

Spring 2003
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 question: does Marx's theory successfully synthesize the pre-Marxian political theories of which it is both an outgrowth and a critique?

There are three required texts for this course: Robert C. Tucker, ed., The Marx-Engels Reader, Philip Kain, Marx and Modern Political Theory, and Allen W. Wood, Karl Marx. Tucker's and Kain's books are available for purchase at Circle Center Bookstore. Wood's book is available for purchase in xerox form in class.

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

Useful biographical material on Marx can be found in David McLellan, Karl Marx: His Life and Thought and Jerrold Seigel, Marx's Fate: The Shape of a Life

I. Pre-Marxian Political Theory (Weeks 1-2)

Required: Kain, Marx and Modern Political Theory, Introduction and chapters 1-5.

II. Human Nature: Capitalism as its Alienation and Communism as its Realization (Weeks 3-7)

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

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

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.

Kain, Marx and Modern Political Theory, chapter 6.

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

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

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.3-55.

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

III. Historical Materialism: The Determining Power of the Mode of Production (Weeks 8-11)

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.

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

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

IV. Capital (Weeks 12-14)

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

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

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

V. The Limits of Marx (Week 15)

Required: Kain, Marx and Modern Political Theory, chapters 7-8
Wood, "Concluding Remark" (pp.235-237)

Recommended:

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

Balbus, Marxism and Domination

Ollman, Alienation, chapter 32.

Kolakowski, Main Currents of Marxism, chapter 16.