"There is no unified postmodern theory, or even a coherent set of positions."

Modernist Assumptions & Optimism
- Reason is the source of progress in knowledge and society, the privileged locus of truth and the foundation of systematic knowledge
- Reason can discover adequate theoretical and practical norms to ground systems of thought and action for restructuring society
- There is or can be objective, universal truths
- There is or can be an autonomous, purely rational, unified human subject

Reality Check?
- Produced untold suffering and victims, “ranging from the peasantry, proletariat and artisans oppressed by capitalist industrialization to the exclusion of women from the public sphere, to the genocide of imperialist colonization”
- Produced “disciplinary institutions, practices, and discourses which legitimate its mode of domination and control”

Postmodern Reactions
- Abandon foundationalism, modernity’s “universalizing and totalizing claims,” “its hubris to supply apodictic truth,” and “fallacious rationalism.”
- Reject assumption that theory and language ‘mirror’ or ‘give presence to’ fundamental reality
- Affirm that all cognitive representations are historically and linguistically mediated
- Replace modern subject with socially and linguistically constructed, fragmented subject