or designee (located in the Office of Institutional Equity). Responsible employees are not confidential resources. For a complete list of resources and more information about the policy see www.wmich.edu/sexualmisconduct.

In addition, students are encouraged to access the Code of Conduct, as well as resources and general academic policies on such issues as diversity, religious observance, and student disabilities:

Office of Student Conduct – www.wmich.edu/conduct

Division of Student Affairs – www.wmich.edu/students/diversity

University Relations Office – www.wmich.edu/policies/religious-observances-policy

Disability Services for Students – www.wmich.edu/disabilityservices

Shalom, Salam, Irene, Pax, Friede, Peace.

Don't Worry!!! Be Happy!!!

You Have my Telephone

Number: 269-381-0864 and my E-mail: rudolf.siebert@wmich.edu

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