EWP8510/PARP8510: THEORETICAL RESEARCH
Spring 2004 (3 units)
Instructor: Jorge N. Ferrer, Ph.D. Email: [JFerrer@ciis.edu]

Course Description:
This course examines a number of theoretical research approaches, assists students in
developing their own, and provides the foundations for writing theoretical papers for
academic publication. Emphasis is placed on approaching theoretical research and
writing as transformative spiritual practices. Theoretical research is the systematic
application of a standpoint or standpoints to a body of existing knowledge with the
intention of uncovering, generating, critiquing, or integrating meanings, theories, models,
paradigms or fields of knowledge. Theoretical research is carried out with critical
reflection based on a thorough knowledge of the relevant literature of that standpoint or
standpoints, as well as of the material to which it is being applied. Theoretical approaches
surveyed in the course include hermeneutics, comparative studies, integrative
scholarship, critical theory, feminist theory, structuralism, and deconstruction.

Summary of Educational Purpose:
The main purpose of this course is to provide students with the knowledge and skills
needed to develop a theoretical approach adequate to their research interests, write
theoretical papers, and submit them for publication.

Learning Objectives:
After completing this course, students will be able to:
1. Understand the logic(s) of theoretical inquiry.
2. Be familiar with a variety of theoretical approaches in the human sciences.
3. Develop a theoretical approach appropriate to their research interests.
4. Write theoretical papers and submit them for publication.

Learning Activities:
1. Cognitive/didactic (lecture): 45%
2. Practical/applied (dialogue, class presentations): 45%
3. Experiential (meditation, group process): 10%

Criteria for Evaluation:
1. Mid-term assignment (1-4 pages): 20%

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2. Final research paper (15-20 pages): 50%
3. Class presentations: 30%

**Grading Options:**
Letter Grade, Pass/Fail, or as allowed by the department.

**Level of Instruction:**
Ph.D. level / MA students with consent of instructor.

**Required Texts:**
- Reader of articles, available at Photo Day (3418 Geary Blv. at Stanyan, San Francisco. Tel: 387-4779. M-Th, 9am-7pm, F-Sa, 9am-6pm)

The APA publication manual serves as a reference text to be used throughout the course. The rest of readings will be assigned weekly as described in the Course Schedule.

NOTE: Besides weekly required readings, the reader includes a number of *sample* papers representing different theoretical approaches. Although strongly recommended, not all the samples are required reading. Students are encouraged to select and read at least one sample of each theoretical approach, and study all the samples of the one or several theoretical approaches most relevant for their research.

**Recommended Readings:**

**Assignments:**
All papers should be written according to the *APA Publication Manual* (4th ed.) or other standard manual of style (MLA, Chicago, etc.).

1. **Mid-Term Paper:** (1-4 pages)
   This assignment can take the form of an outline of the final paper, a research proposal, or a preliminary literature review of your area of inquiry.

2. **Final Paper:** (15-20 pages)

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Write a theoretical research paper on a subject of your interest. Specific guidelines will be offered in class. Optionally, this assignment can take the form of a draft of your dissertation proposal or of a paper you plan to submit for publication.

3. Presentations:
During weeks 11-15, students will be expected to give a presentation on the theoretical research project they are working on. Presentations should be linked to final papers.

Course Schedule and Reading List

Theoretical Research

Week 1. Introduction: What is Theoretical Research? (Jan 21)

Readings:
• Boyer, Ernest, “Enlarging the Perspective” (pp. 15-25).
• Gadamer, Hans-Georg, “Praise of Theory” (pp. 16-36).
• hooks, bell, “Theory as Liberatory Practice” (pp. 59-75).
• Slife, Brent D. & Williams, Richard D., “Toward a Theoretical Psychology” (pp. 117-129).

Samples:
• Leone, George, “Zen Meditation: A Psychoanalytic Conceptualization” (pp. 87-94) • Gold, Jeffrey, “Plato in the Light of Yoga” (pp. 17-31) • Brooke, R., “Towards a Phenomenological Analytical Psychology” in Jung and Phenomenology (pp. 1-13).

Week 2. Research and Writing as Spiritual Practices (Jan 28)
Research and writing as transformative spiritual practices. Mystical hermeneutics and spiritual elements of the hermeneutic process. Spirituality and scholarship: Content, form, process, and impact. Integrating body, heart, and spiritual awareness into the inquiry process. The art of constructive criticism. Scholarship, dialogue, and collaboration.

Readings:
• Barnard, G. William, “Transformations and Transformers: Spirituality and the Academic Study of Mysticism” (pp. 256-60).
• Kripal, Jeffrey J., “Roads of Excess,” “Palaces of Wisdom” (pp. 1-15, 25-31, 305-30).
• Metzger, Deena, “Writing as a Spiritual Practice” (pp. 183-244).

Week 3. The Art of Literature Review (Feb 4)
The literature review as the starting point of theoretical research. Types of literature review: Thematic, chronological, and argumentative. Reviewing your field. The dangers

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of plagiarism. Overview of library and research resources. Internet. Electronic databases: PSYLIT, Religious Index, Philosopher’s Index, Melvyl, etc.

