

PHI 4804 Critical Theory Fall 2006 Take Home Final

This exam is worth 30% of the final grade, and is graded out of 100 points, as indicated below. Please answer the questions as instructed below. Questions are to be answered in paragraph form (no point form answers), typed and double spaced. Please limit yourself to a **maximum** of 2 typed pages per essay answer (parts two and three). There is no stated minimum length - the answers will be judged by quality, defined as command of the course material, insight, cogency of argument, and lucidity. This final exam is due **at the latest** on Thursday, Dec. 7 at 4 p.m. in VAB 0111 (our regular classroom). It can be turned in before that, in my office or to the department secretary. It must be handed in as a hard copy (that is, no emailed electronic copies).

Part One: Define the following terms or phrases (25 points)

1. In a few (about 3-4) sentences per term, define the following terms (in your own words - no quotations). Give an example (from contemporary culture or from a theorist that we discussed) that clarifies the concept.

1. Hegemony
2. Subjectivity
3. Ideology
4. The Culture Industry
5. Paradigmatic analysis
6. Intertextuality
7. Commodity Fetishism
8. The Gaze
9. Metanarrative
10. Technology

Part Two: Answer both of the following questions (2 x 25 points)

2. The following is from the most recent omnibus education bill in the State of Florida (H7087ER), in a section on “required instruction” for high schools:

1155 (f) The history of the United States, including the period
1156 of discovery, early colonies, the War for Independence, the
1157 Civil War, the expansion of the United States to its present
1158 boundaries, the world wars, and the civil rights movement to the
1159 present. American history shall be viewed as factual, not as
1160 constructed, shall be viewed as knowable, teachable, and
1161 testable, and shall be defined as the creation of a new nation
1162 based largely on the universal principles stated in the
1163 Declaration of Independence.

Using the concepts and readings from this course (be specific about your use of these), analyze this statement. Which theorist(s) provide the best tools for understanding the claims made here? Be specific and clear in your choice of theorists. NOTE: I am not asking whether you agree that this provision is in the bill, only how it might be analyzed from a critical theory perspective.

3. Using resources from the entire course, discuss how critical theory helps to understand the cultural experience and representations of university education from the point of view of a student. Be explicit in your analysis about the kinds of questions that might be asked.

Part Three: Answer one of the following questions (25 points)

4. What questions might a Habermas raise about this excerpt from a speech by President Clinton in 1999 (<http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/cybercrime/nas9901.htm>), and how might Clinton (or, if you prefer, President Bush) respond?

...any democracy is imbued with the responsibility of ordinary citizens who do not have extraordinary expertise to meet the challenges of each new age. And that is what we are all trying to do. Our country has always met the challenges of those who would do us harm. At the heart of our national defense I have always believed is our attempt to live by our values -- democracy, freedom, equal opportunity. We are working hard to fulfill these values at home. And we are working with nations around the world to advance them, to build a new era of interdependence where nations work together -- not simply for peace and security, but also for better schools and health care, broader prosperity, a cleaner environment and a greater involvement by citizens everywhere in shaping their own future.

5. What do the terms "cultural resistance" and "hacktivism" refer to? How are cultural resistance, politics, and representation linked together? Use at least two examples to illustrate your answer, from the websites on the course page or material presented in class.

6. A few years ago two deaf lesbians wanted to have a child. In particular, they wanted to have a deaf child, and found a deaf sperm donor to aid in this. They already had a deaf daughter from the same sperm donor. How would a critical/cultural theorist analyze this example using the concepts of subjectivity and rhetoric?

7. What is representation, and why is it important to critical theory? How is the flag in the classroom an example of representation? How might a critical theorist analyze it? Be specific in your use of theorists and concepts.