

PHIL 6391 - Major Figures: Karl Marx

Fall 2021 - Syllabus

Tuesdays, 7:00-9:45pm

This class is concurrent with PHIL 4326: Major Figures.

Professor Matthew J. Brown

Email: mattbrown@utdallas.edu

Phone: 972-883-2536

Office Location and Hours: JO 5.522 - Thursdays 1-3:00pm and by appointment (Virtual for the first weeks of the semester)

Appointments: <https://doodle.com/mm/matthewjbrown/book>

Course Description

This seminar focuses on the philosophy and thought of Karl Marx, including his political, economic, epistemological, and ethical views. After a brief look at his early work, this seminar will focus on analyzing the arguments of his masterwork, *Capital*, in detail.

Student Learning Objectives

1. Student will demonstrate advanced knowledge of the significance of Karl Marx in the history of philosophy, economics, and political thought through class discussion and writing assignments.
2. Through engaging with the works of Karl Marx, students will analyze complex texts in the history of philosophy, politics, and science in class discussion and writing assignments.
3. Student will consider the bearing of multiple secondary source texts that are assigned or found through research, evaluate those sources, and integrate them into their own written interpretations.
4. Students will demonstrate rigorous argumentation and clear communication through writing assignments.

Required Textbooks

- Karl Marx, *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society* (Hackett) [*WYM*]
- Karl Marx, *Capital* Volumes I, II, & III (Penguin Classics)

Some additional readings will be distributed as PDFs.

Required Secondary Sources

- Paul M. Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development: Principles of Marxian Political Economy*
- Robert Paul Wolff, *Understanding Marx: A Reconstruction and Critique of Capital [UM]* (available as a free PDF)
- Robert Paul Wolff, *Moneybags Must Be So Lucky: On the Literary Structure of Capital* (available as a free PDF)
- Allen W. Wood, *Karl Marx* (Second Edition)

Suggested Primary Sources

- Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* - Marx's notebooks of 1857-58, consisting of a length unfinished manuscript on "Fundamentals of a Critique of Political Economy." Valuable in tracing the development of Marx's thinking in *Capital* and on clarifying certain aspects of his theories.
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* - Marx's most widely read and programmatic work.
- Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value* - A draft of what would have been Volume IV of *Capital* (or vols. IV, V, and VI, given that it is typically published in 3 volumes itself). It is primarily a critical history of the economic theories of Marx's time.

Suggested Secondary Sources

- David Harvey, *A Companion to Marx's Capital: The Complete Edition* - Another valuable source of aid in grasping the core ideas and arguments of Marx's *Capital*.
- Sidney Hook, *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx: A Revolutionary Interpretation* - An influential early interpretation of Marx by an American philosopher and student of John Dewey.
- William Clare Roberts, *Marx's Inferno: The Political Theory of Capital* - Situates Marx's work in the context of political theory, the worker's movement, and the literary structure of Dante's *Inferno*.
- Joan Robinson, *An Essay on Marxist Economics* - A reading of Marx's theories by a leading post-Keynesian economist.
- Tom Rockmore, *Marx's Dream: From Capitalism to Communism* - Situates Marx in the philosophical tradition primarily as a moral philosopher.
- Helena Sheehan, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Science: A Critical History* - Traces the influence of Marx on the history of the philosophy of science.
- Jonathan Wolff, *Why Read Marx Today?*
- G.A. Cohen, *If You're an Egalitarian, How Come You're So Rich?* - Explores the connections between Marxism and Rawlsian liberalism.

Video Series on Marx

- Robert Paul Wolff, Lectures on Marx's Critique of Capitalism
- Reading Marx's Capital with David Harvey

