



Doctoral Programme Humanities and Social Sciences 2023/24

THEORIES OF SOCIETY

Schedule of Lectures and Seminars

Academic year 2023/24

Weekly sessions: Tuesdays, 17-20h

Location: see [Timetable](#)

1. Lecture on **October 24, 2023**

Prof. dr. Aleksandra Kanjuo Mrčela, prof. dr. Igor Lukšič, prof. dr. Marko Milosavljević, prof. dr. Peter Stanković

Meeting with four course coordinators. **Introduction to the Course**

2. Lecture on **November 7, 2023**

Shirin M. Rai (University of London)

Shirin M. Rai is Distinguished Research Professor, SOAS, University of London. She is a Fellow of the British Academy. Before joining SOAS, she was Professor of International Political Economy at the University of Warwick. She is the Founder Director of Warwick Interdisciplinary Research Centre for International Development.

Rai's research interests lie in performance and politics, gender and politics and feminist international political economy. She has published widely in these areas, including *Gender and the Political Economy of Development* (Polity, 2004) *Performing Representation: Women Members in the Indian Parliament* (with Carole Spary; OUP), 2019; *Oxford Handbook of Politics and Performance* (2021; co-eds M Gluhovic, S Jestrovic and M Saward) and is currently working on a book titled *Doing Politics Sideways*. Her latest book (forthcoming) *Depletion: the human costs of caring*. She is keen to interact with early career researchers and colleagues working in the broad field of international political economy.



Postcards to the future: struggles against anticipatory harm

In this lecture I explore the idea of depletion through social reproduction and anticipatory harm through examining the campaign of a community to protect its everyday way of life – the story of communities of the Xolobeni region in the Wild Coast region of South Africa, whose world is now threatened by mining. I explore how the threat to the environment of a community produces anxiety that is depleting, and how the community pushes back against this threat through law, social movement and individual engagement to generate a politics that aims to prevent, mitigate, replenish and transform social relations on the ground through imaginaries that are grounded in their histories and the current politics of South Africa

Readings:

Rai, Shirin M (2024) Chapter 6: Postcards to the future: harming communities in *Depletion: the costs of care and the struggles to reverse it* (attached)

Conaghan J (2002) Law, harm and redress: A feminist perspective. *Legal Studies* 319–339. (Text is available at Study Materials section of the course at Web Office).

Bond, Patrick, in *Environmental Impacts of Transnational Corporations in the Global South* edited by Paul Cooney, William Sacher https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=XqB5DwAAQBAJ&pg=PA106&dq=multinational+corporations+and+mining+south+afrika&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi_wcezjsjrAhWxolwKHd1kAbYQ6AEwBnoECAgQAg#v=onepage&q=multinational%20corporations%20and%20mining%20south%20afrika&f=false

ActionAid, (2017) Living Next to the Mine Women's struggles in mining affected communities; <https://www.actionaid.org.za/living-next-to-the-mine-womens-struggles-in-mining-affected-communities/>

3. Lecture on **November 14, 2023**

Igor Lukšič (University of Ljubljana)

Igor Lukšič is Professor of Political Science at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana. He is head of the Department of Political Theory at the Faculty of Social Sciences. His research includes political theory, political anthropology and history of political ideas.

Apolitical Democracy

Democracy has always been a political project with a great goal to widen emancipation of the individual and of the people. Neoliberalism transformed that project in a-political or even anti-political with making democracy just a formal technique. The lecture will present contradictions of the democratic project in a modern period through ideas of Kant, Hegel and Marx. From the



introduction of capitalism, the process of concentration of capital has always required a concentration of political power: at the beginning on the level of nation-state, in some cases in the form of state-capitalism and dictatorship, today more and more in the hands of different institution of the "international community". Can democracy as emancipatory and political project survive?

