

Critical Theory and Psychology

Name	Role	Presentation Title	Poster Number
Robert Bishop PhD	Participant/1stAuthor	Empiricism	
Frederick J. Wertz PhD	Participant/1stAuthor	The Methodological and Theoretical Relevance of Phenomenology for Psychology	
Thomas Teo PhD	Participant/1stAuthor	Critical Theory and Psychology	
Suzanne Kirschner PhD	Participant/1stAuthor	Poststructuralism	
Frank C. Richardson PhD	Participant/1stAuthor	Philosophical Hermeneutics	
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Thomas Teo

The term critical theory is ambiguous. In a historical sense it refers to an interdisciplinary social science research institute established in Frankfurt (Frankfurt School) in 1924. Important first-generation members included Theodor W. Adorno (1903-1969), Max Horkheimer (1895-1973), Erich Fromm (1900-1980), and Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), whereas the philosopher Jürgen Habermas (born 1929) belongs to a second generation, and the philosopher Axel Honneth (born 1949), current director of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, refers to a third generation. In a broader sense, considering the North American usage of the word, the term critical theory may include critical race theory, critical disability studies, critical pedagogy, critical psychology, queer studies, feminist standpoint theory, or even some postmodern theories. In this presentation I address some of the core texts of critical theory including Traditional and Critical Theory, Dialectic of Enlightenment, Negative Dialectics, Knowledge and Human Interest, Theory of Communicative Action, The Struggle for Recognition, as well as texts by psychologists inspired by critical theory. The implications of critical theory for ontology, epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics in psychological reflection are presented. The consequences for what it means to be a societal being, the limitations of positivism, the narrow focus on instrumental rationality while neglecting legitimate interests in knowledge production, the question of social justice, the problem of solidarity and liberty, description and prescription in

academia, recognition versus redistribution, and what it means to experience art beyond entertainment, are discussed. Examples are given for the productive use of critical theory in a broad sense for the discipline and profession of psychology. The relevance of critical theory for the dialectics of critical psychology is projected.