

PROGRAM IN EXPERIMENTAL CRITICAL THEORY
2023 WINTER-SPRING LECTURE SERIES

“Universality, Necessity, and Progress: Marx and the Problem of History”

In response to postcolonial critiques of the Eurocentrism of Marx's theory of history, a new wave of scholarship has questioned whether Marx held on to this theory in his late work. Scholars have argued that in Marx's late journalistic and ethnographic writings, his teleological and stadial theory of universal history gives way to a multilinear and non-Eurocentric view. In this lecture, I argue that the theory of history that is employed in Marx's early work has three distinct components: unilinearity, necessity, and progress. Although all three of these elements are combined in Marx's early work, they can be disaggregated, and, importantly, rejecting one of them does not necessarily entail rejecting the other two. In Marx's late work, in fact, what we find is a multilinear view of the history that nevertheless remains committed to claims about historical necessity and progress.



With Amy Allen

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Amy Allen works at the intersection of Frankfurt School critical theory, contemporary French philosophy, feminist theory, psychoanalytic theory, and post-colonial theory. She is the author of five books including *The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (2016) and *Critique on the Couch: Why Critical Theory Needs Psychoanalysis* (2021), both published by Columbia University Press.

Monday, March 13th, 12:00-1:00 PM PST via Zoom

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