



Goa University

Discipline of Philosophy, School of Sanskrit, Philosophy and Indic Studies

Report on “The Emancipatory Intent of Critical Theory: Jürgen Habermas and the Concept of Knowledge”

1. Title of the Event/Activity/program	Monthly Online Guest lecture series titled, “The Emancipatory Intent of Critical Theory: Jürgen Habermas and the Concept of Knowledge”.
2. Date and Time	25 July 2025 (Friday) from 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM IST
3. Mode of conduct (Online)	meet.google.com/dum-wbqy-mbm
4. School	School of Sanskrit, Philosophy and Indic Studies
5. Detail of the Resource Person (Brief biodata)	<p>Dr. Pius V Thomas is Associate Professor & Head, the Department of Philosophy, Assam University, Silchar. He teaches Contemporary Western Philosophy, Critical Hermeneutics, Ethics-Applied Ethics, Philosophy of Religion, Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhi, Human Rights and the possibility of contextualizing Human Rights, Theories of Democracy and Religion, Ethics and Reason, Environmental Ethics, Philosophy of Education, and Critical Religiosity-Christianity and Buddhism. He has published more than forty papers. The volumes include Knowledge, Theorization and Rights: Renegotiating the Connectives (Edited Volume, Salesian College Publication, Siliguri, 2015); Cosmopolitan Thought and the Displaced (Edited Volume, Authors Press, New Delhi, 2023); Reflections: Collected</p>

	Papers (Authors Press, New Delhi, 2023); Journeys on the Margin (Authors Press, New Delhi, 2024); and Human Rights: Perspectives (Edited Volume, Dev Publications, New Delhi, 2025). Forthcoming volumes include Political Gandhi: The Contemporariness of Gandhi (Edited Volume, Akar Books) and The Patterns of Intersubjectivity.
6. Number of participants attended	46
7. The objectives of the Program/activity/event	This lecture aimed to explore the foundations and evolution of Contemporary Western Critical Theory, emphasising its radical critique of modernity, rationality, power structures, and the ethical imperative for planetary-scale engagement. Drawing on insights from German idealism, Marxist thought, and the Frankfurt School, the session examined critique as a transformative epistemic practice. Special focus was given to Jürgen Habermas's theory of knowledge constitutive interests, particularly the emancipatory interest as central to epistemology. Through interdisciplinary synthesis, the lecture illuminated how critical theory challenged positivist paradigms and advocated for socio-political transformation grounded in rational, ethical, and collective praxis.
8. Description of the Program/activity/event	General Intro- Bhawna Singh Welcome Address- Sagar Yadav Guest lecture- Dr. Pius V Thomas Q & A session- Siya Sangodkar Vote of Thanks- Elizabeth Bara
9. Benefit/Key outcomes of the Program/activity/event	As a result of the talk, attendees gained a nuanced understanding of Contemporary Western Critical Theory and its relevance to current socio-political and ethical challenges. By examining the Frankfurt School's interdisciplinary approach and Habermas's emphasis on emancipatory interests, listeners were empowered to rethink epistemology as a vehicle for social transformation. This insight fosters deeper reflection on the role of critique in shaping democratic planning, intercultural dialogue, and planetary ethics, ultimately

	encouraging more informed, ethical, and transformative intellectual and practical engagements in diverse fields.
10. Enclosures with report	YouTube link - https://youtu.be/M7RIYdoybT4 , Poster, Attendance, Screenshots.


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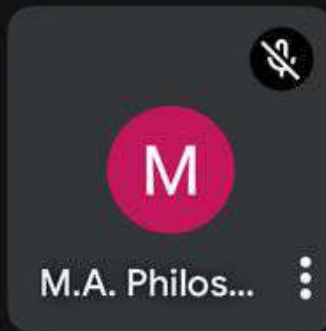
Pius Thomas



Dr.



