

Marx & Marxism

01:730:343

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Tillet Hall, 251
10.20am-11.40am. Mon;Thu.

OVERVIEW:

This class aims to provide an introduction to Marxist theory, with an emphasis on its underlying philosophical assumptions and arguments. Over the course of the semester we will try develop a picture of how different strands of Marx's work weave together; how his philosophical anthropology relates to his theory of history, how his theory of value is connected to his theory of exploitation, how his conception of class is related to his theory of explanation, etc.. At the same time, we will aim to get clearer on his background methodological commitments and the role these play in supporting his theory as a whole.

The class divides into three mains sections: In Section I, focusing on work of the early Marx, we will start by *i*) introducing some basic technical notions of Marxist theory, and *ii*) discussing elements of Marx's over-arching methodology; in Section II, we will look in detail at Marx's analysis of capital, primarily in the form of extracts from his eponymous work; finally, in Section III, we will investigate the way in which issues which occupied a background position in Sections I-II have been developed by 20th and 21st century theorists. The syllabus for this section is open-ended: it comprises of around half a dozen topics, from which you, as students enrolled in the class, will collectively choose 3-4 in which you are most interested.

ASSESSMENT:

The final class grade will break down into four components:

- Participation: 10%
- Weekly comprehension assignments: 20%
- Mid-Term Exam: 30%
- Final Exam: 40%

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance at classes twice a week is mandatory (and is, obviously, a necessary condition for the satisfying the participation component of your grade). If for any reason you will not be able to attend class, please send me an email as early as you can.

COURSE TEXTBOOK:

The majority of the readings will be drawn from The Marx-Engels Reader: 2nd Ed., edited by Robert C. Tucker. Other readings will be made available through sakai. It is also worth noting that a large amount of work by Marxist (and Marxist related) theorists can be found on the extensive marxists.org archive, if you are interested in additional reading. Some materials in the syllabus are drawn from non-academic sources, such as news publications, short films, etc. Unless noted otherwise, these are also compulsory 'reading'.

SECTION I: EARLY MARX – PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION.

Class 1 (6th Sep): Introduction

- *No reading.*

WEEK 2: BACKGROUND.

Class 2 (10th Sep): German Idealism & Utopian Socialism.

- *Socialism: Utopian & Scientific* – Engels, F. (Sect.1-2) [TR: pp683-700]

Class 3 (13th Sep): Classical Economics.

- *The Wealth of Nations* - Smith, A. (Book I; Sect. 8: ‘On the Wages of Labour’) [sakai].

WEEK 3: HUMANS & HISTORY.

Class 4 (17th Sep): Marx’s Philosophical Anthropology.

- *The German Ideology* - Marx, K. & Engels, F. (Intro; Chpt.1.Sect.A) [TR: pp146-155]
- ‘The Part Played by Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man’ – Engels, F. [marxists.org]

Class 5 (20th Sep): Marx’s Theory of history.

- *The German Ideology* - Marx, K. & Engels, F. (Chpt.1.Sect.A:1-2) [TR:pp155-175]

WEEK 4: CLASS & CONSCIOUSNESS.

Class 6 (24th Sep): The Marxist Theory of Class.

- ‘The Manifesto of the Communist Party’ - Marx K., & Engels, F. (Parts I-II.) [TR: pp473-491]

Class 7 (27th Sep): Base & Superstructure.

- ‘Preface to Critique the of Political Economy’ - Marx, K. [TR: pp3-6]
- *The German Ideology* - Marx, K. & Engels, F. (Chpt.1.Sect.B:1-2). [TR: pp176-189]
- ‘Money and Morals’ – Mayyassi, A. [aeon.com]
- Film: *Manufacturing Consent* [37:34 – 46:20]

WEEK 5: THE STATE & THE INDIVIDUAL.

Class 8 (1st Oct): The Marxist Theory of the State.

- *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State: ‘The Origin of the State’* – Engels, F. [TR:pp751-759]

Class 9 (4th Oct): Alienation.

- *Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* – Marx, K. [TR: pp70-81]
- Film: *Paraíso* – Navda Kurtz [10:02]

WEEK 6: INTERLUDE

Class 10 (8th Oct): Summing up.

- *No reading.*

Class 11 (11th Oct): In Class Exam.

