

# CRITICAL THEORY AND NATION STATE FORMATION (COLLOQUIUM AND PUBLIC LECTURE)

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## Opening Speech

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It is important to highlight the fact that critical theory is an examination and critique of society and culture, drawing from knowledge which cuts across the social sciences and humanities. Critical theory involves the application of principles or values in order to make judgments for the purpose of bringing about positive change. This is for instance, rhetorical criticism which carefully examines and judges the quality of discourse.

It is worth to note that the University bears a moral responsibility in shaping a nation's agenda. First, it is important from a moral perspective since it educates and trains our future community and business leaders, teachers and policy makers. Second is that it pursues academic discourse from a practical point of view as it is exceptionally equipped to help solve the daily challenges of a nation through innovation in teaching and learning. It also extends to students and future leaders the intellectual tools for doing that. This means that universities influence the standards for political leadership throughout a nation and even shape the global nation formation.

The multidisciplinary approach has become an important approach in modern discourse as it involves many related disciplines and creates teams of scholars that enrich the overall scholarly experience. It involves drawing appropriately from multiple disciplines to redefine problems outside the normal boundaries and reach solutions based on a new understanding of complex situations. Even though it faces challenges by the long established tradition of highly focused professional practitioners that has cultivated a protective boundary around their area of expertise, I urge the scholars to break away from this practice and engage in multi-disciplinary studies as these are geared towards holistic development of scholarship and enrichment of professional bodies.

While on this path of nation formation, we realize that this sector is multidisciplinary, bringing together scholars from different disciplines like Law, Political Science, Literature, and Sociology, among others.

As scholars, the importance of research in academics cannot be gainsaid. It leads to applications that directly benefit the people of a state and beyond. Without research, we would not be able to transform an unstable nation into a stable nation, shortage into plenty, still into movable. To a large extent, it enables scholars to actively transform our nation and our natural, social, and individual worlds for the better.

Prof. Spivak is an Indian literary, philosopher and University Professor at Columbia University, where she is a founding member of the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society. She is best known for the essay “Can the Subaltern speak?” considered a founding text of post colonialism; and for translation of and introduction to Jacques Derrida’s *De La Grammatology*. In 2012 she was awarded the Kyoto Prize in Arts and Philosophy for being “a critical theorist and educator speaking for the humanities against intellectual colonialism in relation to the globalized world.”

Prof. Spivak is also best known for her contemporary cultural and critical theories to challenge the “legacy of colonialism” and the way readers engage with literature and culture. She often focuses on the cultural texts of those who are marginalized by dominant western culture: the new immigrant; the working class; women; and other positions of the subaltern.