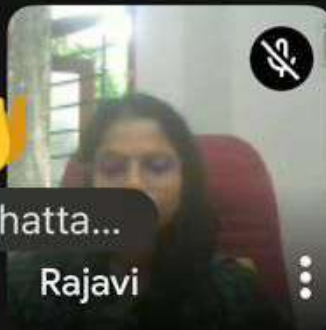
Ranjit



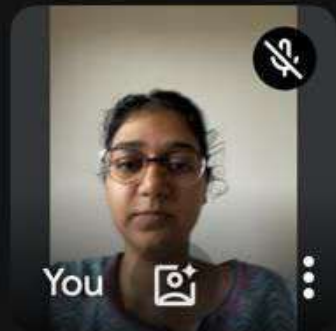
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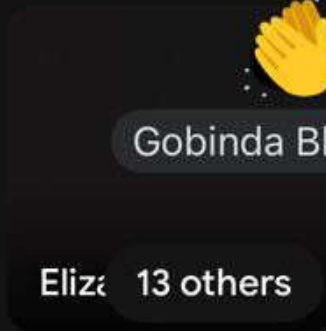
bhawna



Rajavi



You



Gobinda Bhatta...

Eliza 13 others





Ranjit Ghose



Elizabeth Bara



Vidyasagar Sharma



Dr. Koshy Tharakan



Gobinda Bhattacharjee

A

Abhishek Tripathi



Diksha ...



Pius Thomas Vazhappilly



13 others



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M.A. Philosophy Part-2















16:54
25-07-2025

First name	Last name	Email	Duration
Anwesha		anwe*****@***.com	5 min
Pavinta		arju*****@***.com	1 hr 21 min
Shubham Bhat		shub*****@***.com	1 hr 12 min
Izaz	Ahmad	izaz*****@***.com	10 min
Suman	Bakshi	suma*****@***.com	7 min
Elizabeth	Bara	lizb*****@***.com	58 min
Gobinda	Bhattacharjee	gobi*****@***.in	1 hr 25 min
Kajal	Bisht	kaja*****@***.com	57 min
D. S.	Boveio	sociology.boveio@unigoa.ac.in	1 hr 22 min
Bojana	Brajkov	philosophy.bojana@unigoa.ac.in	1 hr 2 min
Michelle	Colaco	mich*****@***.com	59 min
jyoti	diwakar	jyot*****@***.com	52 min
Evelyn	Fernandes	evel*****@***.com	1 hr 23 min
Sayali	Gaunkar	gaun*****@***.com	1 hr 20 min
Vidya Mary	George	philosophy.vidya@unigoa.ac.in	1 hr 20 min
Ranjit	Ghose	ranj*****@***.com	1 hr 29 min
almin	jose	jose*****@***.com	1 hr 19 min
Kevin	Kago	kevi*****@***.com	1 hr 14 min
Suhas	Kamlakar	suha*****@***.com	31 min
Dr.	Koshy Tharakan	koshy@unigoa.ac.in	1 hr 30 min
Tanisha	Kundaikar	kund*****@***.com	44 min
Mayuri	Kuttikar	mayu*****@***.com	1 hr 2 min
Rakshanda	Mayekar	raks*****@***.com	27 min
abhijit	mitra	abhi*****@***.com	53 min
Ritupriya	Mukherjee	ritu*****@***.in	1 hr 23 min
Rajavi	Naik	rajavi@unigoa.ac.in	1 hr 20 min
Yugank	Naik	yugank@unigoa.ac.in	1 hr 25 min
Akash	Naik Salgaonkar	philosophy.akash@unigoa.ac.in	31 min
Sarika	Nair	nair*****@***.com	33 min
M.A. Philosophy	Part-2	gmeet.philosophy2@unigoa.ac.in	1 hr 40 min
Suma	Perumal	know*****@***.com	47 sec
Geetanjali	R	rajg*****@***.com	52 min
Diksha	Rai	philosophy.diksha@unigoa.ac.in	1 hr 40 min
sanket	revankar	sank*****@***.com	24 min
Sanket Shantaram	Revankar	philosophy.sanket@unigoa.ac.in	30 min
Dipanki	Saikia	philosophy.dipanki@unigoa.ac.in	40 min
Jude	Sales	s.ju*****@***.com	44 min
Vidyasagar	Sharma	vidy*****@***.com	1 hr 30 min
bhawna	singh	phd.sspis.bhawna@unigoa.ac.in	1 hr 34 min
suman	talukdar	suma*****@***.com	1 hr 10 min
Alok	Tandon	alok*****@***.com	1 hr 5 min
gautam	tiwari	gaut*****@***.com	8 min
Abhishek	Tripathi	abhi*****@***.com	1 hr 14 min

