

SOC 475 Marxist Sociological Thought  
CRN 26275  
MWF 3:00- 3:50  
**IMC STUDIO D**

Instructor: Paul Prew

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Office Hours: 2:00 - 2:50 M,W; Available after class M, F; or by appointment

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### Course Links

- [Syllabus](#)
  - [List of Weekly Readings \(Including Recommended Readings\)](#) **Week 6 Readings are Recommended**
  - [Lecture Notes](#)
  - [Notes to help with the reading](#)
  - Answers to your bi-weekly questions
    - [Week 3 - Alienation](#)
    - [Week 4 + 5 - Commodities](#)
    - [Week 6 + 7 - Some More Commodities, Value and Other Issues](#)
  - Assignments:
    - [Final Exam](#): Wednesday, March 19 at 3:15
    - [Application Papers and Reaction Questions](#) **NOTE: Week 9 and 10 Assignments are Optional. I will count the 3 best grades out of the 4 assignments.**
  - [Hints for Doing Close Reading](#)
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## Syllabus

### Course Description

The intent of this course is to provide the student with the foundation of Karl Marx's thought. No other social thinker has a more comprehensive theoretical body of work, and Karl Marx is certainly the most revered and reviled, accepted and criticized theorist in history. In order to understand contemporary views of this often used and seldom understood social theorist, it is necessary to develop an understanding of his philosophical, methodological and political-economic foundations. Once we have developed this foundation, we will begin to address some of Marx's core analyses such as alienation, exploitation, value and commodity relations. Finally, we will look at some more contemporary uses of Marxist thought including a look at the world-economy from the World-System perspective and the Monthly Review school of thought.

## Course Requirements

A few things are crucial for successful completion of this course. First, students are expected to have completed all of the relevant readings prior to coming to class. Students must complete the readings in order to participate regularly in class discussions. Class participation will be weighted heavily as part of the graded portion of the class. Your participation and performance will be evaluated by the professor. Since you must be present to participate in class, attendance will be part of your participation grade. After the first week, more than two absences will count against participation. Students will be required to complete four short application papers, applying the course materials to world events and issues. Students will also be asked to turn in questions about the week's readings four times during the term. Late papers will lose ½ letter grade for each class day late. Lastly, there will be two exams. To give students the opportunity to supplement a weakness in their grade, students may watch an approved movie and review it for extra credit. A list of possible movie selections and requirements for the film review will be provided during the quarter.

The grading for the course breaks down as follows:

- 30% Class Participation
- 40% Application Papers
- 10% Reaction Questions
- 10% Exam 1
- 10% [Final Exam](#): Wednesday, March 19 at 3:15

## Required Texts

YOU WILL FIND REQUIRED TEXTS AT MOTHER KALI'S BOOKSTORE AT 720 E 13TH STREET

- Tucker, Robert C (Ed.). 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: Norton.

- Leiss, William. 1988. *The Limits to Satisfaction: An Essay on the Problems of Needs and Commodities*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Magdoff, Harry. 1978. *Imperialism: From the Colonial Age to the Present: Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

YOU WILL FIND THE FOLLOWING REQUIRED READINGS ON RESERVE AT THE LIBRARY

- Foster, John Bellamy. 1999. "Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift: Classical Foundations for Environmental Sociology." *American Journal of Sociology* 105:366-405. (Also available as a PDF file through JSTOR)
- Wallerstein, Immanuel Maurice. 1983. *Historical Capitalism*. London: Verso.

## Weekly Readings

Week 1

Lecture Topic: Course Themes

Readings:

- January 6: No Readings
- January 8:
  - [Notes from the Editors](#) Foster, John Bellamy, and Robert W. McChesney. 2000. "Notes from the Editors." *Monthly Review* 52:1:inside front and back covers.
  - [Why Socialism?](#) Einstein, Albert. 2000. "Why Socialism?" *Monthly Review* 52:1:36-43.
  - [Why Marxism?](#) Singer, Daniel. 1997. "Why Marxism?" *Monthly Review* 49:6:1-5.
  - <http://www.monthlyreview.org/nfte500.htm> Foster, John Bellamy, and Robert W. McChesney. 2000. "Notes from the Editors." *Monthly Review* 52:1:inside front and back covers.
  - <http://www.monthlyreview.org/598einst.htm> Einstein, Albert. 2000. "Why Socialism?" *Monthly Review* 52:1:36-43.
  - <http://www.monthlyreview.org/1197ds.htm> Singer, Daniel. 1997. "Why Marxism?" *Monthly Review* 49:6:1-5.
- January 10:
  - [The Next Thinker](#) Cassidy, John. 1997. "The Next Thinker: The Return of Karl Marx." Pp. 248-59 in *The New Yorker*.