Readings:

Charles S. Maier: Democracy since the French Revolution. In: Dunn, John. 1992. (ed.) The Unfinished Journey 508 BC ad 1993. Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, Cape Town. (125-151) (Text is available at Study Materials section of the course at Web Office)

4. Lecture on November 21, 2023

Prof. Konstantin Daniel Haensch (University of Applied Science and Arts in Hildesheim)

Konstantin D. Haensch (Dr. des., M.A., M.A.) is a Professor of Design Management at the HAWK University of Applied Science and Art Hildesheim. At HAWK, he teaches history, theory, and critical praxis of Design and its managerial, strategic, and entrepreneurial entanglements. He has taught B.A. and M.A. courses at Berlin University of the Arts, HTW University of Applied Sciences Berlin, University of Potsdam, HAWK – University of Applied Science and Art Hildesheim, and Princeton University. In the nexus of theory and praxis, he has worked in the interdisciplinary areas of aesthetics, media culture, design, strategy, and business. His research explores the links between various epistemologies and materialities that shape objects of modernity like "Entrepreneurship," and "Interfaces," operating within current design, creative, and entrepreneurial dispositifs.

Unveiling the Opaque Spheres of Production: The Amazon Echo Story

In our device-dominated era, the impact of laptops, smartphones, and portable devices on our lives is significant, shaping cultural spaces. This lecture focuses on a specific device, the "smart speaker," and delves into its origin, stories, and production conditions. It explores the motivations, strategies, and justifications driving device invention, creation, and production, shedding light on the interplay among actors and forces involved. Using the Amazon Echo as a case study, the lecture discusses the challenges and findings of a research project at Berlin University of the Arts. The Amazon Echo, introduced in 2014, pioneered the smart speaker category and offers insights into platform capitalism. The lecture proposes an expanded version of the "Circuit of Culture" framework from Cultural Studies to analyze the meaning construction and negotiation in technological innovations. It investigates the individuals and institutions involved in producing the smart speaker, including Amazon and its R&D company "Lab 126," as well as internal and external suppliers. The production stage involves various stakeholders, such as leaders, strategists, engineers, designers, marketers, and brand executives, influencing the smart speaker's evolution. By exploring the opaque spheres of production, the lecture aims to gain insights into the dynamics of media, technical, and designed things. Ultimately, it seeks to



enhance our understanding of the cultural realm by unraveling the forces and processes contributing to the object's evolution.

Reading: **Konstantin Daniel Haensch**: FROM "INTERFACING OBJECTS" TO "INTERFACE THINGS"? MATERIALSTRATEGIC NOTES ON THE SMART SPEAKER DESIGN (v priponki).

5. lecture on **November 28, 2023**

Aleksandra Kanjuo Mrčela (University of Ljubljana)

Aleksandra Kanjuo Mrčela is a professor of the Sociology of Work and Economic Sociology at the University of Ljubljana's, Faculty of Social Sciences. Her teaching and research activities are in the fields of industrial relations, work and organisation, gender. From 1999-2001 she was a visiting scholar at the London School of Economics and Political Sciences. Since 2003 she is the coordinator of the national center for Eurofound at UL. Since 2004 she is a member of the Network of Experts in the Fields of Employment, Social Inclusion and Gender Equality Issues (European Commission). From 2011 she is an associate editor and from 2015 an editor of *Social politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

New balance of Power in Global Platform Economy

In recent decades, we have seen accelerated development of platform economy characterized by global presence of new forms of work organization supported by information and telecommunications technology. The trend of rapid growth and the success of the business model of platform economy are based on the destandardization and precarization of work and the externalization of business operating costs and risks. As the new type of economy deepens the unequal power relations between labor and capital, the concept of "platform capitalism" is used to describe current economic and social changes (Srnicsek, 2017; Kenney and Zysman, 2016; Langley and Leyshon, 2017; Murillo et al., 2017). Lecture will present the theoretical debate on the current state of the global economic system and implications for (re) distribution of social and economic power.

Readings:

Kanjuo Mrčela, A. 2022. In search of the Good Life: Weaknesses of the Ever-stronger Global Platform Economy. *Theory and Practice*. Vol 59. Issue 3. Ljubljana: FDV UL
(Text is available at Study Materials section of the course at Web Office)



6. lecture on **December 5, 2023**

Timothy Coombs (Centre for Crisis and Risk Communications)

Timothy Coombs is an academic advisor at the Centre for Crisis and Risk Communications and until recently was a professor of crisis communication at Texas A&M University. His area of expertise is crisis management and crisis communication. His focus is on strategic crisis communication consulting and crisis preparedness and response training. His special topics include the impact of moral outrage on crisis communication, the impact of polarisation on crisis management, and public risk management. He is the author of *Situational Crisis Communication Theory* and has written several books and academic articles in the field. He is currently also Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*.

