

CGS 2004G 550 Critique of Capitalism
Centre for Global Studies
Winter 2023
Monday 8:30-11:30 in H111
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Office hours: Monday 12:00- 1:30 and by appointment on Zoom

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 function in a globalized 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.

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 materials to review. Those materials will include scanned book chapters and likely a short video or two.

We will be reading all four of these books (not every chapter in Sundararajan), and you will need to access them all for the final take home exam. You will also be expected to quote and cite these materials in written course work, and so read with that application in mind. This advice is meant to help you decide which format of the works to purchase or however you're going to access them.

The Huron Library has set up [this link here](#) that will help you navigate to SOME of the course readings on-line. De Soto will only be accessible to one reader at a time, and so you may prefer to purchase your own copy.

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., Jenny Cameron and Stephen Healy. 2013. *Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities*. 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: 5 x 15% (total 75%) (distributed via OWL one week before they are due, on assigned readings, the due dates are noted below)

Take Home Examination 25% (scheduled by the Registrar).

Response Quizzes Due dates: Week 3, Week 5, Week 7, Week 9, Week 12

These are not like 'surprise tests' or attempts to stump you or diminish your confidence. But I couldn't think of any other noun that really suited this. So 'quiz' it is, meaning 'a set of quick questions to affirm comprehension and knowledge of key ideas'. Maybe 'Response Tracks', but you see what I mean, that sounds odd, right?

Each response will be 500 words in length, submitted on OWL. Please include your name, Response Quiz number and date at the top of the page. It would help my slightly challenged vision if you would double space and use a font like Times New Roman 12 pt.

Each assignment is to respond to the question I post for the week's readings. I do not know right now what each question will be because most of this will flow from our exploration of course materials in lecture and discussion. And who knows, maybe something amazing will happen- Uber driver union? Municipalities developing support for mutual aid?- and we can write about that.

Final Take Home Examination

This is a 1250-1500 word essay recapping the basic processes and social entailments of capitalism, exploring its recent transformations and emerging prospects in relation to a supplementary case I will supply.

Schedule of Topics and Readings *Key: ZB = Zygmunt Bauman; HS = Hernando de Soto; GG = Gibson Graham et al; AS = Arun Sundararajan*

- Week 1** January 9 Introduction: Capitalism as Topic of Analysis
- Week 2** January 16 Writing About Capitalism: Sociology and Economics
Readings: ZB Introduction and AS Introduction and Chapter 1
- Week 3** January 23 Writing About Capitalism: Geography and Development Economics
Readings: GG Introduction and Chapter 1, HS Chapter 1
- Week 4** January 30: The Invention of Capitalism: Primitive Accumulation, Proletarianization and the Gendered Division of Labour
Readings: Kaufman on OWL
- Week 5** February 6 The ‘Mysteries’ of Capitalism, or is it Mystifying Capitalism?
Readings: HS Chapters 2-7
- Week 6** February 13 Post-Capitalist Thought: What if Capitalism’s Trajectory is Not What We Thought?
Readings: GG Chapters 2, 3 and 4
- Week 7** February 27 Post-Capitalist Thought: Authority and Command from the Ground Up
Readings: GG Chapters 5, 6 and Conclusion
- Week 8** March 6 Post-Employment Capitalism: Is this the Revolution?
Readings: AS Chapters 2, 5 and 6
- Week 9** March 13 Post-Employment Capitalism: Post-Revolutionary Anxieties and Change
Readings: AS Chapters 7, 8
- Week 10** March 20 In-class Analysis Workshop: What does the future hold? *I will supply some very brief sources that we will analyze together in class.*
- Week 11** March 27 Consumerism: Does Any Secure Social Order Still Exist?
Readings: ZB Chapters 1, 2

Week 12 April 3 Consumerism: Enough is Enough?

Readings: ZB Chapters 3, 4

Week 13 April 10 Capitalism in Transition

Wrap and Exam Prep



Appendix to Course Outlines: Academic Policies & Regulations Fall/Winter 2022-2023

Huron will continue to follow the guidance of public health and government officials. It is anticipated that there will be no disruptions to in-person instruction. This is subject to change.