Suggested Readings:

- Fischer, Ernst, and Franz Marek. 1997. *How to Read Karl Marx*. New York: Monthly Review Press. *Introduction* (7-36)

## Week 2

### Lecture Topic: Marx's Materialist Conception of History

#### Readings:

- January 13:
  - (146-163) Tucker, Robert C (Ed.). 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: Norton.
    - *The German Ideology: Materialist Conception of History*
- January 15:
  - (163-175) Tucker, Robert C (Ed.). 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: Norton.
    - *The German Ideology: Consciousness*
- January 17:
  - (176-200) Tucker, Robert C (Ed.). 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: Norton.
    - *The German Ideology: Forces and Relations of Production*
  - (236-244) Tucker, Robert C (Ed.). 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: Norton.
    - *The Grundrisse: The Method of Political Economy*

#### Suggested Readings:

- Fischer, Ernst, and Franz Marek. 1997. *How to Read Karl Marx*. New York: Monthly Review Press. *Chapter 6* (89-99)

## Week 3

### Lecture Topic: Species Being - Sociality, Cooperation and Creative Labor / Alienation

#### Readings:

- January 20:
  - Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday: No Class
- January 22:
  - (66-105) Tucker, Robert C (Ed.). 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: Norton.
    - *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844: Alienation under Capitalism, Discussion of Communism, and the Nature of Needs in Society*
- January 24:
  - (106-125) Tucker, Robert C (Ed.). 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: Norton.
    - *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844: Hegel and Consciousness*

## Suggested Readings:

- Fischer, Ernst, and Franz Marek. 1997. *How to Read Karl Marx*. New York: Monthly Review Press. *Chapters 1, 2 and 3* (37-66)
- Here is a [summary of alienation](#) as it relates to Marx's view of human nature.

## Week 4

Lecture Topic: Value (Exchange and Use), Commodity Fetishism

## Readings:

- January 27:
  - (302-319) Tucker, Robert C (Ed.). 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: Norton.
    - *Capital Volume I: Value*
- January 29:
  - (319-336) Tucker, Robert C (Ed.). 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: Norton.
    - *Capital Volume I: The Fetishism of Commodities and The General Formula for Capital*
- January 31:
  - (13-45) Leiss, William. 1988. *The Limits to Satisfaction: An Essay on the Problems of Needs and Commodities*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
    - "Part One: Examination"

## Suggested Readings:

- Fischer, Ernst, and Franz Marek. 1997. *How to Read Karl Marx*. New York: Monthly Review Press. *Chapter 4* (67-73)

## Week 5

Lecture Topic: Commodity Fetishism

## Readings:

- February 3:
  - (49-71) Leiss, William. 1988. *The Limits to Satisfaction: An Essay on the Problems of Needs and Commodities*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
    - "Part Two: Diagnosis - Needs"
- February 5:

- (71-94) Leiss, William. 1988. *The Limits to Satisfaction: An Essay on the Problems of Needs and Commodities*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
  - "Part Two: Diagnosis - Commodities / The Double Ambiguity"
- February 7:
  - (97-134) Leiss, William. 1988. *The Limits to Satisfaction: An Essay on the Problems of Needs and Commodities*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
    - "Part Three: Prognosis"

## Week 6

Lecture Topic: Labor, Exploitation and Profit; Transformation problem

Readings: NOTE - Readings are Recommended for this Week

- February 10:
  - (203-217) Tucker, Robert C (Ed.). 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: Norton.
    - *Wage Labor and Capital*
- February 12:
  - (336-364, 376-384, 403-411 including section 5, 417-419) Tucker, Robert C (Ed.). 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: Norton.
    - *Capital Volume I: The Production of Relative Surplus Value*
- February 14:
  - (419-431) Tucker, Robert C (Ed.). 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: Norton.
    - *Capital Volume I: The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation*

Suggested Readings:

- Fischer, Ernst, and Franz Marek. 1997. *How to Read Karl Marx*. New York: Monthly Review Press. *Chapters 7 and 8* (100-118)

