Syllabus

This course explores key issues in how cultural contexts and processes of communication affect representation, understanding, and practice. We will focus on two themes: the philosophical discourse between modernity and postmodernism, and theories of the "other," especially in a time of terror.

Required Books and Readings:

The Adorno Reader, Brian O'Connor, editor (Blackwell, 2000, ISBN: 631212493);
Günter Grass, Crabwalk (Harcourt, 2002; ISBN: 0151007640; German original: Im Krebsgang, Steidel, 2002);

Prerequisite: graduate standing or permission of the instructor.
Course Description and Objectives:

This course focuses on the study of communication in multicultural societies. It provides students with theoretical as well as literary texts. Reading and discussing these works will help you:
(a) To deliberate on the way communicative actions function and perhaps also malfunction at a time of increasing globalization/fragmentation;
(b) To understand how particular social and global conflicts affect the dynamics of communicative actions;
(c) To deliberate on the conceptual challenges of postmodernism and colonizing forces to the philosophical discourse of modernity;
(d) To understand the role of historical, political, philosophical, and religious factors in creating cultural stereotypes, perceptions, fears, desires, and misunderstandings.

We will use the books, *The Adorno Reader* and *The Postmodern Condition* (by Lyotard) as an introduction to modernist and postmodernist critiques of culture and communication, and precede with Günter Grass’s literary critique of western culture and communication in his book, *Crabwalk* (German title: *Im Krebsgang*), as well as Jürgen Habermas’ attempt to grasp such issues with a critical political theory that utilizes the concept of alterity ("the other"), in a collection of essays entitled, *The Inclusion of the Other*. Finally, we’ll discuss the attempts of postmodernist as well as critical theorists to philosophically contemplate on the challenges of “September 11” and the ongoing resistance against Western civilization as well as the colonization of other societies.

Every member of this course is strongly encouraged to voice her or his personal opinion and to actively participate in discussions.

The course requirements are:
a) Regular attendance
b) Active participation
c) Required readings (see schedule, “Discussion: x-y”)
d) Two oral reports
e) Three written reading responses, due 2/7, 2/20, 4/4
h) Abstract for final paper, due 4/11
i) Research Paper, due 4/20

Please note: MTU complies with all federal and state laws regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students (487-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department chair, or the Affirmative Action Office (487-3310).

Also: this course description and all schedules are tentative and may be changed. If any such changes are made, you will receive a printed update during our regular class meetings.
Tentative Schedule

Meeting 1 (Monday, 10 January)
Course Introduction

Meeting 2 (Monday, 17 January or Wednesday, 19 January, at my house?)
Discussion: *Adorno Reader*, 1-19, 23-39, 40-53
Film (in German) on Adorno (100 years after his birth)
Report: *Adorno Reader*, 155-73
Discussion: *Adorno Reader*, 174-92

Meeting 3 (Monday, 24 January)
Discussion: *Adorno Reader*, 54-78, 79-83, 84-88
Report: *Adorno Reader*, 211-29, 239-64
Discussion: Lyotard, vii-xxi, 71-84 ("What is Postmodernism?")

Meeting 4 (Monday, 31 January)
Report: on Lyotard
Discussion: Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, xxiiif., 3-67
Report/Film: on Grass
Discussion: Grass, *Crabwalk*, 3-26

Meeting 5 (Monday, 7 February)
Report: Beckett, Joyce and Schönbhein as Modernist Artists
Discussion: *Adorno Reader*, 319-352
Discussion: Grass, *Crabwalk*, 27-129

Meeting 6 (Monday, 14 February)
Report: Habermas and the Frankfurt School
Discussion: Grass, *Crabwalk*, 130-234
Report: Habermas, *Inclusion*, 105-128
Discussion: Habermas, *Inclusion*, vii-xxxvii

Meeting 7 (Monday, 21 February)
Discussion: Habermas, *Inclusion*, 3-48
Report: Habermas, *Inclusion*, 75-104
Discussion: Habermas, *Inclusion*, 49-74

Meeting 8 (Monday, 28 February)
Report: Habermas, *Inclusion*, 155-64
Report: Immanuel Kant on Enlightenment, Ethics, and Perpetual Peace
Discussion: Habermas, *Inclusion*, 165-202
Viewing of the film, *The Tin Drum*
Meeting 9 (Thursday, 17 March, at my house?)
Further Viewing of the film, The Tin Drum
Report: Habermas, Inclusion, 203-238
Discussion: Habermas, Inclusion, 239-52
Report: Habermas, Inclusion, 253-64

Meeting 10 (Monday, 21 March)
Discussion: Philosophy in a Time of Terror, ix-xvi, 1-43
Report: Philosophy in a Time of Terror, 45-81
Report: Susan Buck-Morss’ on the Frankfurt School
Discussion: Buck-Morss, 1-19

Meeting 11 (Monday, 28 March)
Discussion: Philosophy in a Time of Terror, 85-136
Report: Philosophy in a Time of Terror, 137-72
Discussion: Buck-Morss, 22-38

Meeting 12 (Monday, 4 April)
Discussion: Buck-Morss, 41-63
Report: Walter Benjamin’s View of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction
Discussion: Buck-Morss, 81-91

Meeting 13 (Monday, 11 April)
Report: Buck-Morss, 92-112
Discussion: Buck-Morss, 113-35
Reports: On final paper projects

Meeting 14 (Monday, 18 April)
Final Discussion
Viewing of film, Voyager