**Readings:**
- Roth, Audrey, “Searching for Information,” Recording Information” (pp. 54-57, 100-110).
- Becker, Howard S., “Terrorized by the Literature” (pp. 135-149).
- Patten, Mildred, “Writing Literature Reviews” (pp. 35-36).
- Pyrczak, Fred, “A Closer Look at Evaluating Literature Reviews” (pp. 39-43).

**Samples:**
- *Thematic:* Smith, Curtis D., “Approach to Jung” (pp. 7-18).
- *Chronological:* McGinn, Bernard, “Comparativist and Psychological Approaches to Mysticism” (pp. 326-43).

**Week 4. Theoretical Approaches I: Hermeneutic Studies (Feb 11)**

**Readings:**
- Palmer, Richard E. “Six Modern Definitions of Hermeneutics” (pp. 33-45).
- Bernstein, Richard J., “Understanding and Prejudice,” “The Hermeneutical Circle,” “Temporal Distance, Effective-Historical Consciousness, and the Fusion of Horizons” (pp. 126-144).
- Tuck, Andrew P., “The Philosophy of Scholarship,” “Holists, Hermeneuticists, and Holy Men” (pp. 3-30, 94-100).

**Samples:**
- Lopez, Donald S., “Introduction” in Buddhist Hermeneutics (pp. 1-10).
- Whicher, Ian, “Yoga and Freedom: A Reconsideration of Patanjali’s classical Yoga” (pp. 272-73, 297-303).
- Van Norden, Bryan W., “Competing Interpretations of the Inner Chapters of the Zhuangzi” (pp. 247-268).

**Week 5. Theoretical Approaches II: Comparative Studies (Feb 18)**
What is comparative hermeneutics? Comparing traditions, disciplines, thinkers, theories, and concepts. Issues in comparative scholarship: Incommensurability and translatability; universalism, relativism, and contextualism; ethnocentrism, orientalism, and “going

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native.” Cross-cultural hermeneutics. Hermeneutics of the interfaith dialogue. The art of searching for commonalities while honoring differences.

**Readings:**

- Paden, William, “Comparative Perspective in the Study of Religion” (pp. 67-86).
- Bernstein, Richard J., “The Hermeneutics of Cross-Cultural Understanding” (pp. 29-41).
- Krieger, D. J., “Methodological Foundations for Interreligious Dialogue” (pp. 201-06, 222-23).
- Holdrege, Barbara, A., “What’s Beyond the Post? Comparative Analysis as Critical Method” (pp. 77-91).

**Samples:**


**Week 6. Theoretical Approaches III: Integrative Scholarship (Feb 25)**


**Readings:**

- Organ, Troy W., “The Ways of Integration,” “The Ways of Synthesis” (pp. 78-98).
- Klein, Julie T., “The Problem of Interdisciplinary Discourse,” “The Integrative Core” (pp. 11-15, 182-196).
- Chaudhuri, Haridas, “The Integral Method,” “Integral Dialectics” (pp. 85-102).
- Feuerstein, George, “A Note on Gebser’s Methodology. Beyond System and Philosophy” (pp. 191-203).
- Crittenden, Jack, “What Should We Think About Wilber’s Method” (pp. 99-103).

**Samples:**

- Tigue, John, “Introduction” in The Transformation of Consciousness in Myth: Integrating the Thought of Jung and Campbell (pp. 1-17) • Wilber, Ken, “An Integral Theory of Consciousness” (pp. 71-92) • Loy, David, “Introduction” in Nonduality: A Study in Comparative Philosophy (pp. 1-14) • Wilber, Ken, “Transpersonal Art and Literary Theory (pp. 63-91).

**Week 7. Theoretical Approaches IV: Critical Theory (March 3)**

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**Readings:**

- Snyman, Johan, “Social Science according to the Frankfurt School” (pp. 159-179).
- Fay, Brian, “The Basic Scheme of Critical Social Science” (pp. 27-41).
- Geuss, Raymond, “Critical Theory” (pp. 55-88).
- McCarthy, Thomas, “A Preliminary Sketch,” “The Emancipatory Interest of Critical Theory” (pp. 51-60, 75-91).

**Samples:**

- Boff, Leonardo, “The Originality of the Theology of Liberation” (pp. 38-48) • Freire, Paolo, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (pp. 52-67) • Santikaro Bhikkhu, “The Four Noble Truths of Dhammic Socialism” (pp. 89-114) • Hakamaya, Noriaki, “Thoughts on the Ideological Background of Social Discrimination (pp. 339-55).

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**MID-TERM ASSIGNMENT DUE!**

**Week 8. Theoretical Approaches V: Feminist Theory (March 10)**


**Readings:**

- Gross, Elizabeth, “What is Feminist Theory?” (pp. 355-369).
- hooks, bell, “feminist theory: a radical agenda” (pp. 35-41).
- Harding, Sandra, “Is There a Feminist Method?” (pp. 1-14).