Digitization and Crisis Communication: Implications for Preparation

Digitization has changed how crisis managers prepare for crises. Augmented reality offers new means for training people for crises. AI provides a valuable tool to scan for risks and crises. However, digitization also has created problems with misinformation and disinformation, a growing form of risk and crisis.

Readings: Farrokhi, A., Shirazi, F., Hajli, N., & Tajvidi, M. (2020). Using artificial intelligence to detect crisis related to events: Decision making in B2B by artificial intelligence. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 91, 257-273.

Lu, S. J., Lin, Y. C., Tan, K. H., & Liu, Y. C. (2022). Revolutionizing elementary disaster prevention education and training via augmented reality-enhanced collaborative learning. *International Journal of Engineering Business Management*, 14, 18479790211067345.

Zhu, Y., & Li, N. (2021). Virtual and augmented reality technologies for emergency management in the built environments: A state-of-the-art review. *Journal of safety science and resilience*, 2(1), 1-10.

7. lecture on **December 12, 2023**

Marko Milosavljević (University of Ljubljana)

Marko Milosavljević is a Full Professor, Ph.D., at the Department of Journalism at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. He was a Head of the Department from 2008 until 2012.

He is a Vice-Chair of the Committee of Experts on Media Environment and Reform (MSI-REF) at the Council of Europe, the chair of Communications Law and Policy section of European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA) and a member of the Core Experts



Group for Media and Culture (EENCA), advising European Commission on culture and media policy (2016-2020).

He was interviewed and quoted in publications such as The New York Times, Financial Times, Reuters, Al Jazeera English, Euronews, Le Monde, Liberation, La Croix, Radio France, Deutsche Welle, ARD, ZDF, Der Standard, Falter, Politico, Euractiv, Bloomberg, L'Espresso, Balkan Insight, Polish digital Višegrad Insight, Czech daily Britske Listy, Swedish public radio, Swedish commercial television TV4, Swedish daily newspaper Dagens Nyheter, Dutch newspaper de Volkskrant, and others. He is a member of Horizon2020 project EMBEDDIA, researching artificial intelligence in the media and newsrooms, where he takes the position of manager for Ethics & Policy, Dissemination and journalism. He spoke at the conferences and as keynote speaker at conferences at MIT Boston, National Press Club in Washington D.C., Ryerson University Toronto, St. Johns University New York, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, London School of Economics, Central European University Budapest, Munich LMU University, Complutense Madrid, Lusofona Lisbon, Lund University, at conferences by European Commission, UNESCO, ECREA, IAMCR, ICA, the Council Of Europe, European Parliament and others.

Journalism and Artificial Intelligence - key issues, potential and threats

One of the key developments of journalism in the digital age is the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) , algorithms, automation and related tools within the journalistic gathering of information, verification, production, distribution, and promotion. Some assessments of AI in newsrooms state that AI and particularly automation brings the potential to augment journalism by freeing journalists up from routine tasks and saving time for creative work, by aiding newsrooms to find relevant stories in large data that might be overlooked by human agency, and by tailoring news to be of interest and relevance to the public.

There are also concerns exemplifying the deskilling and increased layoffs, legal and ethical problems, further commodification of news through mass personalization, and greater degradation of professional journalism as opposed to either automation or mass amateurisation.

The lecture focuses on epistemological implications for each stage of journalistic creation and potential challenge for “the ideal-typical values” in journalistic professional ideology, and is based on research in newsrooms and with key editors and directors of newsrooms and digital at media companies such as New York Times, Bloomberg, Associated Press, AFP, BBC, The Guardian, Der Spiegel, L'Express, ARD, and Financial Times. On the basis of these interviews the assessment of journalism and professional values are analyzed with respect to future developments of news institutions.