SECTION II: LATE(R) MARX - CAPITAL & CRISIS.

WEEK 7: CHAPTER 1: ECONOMIC THEORY.

Class 12 (15th Oct): The Commodity & The Labour Theory of Value.

- Capital: Chpt.I.i-iii; [TR: pp302-313]

Class 13 (18th Oct): Commodity Fetishism.

- Capital: Chpt.I. iv [TR: 319-329]

WEEK 8: CHAPTER 3: CAPITAL & PROFIT.

Class 14 (22nd Oct): The General Formula of Capital.

- Capital: Chpt,IV. [TR: pp329-336].

Class 15 (25th Oct): Labor Power..

- Capital Chpt.VI. [TR: pp336-344]
- 'How Bosses are (Literally) Like Dictators' – Anderson, Elisabeth [vox.com]

WEEK 9: CRISIS!

Class 16 (29th Oct): Surplus Value & Profit

- Chpt.VII. [TR: 344-361]
- 'Behind a \$13 shirt, a \$6/hr Worker' - Kitroeff, Natalie & Kim, Victoria [latimes.com]

Class 17 (1st Nov): The Falling Rate of Profit

- Capital: ChptXII; ChptXXV [TR: pp376-384; pp419-431]

WEEK 10: INTERLUDE:

Class 18 (5th Nov): After Capitalism?:

- 'Critique of the Gotha Program' – Marx, K. [TR: pp525-541]
- The Manifesto of the Communist Party: Part III. Marx, K. & Engels, F. [TR: pp491-500]

Class 19 (8th Nov): Summing Up:

- *No reading.*

SECTION III: MARXISM – ITS PROPONENTS & CRITICS

NB: We will cover 3-4 topics from this section, as chosen by the class. The readings for each topic have the potential to change in response to interests, but should provide a guide to the focus of each topic

TOPIC 1: REVOLUTIONARY THEORY: LENIN & LUXEMBURG

- a. Rosa Luxemburg - 'Reform or Revolution'
- b. Rosa Luxemburg 'The Russian Revolution'
- c. V.I. Lenin - 'The State and Revolution'

TOPIC 2: CRITIQUES OF MARXIST THEORY: NOZICK & POPPER

- d. Karl Popper – *The Open Society & Its Enemies* (Chapter 18: The Coming of Socialism).
- e. Robert Nozick – *Anarchy, State & Utopia* (Chapter 7: Distributive Justice)

TOPIC 3: THE PARIS COMMUNE: REVOLUTIONARY THEORY IN PRACTICE.

- f. Donny Gluckstein – *The Paris Commune*, Ch. 1
- g. Karl Marx - ‘The Civil War in France’
- h. Mikhail Bakunin - ‘The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State’

TOPIC 4: MARXIST FEMINISM: LABOR UNDER PATRIARCHY.

- i. Heidi Hartmann - ‘The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism’
- j. Silvia Federici - ‘Wages Against Housework’
- k. Lise Vogel - *Marxism and the Oppression of Women: Towards a Unitary Theory* (Chapter 10 – The Reproduction of Labor Power)
- l. Catherine McKinnon - ‘Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State’

TOPIC 5: ACTUALLY EXISTING SOCIALISM: CENTRAL PLANNING & HUMAN DISASTER.

- m. C.L.R. James - *State Capital & World Revolution*
- n. Leszek Kolakowski - *Main Currents in Marxism* ‘The Marxist Roots of Stalinism’

TOPIC 6: IDEOLOGY & HEGEMONY: HOW TO BUILD A SUPERSTRUCTURE.

- o. Antonio Gramsci - *The Prison Notebooks*: ‘The Intellectuals’.
- p. Louis Althusser - ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses’.
- q. Sally Haslanger - ‘Racism, Ideology & Social Movements’.

TOPIC 7: PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION: AT THE BORDERS OF COMMODIFICATION AND LABOR

- r. Karl Marx - *Capital I*: ‘So-Called Primitive Accumulation’ -
- s. David Harvey - *The ‘New’ Imperialism: Accumulation by Dispossession*
- t. Elizabeth Anderson - ‘The Ethical Limitations of the Market’
- u. Rachel Fraser - ‘Animal Citizens, Animal Workers’ *The New Inquiry*