This seminar traces the development of two central concepts in the critical social theory of the Frankfurt School. The primary aim is to evaluate the continued relevance of the concepts of alienation and reification for diagnosing social pathologies. After reading classic accounts of alienation in Marx and reification in Lukács, we will turn to the “first generation” of the Frankfurt School and read parts of Horkheimer and Adorno’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Then we turn to the “second generation” by reading selections from Habermas’s *Theory of Communicative Action*. Finally, we will look at recent attempts to rejuvenate these key concepts within social philosophy by the “third generation” of the Frankfurt School and beyond by reading Honneth’s *Reification* and Jaeggi’s *Alienation*. In this manner, we will be able to see how later generations of the Frankfurt School have critically appropriated the work of earlier generations while also taking these key concepts in new directions.

**Texts**