Pius Thomas	Vazhappilly	pius*****@***.com	1 hr 26 min
Prashant	Vishwakarma	pras*****@***.com	21 min
Sagar	Yadav	saga*****@***.com	1 hr 27 min

Time joined	Time exited
3:53 PM	3:59 PM
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The Emancipatory Intent of Critical Theory: Jürgen Habermas and the Concept of Knowledge

25 July 2025 (Friday)
3:30 PM to 5:30 PM IST

An online talk by
Dr. Pius V Thomas
Associate Professor, Philosophy
Assam University, Silchar

Meet Link: <https://meet.google.com/dum-wbqy-mbm>

Abstract

Contemporary Western Critical Theory can be seen as associated with a radical critique of modernity, rationality, political association, power, cross-interculturality, and the need for macro or planetary ethics as a stage qualitatively beyond the micro and meso ethics. As

Michael J Thompson says, “Critique is a distinctive form of knowledge derived from the insights of German idealism and developed in Marx’s writings that is opposed to the merely empirical and positivist models of knowledge. The concept of critique is an essential feature of this tradition as a whole and of its distinctiveness. For one thing, it means not simply an act of judgment or resistance, but also a specific way of relating to the world, a way that any subject relates to an object. This is because critique is a means to relate what is perceived in everyday life with a deeper, more rational knowledge of the world.”

When it comes to the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School, Douglas Kellner puts it, “This project requires a collective, supra-disciplinary synthesis of philosophy, the sciences, and politics, in which critical social theory is produced by groups of theorists and scientists from various disciplines working together to produce a critical theory of the present age aimed at radical socio-political..., whereby a) free markets were to be succeeded by democratic planning, b) scientifically, a loss of faith in the reason (and science) that would rationally guide this process, and c) morally, pervasive challenges to the universalistic values embodied in the theories of natural rights associated with modernity.”

Jürgen Habermas is a well-known representative of the Frankfurt School and critical theory. He is a second-generation critical theorist. The major addition that Habermas makes to the Critical Theory is his concept of knowledge and knowledge constitutive interests. It becomes all the more unique with the idea of the emancipatory-critical interest as the core of all epistemic engagements. As

Habermas says, knowledge cannot be understood without emancipation or emancipatory interest, as it is the most fundamental survival interest.

Therefore, the Empirical Knowledge-Scientific method, the Historical Hermeneutic method of human sciences and history, needs to be informed and juxtaposed with critical reflective knowledge as generated from the need for emancipation from domination/power/ systematically distorted communication. Similarly, Habermas's depth hermeneutics that seeks and grounds the emancipatory dimension operative between the technical-instrumental and the practical-interpretive, also makes the reflective necessity of intersubjective communication inevitable. The discussion tries to explore the various dimensions of the above claims of Habermas's Critical Theory.

Bio

Dr. Pius V Thomas is Associate Professor & Head, the Department of Philosophy, Assam University, Silchar. He teaches Contemporary Western Philosophy, Critical Hermeneutics, Ethics-Applied Ethics, Philosophy of Religion, Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhi, Human Rights and the possibility of contextualizing Human Rights, Theories of Democracy and Religion, Ethics and Reason, Environmental Ethics, Philosophy of Education, and Critical Religiosity-Christianity and Buddhism. He has published more than forty papers. The volumes include Knowledge, Theorization and Rights: Renegotiating the Connectives (Edited Volume, Salesian College Publication, Siliguri, 2015); Cosmopolitan Thought and the Displaced (Edited Volume, Authors Press, New Delhi, 2023); Reflections: Collected Papers (Authors Press, New Delhi, 2023); Journeys on the Margin (Authors Press, New Delhi, 2024); and Human Rights: Perspectives (Edited Volume, Dev Publications, New Delhi, 2025). Forthcoming volumes include Political Gandhi: The Contemporariness of Gandhi (Edited Volume, Akar Books) and The Patterns of Intersubjectivity.