Readings:

Milosavljevič, Marko, Vobič, Igor. Human still in the loop : editors reconsider the ideals of professional journalism through automation. Digital journalism. 2019, vol. 7, iss. 8, str. 1098-1116. (Text is available at Study Materials section of the course at Web Office)



Milosavljevič, Marko, Vobič, Igor. "Our task is to demystify fears" : analysing newsroom management of automation in journalism. Journalism. 2019, vol. , no. , 19 (Text is available at Study Materials section of the course at Web Office)

8. lecture on **December 19, 2023**

Peter Stanković (University of Ljubljana)

Peter Stanković (1970) is Professor at Department of Cultural Studies, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. He specializes in cultural studies, film studies, popular music, food studies and identity politics. His recent publications include a monograph on the history of Slovenian cinematography and several articles on popular music heritage, food as a medium of cultural exchange, and mechanisms of symbolic exclusion of immigrants from the other former Yugoslav republics in Slovenia.

Rancière and the Politics of Aesthetics

After Bourdieu's critique of art as a mechanism of reproduction of class differences, art has become almost something like an opponent in the critical project of cultural studies. In recent years, however, there is a notable surge of voices that argue that art could be understood as an important tool of emancipatory politics as well. One of the most important theorists, who think in this way, is Jacques Rancière. His work is based on a synchronic and diachronic analysis of three different regimes of art that constitute three different relationships toward society. These regimes are ethical, representative in aesthetic. According to Rancière, it is only the aesthetic regime that is connected to life and therefore capable of changing it (together with wider social circumstances).

Readings:

Jacques Rancière (2006): The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible. London: Continuum. Str.20–30. <https://selforganizedseminar.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/rancic3a8re-jacques-politics-aesthetics-distribution-sensible-new-scan.pdf>

9. lecture on **January 9, 2024**

Ann Shola Orloff (Northwestern University)

Ann Shola Orloff She is a Professor of Sociology and Political Science at Northwestern University.

Ann Shola Orloff is Professor of Sociology and Political Science and a sociologist, specializing in Comparative-Historical Sociology, Gender and Social Inequalities, Sociological Theory and Political Sociology. Earlier in her career, she was Professor of Sociology at University of



Wisconsin-Madison and visiting professor at the European University Institute in Florence. Orloff's research and publications focus on gendered social policies, states and feminist politics in the developed world, social theory and historical, comparative and global social science. She is also past President of the Social Science History Association and of RC 19, the Research Committee on Poverty, Social Welfare and Social Policy of the International Sociological Association, and was a founder of Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society.

Transformations of the Gendered State

States (and their "many hands") are gendered institutions; they have helped to reproduce, reconstitute, and reshape masculine domination through personnel, practices, law, policy, citizenship criteria, and the creation of public/private splits. The welfare state – or systems of social provision and regulation – has been one key site of these processes, although other state institutions are also important to masculine power (e.g., finance, military, police). If, historically, states have helped to constitute and reproduce masculine domination, is it possible for modern states to help to undermine gender hierarchies? Have they done so? In this lecture, I will illustrate some of the ways in which gendered systems of social provision and regulation have been transformed over the last half century, with a focus on the US and Sweden.

Readings:

Htun, Mala and Laurel Weldon, "States and Gender Justice," in Kimberly J. Morgan and Ann Shola Orloff, eds, *The Many Hands of the State: Theorizing Political Authority and Social Control* (Cambridge, 2017).

Orloff, Ann Shola and Marie Laperriere (2021), "Gender" in Daniel Beland et al, eds, *Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State*, second edition.

1. seminar on January 16, 2024

Igor Lukšič

Readings:

Pierre Rosanvallon (2008): Counter-Democracy. Politics in an Age of Distrust. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Book is available in our library of online through COBISS+ portal)

10. lecture on January 23, 2024

Jaroslav Švelch (Karlova univerza, Praga)



Jaroslav Švelch is an assistant professor in the Department of Media Studies at Charles University, Prague, and lecturer in the Department of Game Design at the Film and TV School of Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. He is the author of *Player vs. Monster* and *Gaming the Iron Curtain*.

