

Practical Session No. 8

Contemporary Western Philosophy

Session Focus

Freud and Jung
Linguistic turn
Hermeneutics and post-structuralism
Postmodern condition
Conceptual mapping
The Matrix discussion

Roadmap of the Practical Session

A compact structure for discussion, interpretation, and conceptual comparison.

Block I

Psychoanalytic anthropology
Freud and Jung

Block II

Linguistic turn
Wittgenstein and neopositivism

Block III

Interpretation and power
Gadamer, Foucault, Derrida

Block IV

Postmodernism
Lyotard, Baudrillard

- Move from the inner structure of the psyche to the outer structure of language, discourse, and media.
- Use each block to connect a philosophical concept with a contemporary example.
- Finish with one integrative case: The Matrix as a mirror of twentieth-century philosophy.

Block I. Psychoanalytic Anthropology

Conflict, unconscious depth, and the search for wholeness.

Freud: Anatomy of Conflict

- Psyche as dynamic tension among Id, Ego, and Superego.
- Ego constantly mediates instinct, prohibition, and reality.
- Culture disciplines desire but also generates repression.
- Sublimation redirects instinctual energy into art, science, and institutions.

Jung: Archetypes, Shadow, Individuation

- The collective unconscious contains inherited symbolic patterns.
- The Shadow gathers rejected and unacknowledged aspects of the self.
- Individuation requires confronting the Shadow rather than denying it.
- The Self is achieved through integration, not through one-sided rational control.

Freud and Jung: Two Models of Psychological Meaning

Past-oriented causality versus future-oriented wholeness.

Freud

Personal unconscious
Determinism
Symptoms reveal repressed past
Therapy uncovers hidden causes
Culture = compromise and restraint

Jung

Collective unconscious
Teleology
Symbols point toward future integration
Therapy guides individuation
Culture = symbolic path to wholeness

Seminar Prompts

How does the Ego “maneuver” between instinct and moral law?

Why is the Shadow necessary for growth?

Which model seems more convincing today:
explanation through past trauma or
orientation toward future meaning?

Block II. The Linguistic Turn and Analytic Philosophy

Language is not a neutral instrument: it frames sense, truth, and philosophical confusion.

Wittgenstein

- “The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.”
- Meaning depends on use, not on hidden essences.
- Language games show that truth works differently across forms of life.
- Some philosophical puzzles arise because language is forced beyond its practical rules.

Neopositivism

- The verification principle asks whether a statement can be empirically tested.
- Metaphysical statements are treated not as false, but as cognitively meaningless.
- Ethics, religion, and art become problematic for strict verificationism.
- Philosophy becomes a hygiene of thought and a critique of pseudo-problems.

Block III. Interpretation, Power, and Text

From understanding tradition to analyzing discipline and deconstruction.

Gadamer

Fusion of horizons
Tradition and prejudice are conditions of understanding
Interpretation is dialogical, historical, and never fully neutral

Foucault

Power-knowledge shapes what counts as truth
Human sciences help produce “docile bodies”
Surveillance works through normalization as much as punishment

Derrida

“There is nothing outside of the text”
Meaning is unstable and relational
Deconstruction reveals hidden hierarchies in binary oppositions

Block IV. Postmodernism

The crisis of universality, the rise of simulations, and distrust toward grand explanations.

Lyotard

- Postmodernity is marked by incredulity toward metanarratives.
- Great stories of progress, emancipation, and universal reason lose authority.
- Knowledge fragments into local, competing, and context-bound narratives.

Baudrillard

- Simulacra are copies without originals.
- Hyperreality appears when media images become more influential than direct reality.
- Social networks, brands, curated identities, and digital spectacle blur the line between the real and the fabricated.

Conceptual Mapping Exercise

Students establish logical links between concepts and explain them in 2–3 sentences.

Sublimation — Culture

Freud

Episteme — Surveillance

Foucault

Shadow — Self

Jung

Simulacrum — Hyperreality

Baudrillard

Language Game — Truth

Late Wittgenstein

Tradition — Horizon of Understanding

Gadamer

Conceptual Mapping: Instructor Key

Use these mini-links to guide clarification after student answers.

- Sublimation → Culture: culture transforms instinctual energy into socially valuable forms.
- Shadow → Self: wholeness begins when the rejected side of the personality is acknowledged.
- Language Game → Truth: truth is shaped by rules of use inside a form of life.
- Episteme → Surveillance: institutions control bodies through historically accepted norms of knowledge.
- Simulacrum → Hyperreality: endless copies without originals create a world of signs stronger than reality.
- Tradition → Horizon of Understanding: interpretation always begins inside a historically formed horizon.

Case Study: The Matrix as a Mirror of 20th-Century Philosophy

A single cultural text can activate the whole seminar.

Baudrillard

The Matrix is an ideal simulacrum: a world where signs replace the real.

Foucault

The system creates docile bodies through total control, normalization, and coded discipline.

Wittgenstein

“There is no spoon” suggests that rules define the world that can be lived and changed.

Freud

Awakening resembles psychoanalysis: leaving the dream of repression for painful truth.

Derrida

“The One” is deconstructed as a planned anomaly, not a pure miracle.

Final Group Task

Blue Pill vs. Red Pill

Debate Motion

Is it more humane to preserve a stable illusion for millions or to destroy it in the name of frightening freedom for a few?

Argument Frames

- Use Gadamer: tradition can sustain meaning and continuity.
- Use Lyotard: distrust toward grand narratives may justify breaking the illusion.
- Compare security, truth, dignity, and autonomy.
- End with a concrete judgment: what should a humane society choose?

Vocabulary for Philosophical Discourse

Key terms for active seminar use.

- Archetype — symbolic prototype in the collective unconscious
- Individuation — integration of psychic opposites into the Self
- Language game — meaning through context-bound use
- Verification principle — empirical test as criterion of cognitive meaning
- Episteme — historical structure of knowledge
- Deconstruction — revealing instability and hidden hierarchy in texts
- Simulacrum — copy without original
- Hyperreality — signs becoming stronger than the real

Closing idea: twentieth-century philosophy moves from the inner conflict of the psyche to the instability of language, the productivity of power, and the uncertainty of reality itself.