

CGS 2004F Critique of Capitalism
Centre for Global Studies
Fall 2017-18
Friday 9:30-12:30 HC W6
Dr. Wendy Russell

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Office hours: Thursday 2:00-4:00 and Friday by appointment

Prerequisite(s): 0.5 course from Centre for Global Studies 1000-1999, or permission of the Centre for Global Studies.

Introduction

This course explores the socio-economic form of 'capitalism', and examines the development and spread of the key features of capitalist social organization – the division of labour, private property, primitive accumulation – and examines their functioning in a rapidly globalizing world.

Course Learning Objectives

This course provides you the opportunity to learn the skill of scholarly critique: to undertake a close reading of a work, to identify and unpack the author's assumptions, goals and arguments. You will undertake such a close reading of the four books assigned for the course, meaning that you will have time to explore, in detail, the arguments each book presents. You will learn to identify the key ideas being put forward in each work, and to compare and contrast the similarities and differences in how these scholars explain the same social phenomenon. The

Each assignment in the course depends on this close and analytical reading of our assigned reading, and gives you the opportunity to explain these arguments, and to apply the key ideas in each work in your answers to the problems assigned for each of your response papers. These assignments will help you develop both your skills as a researcher drawing on scholarly sources and your skills of argumentation.

Course Methods

This course is lecture-based, supplemented with class discussions of how key ideas covered in the reading relate to real-world and current examples where the social aspects and effects of capitalism are revealed.

Required Readings in addition to these books, and as announced in class and via our shared OWL world, from time to time there may be additional items to read put up on our OWL page.

Bauman, Zygmunt, 2006. *Consuming Life*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.

de Soto, Hernando, 2000. *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*. New York: Basic Books.

Gibson-Graham, J.K., 2006. *A Postcapitalist Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Sundararajan, Arun, 2016. *The Sharing Economy: The End of Employment and the Rise of Crowd-Based Capitalism*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Evaluation

Response Quizzes: 3 x 10% (total 30%) (distributed via OWL one week before they are due, on assigned readings)

Response Papers: 20% and 25% (Due dates listed below, and please see instructions below)

Take Home Examination 25% (handed out in class December 7 and due in my office before 4:00 p.m. December 14).

About Your Response Quizzes

These are one-page answers to questions distributed via OWL. Each is a brief answer to a question based on the course readings for the upcoming week. Turn in each in the corresponding class, printed on paper in 12 pt font please.

About Your Response Papers

These are short essays (4-5 pages or 1000-1250 words, exclusive of quotations from our sources) exploring how the texts we are reading help you answer the discussion questions provided for each topic (these are on our OWL page). These papers will be typed, double spaced and in 12 pt font.

You will please use in-text citations for quotations and references. (That means ‘please do not use footnotes’). An in-text citation looks like this: (Scrofula 2013, 45), to reference a quotation or reference to page forty five in Alice Scrofula’s 2013 book *All Aboard For Economic Autonomy: Community-Run Railroads in the 21st Century*. You would cite her work in your bibliography with complete details.

You will please submit the paper by the deadline date given for each topic. Discussion questions for each topic and general instructions on how to go about preparing your answers are on our OWL page in a folder titled ‘Assignments’.

Topic 1 Primitive Accumulation in the Age of Globalization due October 26

Topic 2 Property (Private and Otherwise) and Globalized Resistance due November 23

About Your Take Home Exam

This is a final response paper, and my expectation is that you will answer the question using detailed and specific discussion of the assigned course readings.

Topics and Reading Schedule

Key: ZB = Zygmunt Bauman; HS = Hernando de Soto; GG = Gibson Graham; AS = Arun Sundararajan

September 7 Introduction

September 14 Reading about Capitalism: Secrets and Possibilities

readings: ZB introduction; GG introduction; HS Chapter 1; AS Introduction

September 21 The Invention of Capitalism: Primitive Accumulation, Proletarianisation and the Gendered Division of Labour

Kaufman reading, on OWL

September 28 Mysteries!

HS Chapters 2, 3 and 4

October 5 A Mystery Indeed

Chapters 5, 6 and 7

October 19 Post-Capitalist Politics: Re-diversifying Economic Thinking

GG: Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4

October 26 Post-Capitalist Politics: Re-diversifying Economic Action

GG: Chapters 5, 6 and 7

November 2 Post-Employment Capitalism: Is This the Revolution?

AS Chapters 1, 2

November 9 Post-Employment Capitalism: Post-Revolutionary Anxieties/Opportunities

AS Chapters 5, 6

November 16 Post-Employment Capitalism: Now What....

AS Chapters 7, 8

November 23 Consumerism I

ZB Chapters 1, 2

November 30 Consumerism II

ZB Chapters 3, 4

November 7 Wrap Up and Exam Prep



The Appendix to Course Outlines is posted on the OWL course site.