

CRITICAL THEORY

Degree type: Certificate

This program proposes a thorough introduction to critical theory through a structured, interdepartmental curriculum. Critical theory is encountered frequently in the study of politics and philosophy and has become an integral part of literary theory and cultural analysis. Over the past three decades, particularly in the United States, the term “critical theory” has expanded from its original designation of a group of thinkers associated with the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer, Adorno, Habermas) to a more generally conceived approach to study rather than a self-contained discipline. It entails reflection on the premises, concepts and categories used in different disciplines such as literary studies, history, political science, and film studies, to name a few. Critical theory can therefore not be limited to a particular field or even to a specific content. It is involved wherever methods and concepts are not simply taken for granted but subjected to a critical reflection in a systematic and rigorous fashion.

Critical theory is by nature interdisciplinary. Because it is a scholarly practice more than a body of theory or method, training in critical theory assumes the form of an apprenticeship more than it does doctrinal or methodological instruction. Providing students with that apprenticeship requires exposing them to its use in a variety of disciplines. The Interdisciplinary Program in Critical Theory (IPCT) is designed to provide this kind of exposure.

An exposure to critical theory is highly recommended for students of literature, philosophy, politics, culture, the visual arts, gender and race studies, rhetoric, and society in our post-colonial, post-modern world.

In addition to close ties with disciplinary departments and programs, IPCT works closely with university research centers to develop opportunities to further graduate training in critical theory, notably the French and German Interdisciplinary Groups, the Humanities Institute, and the Center for International and Comparative Studies.

Additional Resources:

- Certificate website (<https://criticaltheory.northwestern.edu/graduate/certificate.html>)

Certificate Offered

- Critical Theory Certificate (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/critical-theory/critical-theory-cert/>)