Student Code of Conduct

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at:

<https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf>.

Prerequisite and Antirequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that they have not completed any course antirequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
- 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Review the policy on Attendance Regulations for Examinations here: [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#)

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](http://www.uwo.ca/academiccalendar/) . The appeals process is also outlined in this policy as well as more generally at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf.

Turnitin.com

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

It is not appropriate to use electronic devices (such as, but not limited to, laptops, tablets, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

Statement on Use of Personal Response Systems (“Clickers”)

Personal Response Systems (“clickers”) may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else’s clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

Academic Consideration for Missed Work

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. **Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.**

Students who have conditions for which academic accommodation is appropriate, such as disabilities or ongoing or chronic health conditions, should work with Accessible Education Services to determine appropriate forms of accommodation. Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>.

Policy on Academic Consideration for a Medical/ Non-Medical Absence

- (a) Consideration on **Medical Grounds** for assignments worth *less than 10%* of final grade:
Consult Instructor Directly and Contact Academic Advising

When seeking consideration on **medical grounds** for assignments worth *less than 10%* of the final course grade, the student should contact the instructor directly. The student need only share broad outlines of the medical situation. The instructor **may** require the student to submit documentation to the academic advisors, in which case she or he will advise the student and inform the academic advisors to expect documentation. If documentation is requested, the student will need to complete and submit the [Student Medical Certificate](#). The instructor may not collect medical documentation. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation.

b) Medical Grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of final grade: Go Directly to Academic Advising

University Senate policy, which can be found at [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#) requires that all student requests for accommodation on medical grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of the final grade be made directly to the academic advising office of the home faculty (for Huron students, the “home faculty” is Huron), with supporting documentation in the form (minimally) of the Senate-approved Student Medical Certificate found at: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

The documentation is submitted in confidence and will not be shown to instructors. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation. The instructor will not normally deny accommodation where appropriate medical documentation is in place and where the duration it describes aligns with the due date(s) of assignment(s). Before denying a request for accommodation on medical grounds, the instructor will consult with the Dean. The instructor’s decision is appealable to the Dean.

c) Consideration on Non-Medical Grounds: Consult Huron Support Services/Academic Advising, or email hurousss@uwo.ca

Students seeking academic consideration for a **non-medical** absence (e.g. varsity sports, religious, compassionate, or bereavement) will be required to provide appropriate documentation. All consideration requests must include a completed [Consideration Request Form](#). Late penalties may apply at the discretion of the instructor.

Please review the full policy on Academic Consideration for medical and non-medical absence at: [accommodation_medical.pdf \(uwo.ca\)](#). Consult [Huron Academic Advising](#) at hurousss@uwo.ca for any further questions or information.

Support Services

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should email an Academic Advisor in Huron’s Student Support Services at

huronsss@uwo.ca. An outline of the range of services offered is found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>.

Department Chairs, Program Directors and Coordinators are also able to answer questions about individual programs. Contact information can be found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/contact/faculty-staff-directory/>.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your workload is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you are considering reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines. Please refer to the Advising website, <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/academic-advising/> or review the list of official Sessional Dates on the Academic Calendar, available here: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm>.

You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP and/or Scholarship/Bursary eligibility.

Huron Student Support Services: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/> Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/>
 Student Quick Reference Guide: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/#1> Academic Support & Engagement: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>
 Huron University College Student Council: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/beyond-classroom/hucsc/>
 Western USC: <http://westernusc.ca/your-services/#studentservices>

Wellness and Health Supports at Huron and Western

University students may encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. Huron offers a variety of services that are here to support your success and wellbeing. All Huron staff and faculty have received training on responding to disclosures of Gender-Based Sexual Violence (GBSV); students should know that the Community Safety Office is a resource for survivors, providing support and, if desired, guidance while referring them to the further supports that they may require. Please visit <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life-campus/student-services/wellness-safety> for more information or contact staff directly:

Wellness Services:

huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca Community

Safety Office: safety@huron.uwo.ca

Additional supports for Health and Wellness may be found and accessed at Western through, <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.

Western Calendar - Policy Pages -

[Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#)