## Week 7

Lecture Topic: Division of Town and Country, Environmental issues

Readings:

- February 17:
  - (411-419) Tucker, Robert C (Ed.). 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: Norton.
  - *Capital Volume I: Factory and Agriculture*
- February 19:

- (366-383) Foster, John Bellamy. 1999. "Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift: Classical Foundations for Environmental Sociology." *American Journal of Sociology* 105:366-405. [JSTOR page with "Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift"](#)
- February 21:
  - (383-401) Foster, John Bellamy. 1999. "Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift: Classical Foundations for Environmental Sociology." *American Journal of Sociology* 105:366-405. [JSTOR page with "Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift"](#)

#### Suggested Readings:

- Burkett, Paul. 1999. *Marx and Nature: A Red and Green Perspective*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Foster, John Bellamy. 2000. *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

#### Week 8

Lecture Topic: Primitive Accumulation / History of Colonialism and Imperialism

#### Readings:

- February 24:
  - (431-438) Tucker, Robert C (Ed.). 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: Norton.
    - *Capital Volume I: The So-Called Primitive Accumulation*
  - (17-34) Magdoff, Harry. 1978. *Imperialism: From the Colonial Age to the Present: Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
    - "European Expansion Since 1763"
- February 26:
  - (34-54) Magdoff, Harry. 1978. *Imperialism: From the Colonial Age to the Present: Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
    - "European Expansion Since 1763"
- February 28:
  - (54-75) Magdoff, Harry. 1978. *Imperialism: From the Colonial Age to the Present: Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
    - "European Expansion Since 1763"

#### Suggested Readings:

- (76-91) Magdoff, Harry. 1978. *Imperialism: From the Colonial Age to the Present: Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
  - "Imperialist Expansion: Accident and Design"
- [Foster, John Bellamy. 2002. "The Rediscovery of Imperialism." \*Monthly Review\* 54.](#)
- ["Iraq: Voices From The Street"](#) can be found on this website. There are also other videos that you may be interested in.

- [State of Oregon: Economic and Revenue Forecast](#) The figures in class regarding Oregon corporate and personal income tax were taken from the "[December 2002 Economic and Revenue Forecast](#)", page 47.

## Week 9

Lecture Topic: World System / Incorporation

Readings:

- March 3:
  - (13-43) Wallerstein, Immanuel Maurice. 1983. *Historical Capitalism*. London: Verso.
    - "The Commodification of Everything"
- March 5:
  - (47-72) Wallerstein, Immanuel Maurice. 1983. *Historical Capitalism*. London: Verso.
    - "The Politics of Accumulation"
- March 7:
  - (75-93) Wallerstein, Immanuel Maurice. 1983. *Historical Capitalism*. London: Verso.
    - "Truth as Opiate"

Suggested Readings:

- (97-110) Wallerstein, Immanuel Maurice. 1983. *Historical Capitalism*. London: Verso.
  - "On Progress and Transitions"

## Week 10

Lecture Topic: Logic of Imperialism

Readings:

- March 10:
  - (117-145) Magdoff, Harry. 1978. *Imperialism: From the Colonial Age to the Present: Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
    - "Imperialism Without Colonies"
- March 12:
  - (94-111) Magdoff, Harry. 1978. *Imperialism: From the Colonial Age to the Present: Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
    - "Imperialism: A Historical Survey"
  - (148-163) Magdoff, Harry. 1978. *Imperialism: From the Colonial Age to the Present: Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
    - "Economic Myths and Imperialism"
- March 14:



- (198-210) Magdoff, Harry. 1978. *Imperialism: From the Colonial Age to the Present: Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
  - "Militarism and Imperialism"

Suggested Readings:

- (165-195) Magdoff, Harry. 1978. *Imperialism: From the Colonial Age to the Present: Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
  - "The Multinational Corporation and Development - A Contradiction?"
- (213-221) Magdoff, Harry. 1978. *Imperialism: From the Colonial Age to the Present: Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
  - "The Impact of US Foreign Policy on Underdeveloped Countries"
- (222-233) Magdoff, Harry. 1978. *Imperialism: From the Colonial Age to the Present: Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
  - "Capital Technology and Development"
  
- Fischer, Ernst, and Franz Marek. 1997. *How to Read Karl Marx*. New York: Monthly Review Press. *Chapters 9, 10 and 11* (119-139)

Final Exam: Wednesday, March 19 at 3:15