Class Schedule by Week

1. Introduction
2. The Early Marx on Alienation
 - Read: Selections from *Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (WYM pp. 283-314)
 - Secondary Reading: Wood, Part I
3. Early Marx on Method, Ideology, and Historical Materialism
 - Read: "Theses on Feuerbach", selections from *The German Ideology* and *The Poverty of Philosophy* (WYM 400-2, 403-429, 474-495)
 - Secondary Reading: Wood, Part II; Sweezy, Ch 1 (See also: Wood, Parts 3-4 & Ch 13)
4. The Theory of Value in Classical Political Economy
 - Read: Wolff, *UM* Chs 1-3
5. Marx's Theory of Value
 - Read: *Capital* vol. I, part I
 - Secondary Reading: Wolff, *UM* §4.1; Sweezy Ch. 2; Wood, Ch 15. (See also, Sweezy Ch. 3)
6. Irony and Mystification: Literary and Methodological Issues
 - (Re)Read: *Capital* vol. I, Ch. 1; Wolff, *Moneybags*
7. The Concept of Capital
 - Read: *Capital* vol. I, part II & Chs. 7-8; vol. III, Ch. 24
 - Secondary Reading: Sweezy pp. 56-66
8. Exploitation and Surplus Value
 - Read: *Capital* vol. I, Chs. 9-11; vol. III, Ch 48
 - Secondary Reading: Sweezy, pp. 67-71; Wolff, *UM* §§4.2-5.1; Wood, Ch 16
9. Technical Progress
 - Read: *Capital* vol. I, part IV.
 - Secondary Reading: Sweezy, "Karl Marx and the Industrial Revolution"
10. Economic and Social Reproduction
 - Read: *Capital*, vol I, Chs 23-24; vol. II, Chs. 18-20
 - Secondary Reading: Sweezy, pp. 75-79; Wolff, *UM* Ch. 1
11. Prices and Profits
 - Read: *Capital*, vol III, parts I-II
 - Secondary Reading: Sweezy, pp. 109-130; Wolff, *UM* §§5.2 - Ch. 6 & Envoi
12. The Accumulation of Capital
 - Read: *Capital*, vol I, Ch 25; vol. II, Chs. 21

- Secondary Reading: Sweezy, pp. 79-95
13. Crises of Capitalism
 - Read: *Capital*, vol III, part III
 - Secondary Reading: Sweezy, pp. 96-108 & Part III
 14. Original Accumulation
 - Read: *Capital*, vol I, part VIII (See also *Grundrisse* §2, “Original Accumulation of Capital” / “Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations” I)
 - Secondary Reading: Sweezy and Dobb, “The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism” (See also Maurice Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*; Takahashi, “A contribution to the Sweezy-Dobb controversy”; Dobb and Sweezy, “Comments on Takahashi”; Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*)
 15. *Fall Break*
 16. Wrap-up and Marx’s Influence
 - Readings *TBD*

Assignments and Grading

1. Participation (20%) - Participate in class discussion and peer activities regularly and well, in such a way that demonstrates you are well prepared.
2. Discussion Lead (20%) - Leading a small group of undergraduate students through discussion each week, based on their submitted Discussion Questions.
3. Term paper (60%) - 5,000-6,000 word paper involving original research, focused on philosophical interpretation or historiography of Marx’s work or philosophical argument on a Marxian theme of contemporary relevance. The paper will have multiple preparatory stages such as topic proposal, initial bibliography, outline draft.

Course and Instructor Policies

Class Meeting expectations

You are expected to have **read the assignments *before* class**, and it would be to your benefit to also read them again after class. You are expected to have the readings for each day’s class open to refer to during discussion. You are expected to **listen respectfully** to the professor and your fellow students, and **participate** in class discussions and activities.

Late Work, Make-Up, and Completion

It is important to stay on track with the class schedule, or else you will fall behind and not be able to complete the work to a satisfactory standard. Extensions will be given upon request, within reason, as long as you ask *before the deadline*.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Don't do it! If you incorporate any work that is not your own into any project that you do, and you do not cite the source properly, this counts as plagiarism. This includes someone doing the work for you, taking work done by another student, verbatim copying of published sources, *paraphrasing* published work without citation, and paraphrasing in an inappropriate way even with citation. Re-using work created for another course also counts as plagiarism in most contexts. Unless group work is *explicitly* permitted or required, it is expected that all of the work that you turn in is original and your own, and that any sources that you make use of are correctly cited. If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing, it is absolutely mandatory for me to turn you in to the Dean of Students Office of Community Standards and Conduct.

University Policies

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus: <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>