Gaming the Iron Curtain: Exploring home computer and gaming cultures in 1980s Czechoslovakia

Drawing from the eponymous book, this talk will explore the participatory culture organized around home computers in 1980s Czechoslovakia. While home computers were scarce and expensive in Czechoslovakia, a vibrant scene emerged in the country, which used computers for self-expression and activist work. In the final years of the Communist rule, the country's amateur programmers were among the first in the world to make openly political computer games about current events. The talk will also offer a methodological and theoretical reflection, showing how Western theoretical approaches to the topic (such as participatory culture or STS-informed approaches) can (or cannot) be applied in the context of the late socialism in Central and Eastern Europe.

2. seminar on January 30, 2024

Peter Stanković

Readings:

Chris Barker (2002): *Making Sense of Cultural Studies. Central Problems and Critical Debates*. London, Sage, pp. 45–85 in 108–175. (Book is available in our library of online through COBISS+ Smith, Philip in Riley, Alexander (2009): *Cultural Theory: An introduction* (Second Edition). Malden: Blackwell, pp. 195–206 in 262–279. (Book is available in our library of online through COBISS+ portal)

11. lecture on February 6, 2024

Manuel Puppis, professor, University of Freiburg.

Manuel Puppis is Professor of Media Structures and Governance in the Department of Communication and Media Research DCM, University of Fribourg, Switzerland. He currently serves as vice-chair of the Swiss Federal Media Commission (FMEC). Puppis holds a PhD in Communication Science and an M.A. in Communication Science, Political Science and Economic and Social History from the University of Zurich.

Media Structures.

Media structures matter. They influence media performance and societal communication. Yet media structures are not natural: They are shaped by media policy. The decision whether and



how to regulate media and platforms influences the conditions under which communication in the public sphere is created, disseminated and used. After introducing media systems, institutions and organizations, this lecture will look into the politics of media policy and current attempts of media and platform governance in Europe.

Reading:

Puppis, Manuel. 2010. Media Governance: A New Concept for the Analysis of Media Policy and Regulation. *Communication, Culture and Critique*, Volume 3, Issue 2, June 2010, Pages 134–149, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1753-9137.2010.01063.x>

3. seminar on February 13, 2024

Aleksandra Kanjuo Mrčela

Readings:

Jones, Pip in Bradbury, Liz (2018): *Introducing social theory*. Third Edition. Cambridge: Polity Press. (Book is available in our library of online through COBISS+ portal)

4. seminar on February 20, 2024

Marko Milosavljević

Readings:

. Victor Pickard (2020): *Democracy Without Journalism? Confronting the Misinformation Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Book is available in our library of online through COBISS+ portal)

Exam Readings:

1. Jones, Pip; Bradbury, Liz (2018): *Introducing social theory*. Third Edition. Cambridge: Polity Press. (Book is available in our library of online through COBISS+ portal).
2. Pierre Rosanvallon (2008): *Counter-Democracy. Politics in an Age of Distrust*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Book is available in our library of online through COBISS+ portal)
3. Chris Barker (2002): *Making Sense of Cultural Studies. Central Problems and Critical Debates*. London, Sage, pp. 45–85 in 108–175. (Book is available in our library of online through COBISS+ portal)
4. Smith, Philip in Riley, Alexander (2009): *Cultural Theory: An introduction* (Second Edition). Malden: Blackwell, pp. 195–206 in 262–279. (Book is available in our library of online through COBISS+ portal)



5. Victor Pickard (2020): *Democracy Without Journalism? Confronting the Misinformation Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Book is available in our library of online through COBISS+ portal)

Course Requirements and final examination:

The course is structured in four lectures by four course coordinators, invited guest talks and four concluding seminars with coordinators. The course outline indicates the required readings for each meeting. Each class meeting will combine lecture, discussion and students' responses to the readings. All readings listed above are required readings and are to be read prior to the class meeting. Students can use their initiative and seek out additional scholarly and non-scholarly resources. Students are expected to attend all lectures and seminars.

Evaluation is based on the participation and a final examination. In the two-hour exam, students will receive four problem questions. Performance evaluation will be based on four short essays that respond to four questions referring to the assigned readings. We expect students to demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the required texts and exhibit a method of critical analysis at an advanced level. Each of the four essays will be graded separately by four coordinators of the course. Students are required to perform satisfactorily in all four essays and receive a minimum grade 6 at each of the four short essays.