**Samples:**

- Chodorow, Nancy, “Introduction” in *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory* (pp. 1-19) • Ruether, Rosemary R., “Introduction” in *Gaia & God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (pp. 1-12) • Paper, Jordan, “Introduction” in *Through the Earth Darkly: Female Spirituality in Comparative Perspective* (pp. 1-12) • Wright, Peggy, “Bringing Women’s Voices to Transpersonal Theory” (pp. 3-10).

**Week 9. Theoretical Approaches VI: Structuralism and Deconstruction (March 17)**

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**Readings:**
- Leach, E., “Structuralism” (pp. 54-64).
- Rosenau, Pauline M., “Epistemology and Methodology: Postmodern Alternatives” (pp. 109-137).
- Olivier, Bert, “Deconstruction” (pp. 241-261).
- Ellis, John M., “The Logic of Deconstruction” (pp. 137-152).

**Samples:**
- Burman, Erica, “Introduction” in Deconstructing Developmental Psychology (pp. 1-8). (In Reader).
- Taylor, Mark C., “…Prelude” in Earring: A Postmodern A/theology (3-18).
- Burman, Erica, “Deconstructing Feminist Psychology” (pp. 1-29).

**MARCH 24: SPRING BREAK!**

**Week 10. Open Forum on Theoretical Approaches (March 31)**
A mid-term open forum to discuss questions, problems, and/or loose ends in relation to the various theoretical approaches examined in the first half of the course. Other theoretical approaches. Linking theoretical approaches to students’ research interests. Students’ preliminary presentation of their research projects.

**Week 11. Starting a Theoretical Research Project (April 7)**

**Readings:**
- Pyrczak, Fred, “Evaluating Titles” (pp. 11-19).
- Fulwiler, Toby, “Openings and Closings” (pp. 289-297).
- Pyrczak, Fred, “Evaluating Introductions” (pp. 31-38).

**Week 12. Writing a Theoretical Research Paper I (April 14)**
Writing as inquiry and as a way of knowing. Writing practices. Basic guidelines for writing theoretical papers. Paragraphs and sentences. Students’ presentations.

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Readings:  
• Richardson, Laurel, “Writing: A Method of Inquiry” (pp. 516-529).  
• Roth, Audrey, “Writing your Paper” (pp. 154-185).  
• Fulwiler, Toby, “Working Paragraphs,” “Working Sentences” (pp. 299-315).  
• Goldberg, Natalie, “What I Really Want to Say,” “Reading Aloud” (pp. 73-74, 81-82).

Week 13. Writing a Theoretical Research Paper II (April 21)  
Theoretical writing skills: Definitions, distinctions, analysis, dilemmas, examples and counter-examples, anticipating and addressing objections, use of metaphors. Style and form. Abstracts. Procrastination and the writer’s block. Revising your writing as polishing a piece of art. Students’ presentations.

Readings:  
• Pyrczak, Fred, “Evaluating Abstracts” (pp. 21-29).  
• Goldberg, Natalie, “Writing as a Practice,” “Fighting Tofu,” “Writing is a Communal Act,” “Rereading and Rewriting” (pp. 11-13, 23-25, 79-81, 162-166).  
• Fulwiler, Toby, “Strategies for Revision,” “Focused Revision” (pp. 269-287).

Week 14. Publishing Theoretical Papers (April 28)  

Readings:  
• Wechsler, Harold S., “Publishing a Journal Article” (pp. 5-26).  
• Luey, Beth, “Journal Articles,” “Bibliography” (pp. 8-30, 283-304).  
• Ferrer, Jorge, “Dossier Publication Process” (pp. 1-15).

Week 15. Conclusion: The Spiritual Dimension of Contemporary Theoretical Approaches (May 5)  
Concluding remarks on spirituality and scholarship. Contemporary philosophy from a spiritual perspective. Students’ presentations. Closing circle.

- FINAL PAPER DUE!

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COURSE READER
“THEORETICAL RESEARCH”
Required Readings


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Samples

Basic Theoretical Research


Literature Reviews


Hermeneutic Studies


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Comparative Studies

Integrative Scholarship

Critical Theory

Feminist Theory

Structuralism and Deconstruction

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Research Bibliography:

A. ON THEORETICAL RESEARCH APPROACHES

Hermeneutics

Comparative Studies

Integrative Scholarship

Critical Theory

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**Feminist Theory**

**Structuralism, Post-structuralism, & Deconstruction**

**B. ON WRITING THEORETICAL PAPERS**

**Research Papers**

**Literature Reviews**

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**Style**


**Guides to Nonsexist Language**


**Scholarly Publishing**


**Jorge N. Ferrer, Ph.D.** is core faculty at the East-West Psychology Program. Formerly a fellow of “La Caixa” Foundation, a research fellow of the Catalanian Council, and an ERASMUS scholar at the University of Wales, he is also Adjunct Faculty at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology. Jorge is the author of *Revisioning Transpersonal Theory: A Participatory Vision of Human Spirituality* (SUNY Press, 2002) as well as of several translations, book chapters, and journal articles on transpersonal studies. He is also the editor of a monograph of the journal *ReVision on New Horizons in Contemporary Spirituality* (Fall 2001). His research interests include transpersonal theory, spiritual inquiry, comparative mysticism, philosophy of science, integral development and education, and spiritual perspectives on sexuality and relationships.

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