

Fall 2007

Professor Balbus

Political Science 295: Introduction To Marxism

This course explores the development of Marx's thought from his earliest through his latest writings. It also situates this thought within the tradition of Western political theory from the 17th through the 19th centuries. It asks, and attempts to answer, the following questions: Does Marx's theory successfully synthesize the pre-Marxian political theories of which it is both an outgrowth and a critique? To what extent is this (purported) theoretical synthesis adequate to the critical comprehension of contemporary capitalism? What, if any, modifications in his theory would be necessary to realize that objective?

There are two required texts for this course: Robert C. Tucker, ed., The Marx-Engels Reader, which is available for purchase at Circle Center Bookstore, and a packet of readings entitled Modern Political Theory Before Marx, which is available for purchase in xerox form in my office.

One mid-term paper of from 5-7 double-spaced typed pages and one take-home essay final exam are required. Students are also expected to come to class regularly and to participate in discussion, which means they must do the relevant required reading prior to each class during which it will be discussed.

The following recommended readings are available at the library:

Shlomo Avineri, The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx

Isaac D. Balbus, Marxism and Domination

Daniel Brudney, Marx's Attempt to Leave Philosophy

G.A. Cohen, Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence

Terry Eagleton, Marx

Norman Geras, Marx and Human Nature

Dick Howard, The Development of the Marxian Dialectic

Leszek Kolakowski, Main Currents of Marxism: The Founders

Ernest Mandel, The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx

Herbert Marcuse, Reason and Revolution and Studies in Critical Philosophy

David McLellan, Marx Before Marxism and The Thought of Marx: An Introduction

John McMurtry, The Structure of Marx's World-View

Istvan Meszaros, Marx's Theory of Alienation

Bertell Ollman, Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society

Moishe Postone, Time, Labor and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory

Melvin Rader, Marx's Interpretation of History

Alfred Schmidt, The Concept of Nature in Marx

William Shaw, Marx's Theory of History

Isidor Wallimann, Estrangement: Marx's Concept of Human Nature and the Division of Labor

Jonathan Wolff, Why Read Marx Today?

Alan Wood, Karl Marx

Useful biographical material can be found in David McLellan, Marx: His Life and Thought and Jerrold S

I. Pre-Marxian Political Theory (Weeks 1-3)

Required:

Modern Political Theory before Marx

II. Human Nature: Capitalism as its Alienation and Communism as its Realization (Weeks 4-8)

Required:

Marx, Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, in Tucker, The Marx-Engels Reader, pp. 16-25.

Marx, On the Jewish Question, in Tucker, pp.26-46.

Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, in Tucker, pp.67-125.

Marx, "On the Realm of Necessity and the Realm of Freedom", in Tucker, pp.439-441.

Marx, Critique of the Gotha Program, in Tucker, pp.525-541.

Marx, "Introduction" to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, in Tucker, pp.53-65.

Marx, "Alienation and Social Classes", in Tucker, pp.133-135.

Marx and Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party, Prefaces and Parts I-I, in Tucker, pp.469-491

Marx, The Civil War in France, in Tucker, pp.618, 629-642.

Marx, "Marginal notes to Bakunin's Statism and Anarchism", in Tucker, pp.542-548.

Recommended:

Avineri, The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx, chapters 1-5.

Geras, Marx and Human Nature

Howard, The Development of the Marxian Dialectic

Philip Kain, Marx and Modern Political Theory, chapter 6.

Kolakowski, Main Currents of Marxism

Mandel, The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx, chapters 7 and 10.

Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, espec. pp.312-322 and vii-xiv, and Studies in Critical Philosophy, pp

McLellan, Marx Before Marxism and The Thought of Karl Marx

Meszaros, Marx's Theory of Alienation

Ollman, Alienation

Schmidt, The Concept of Nature in Marx, chapter 1, Sec.A and chapters 2-4.

Wallimann, Estrangement

Wood, Karl Marx, Part I (pp.3-59) and Part III (pp.125-156).

III. Historical Materialism: The Determining Power of the Mode of Production (Weeks 9-12)

Required:

Marx, Theses on Feuerbach, in Tucker, pp.143-145.

Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, in Tucker, pp.146-200.

Marx and Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party, Prefaces and Parts I-II, in Tucker, pp.469-491.

Marx, Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, in Tucker, pp.3-6.

Marx, "Introduction" to The Grundrisse, in Tucker, pp.221-246.

Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, in Tucker, pp.594-617.

Recommended:

Balbus, Marxism and Domination

Cohen, Karl Marx's Theory of History

McMurtry, The Structure of Marx's World-View

Rader, Marx's Interpretation of History

Shaw, Marx's Theory of History

Wood, Karl Marx, Part II (pp.63-122) and Part IV (pp.158-186).

IV. Capital (Weeks 13-14)

Required:

Marx, Capital, Vol.I, in Tucker, pp.294-438.

Recommended:

Avineri, The Social and Political Thought of Marx, chapter 2.

Mandel, The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx

Ollman, Alienation, chapters 25-28.

Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, pp.295-312.

Kolakowski, Main Currents of Marxism, chapters 12-13.

Postone, Time, Labor and Social Domination

Wood, Karl Marx, Part V (pp.189-234)

V. The Limits of Marx (Week 15)

Recommended:

Avineri, The Social and Political Thought of Marx, "Epilogue"

Balbus, Marxism and Domination

Kain, Marx and Modern Political Theory, chapters 7-8

Ollman, Alienation, chapter 32.

Kolakowski, Main Currents of Marxism, chapter 16.

Wood, "Concluding Remark" (pp.235-237)

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