

International History and Politics

Academic year 2021-2022

Capital: Past, Present, Future

HPI132 - Autumn - 6 ECTS

Monday 16h15 - 18h00 / P3#506

Course Description

Capital saturates our lives, yet is also an object of theoretical interest across the disciplines. How can we bring our everyday experiences to advance our intuitions and understanding of capital? We will grapple with this question in the seminar through suggestive explorations of our encounters with capital. Hence, along with classical theoretical writings, we will seek to explore the place of capital in our lives through transversal everyday experiences, such as of study, work, faith, desire, and death.

> PROFESSOR

[Gopalan Balachandran](#)
[Carolyn Biltoft](#)

[Office hours](#)

> ASSISTANT

David Motzafi-Haller

[Office hours](#)

Syllabus

This syllabus is provisional and may change. The final syllabus will be announced at the start of the semester.

Grading Scheme

- Class Participation 30%
- Three 1000-word Essays (45%) and a Final 2000-word Essay (25%)

Essays

You will write three essays of 1,000 to 1200 words through the semester and a final essay of 2000 words. These are meant to be individual reflections on the course readings putting several of them into conversation. Think of these essays as born of the “close reading” of and reflection on the texts. For a discussion of what constitutes an essay please see <https://www.pw.org/content/essays>

Reading Days

There are reading days built into the syllabus. These are not “days off” they are built in with the intention of giving you time to read carefully, rather than skimming, on weeks when the reading is heavier or more theoretically complex. If you prefer to form reading groups, the TA

will be available in the classroom on reading days, so that you can come and do the reading collectively.

Reading Schedule

- 27/9 Welcome! Introductory Discussion
- 4/10 Value and Capital
 - Karl Marx, *Capital, Vol 1*: Chs 1 and 2
 - George Simmel, 'Metropolis and Mental Life'
https://www.blackwellpublishing.com/content/bpl_images/content_store/sample_chapter/0631225137/bridge.pdf
- 11/10 Experiencing Capital
 - Marx, *Capital, Vol 1*: Ch. 7
 - Stephen Marglin, 'What Do Bosses Do''
https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/marglin/files/review_of_radical_political_economics-1974-marmlin-60-112_0.pdf
- 18/10 Disciplined and (De)Valued Bodies (Reading Day, No Class)
 - Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Lecture 9
 - Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, Chs 1 and 6
 - E. P. Thompson "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism, Past & Present, No. 38 (Dec., 1967)" pp. 56-97
- 18/10 In Class Discussion Day
- 25/10 Capital at Home and in the World (Reading Day, No Class)
 - Malcom Harris, Kids These Days: Capital and the Making of Millennials (as much of the text as possible).
 - Melinda Cooper, *Family Values*, Chs 1 and 6
- 1/11 Discussion Day
 - Essay 1 due
- 8/11 Of Having, Holding (Reading Day, No Class)
 - Jean Baudrillard "Systems of Collecting," in Roger Cardinal, Cultures of Collecting, 7-24.
 - Thorsten Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, <http://moglen.law.columbia.edu/LCS/theoryleisureclass.pdf> , Chs 1, 3 and 4.
- 15/ 11 Discussion Day
- 22/11 Feeling and Believing
 - Martijn Konig, The Emotional Logic of Capital, Introduction and Chs 1, 3 and 7
 - Walter Benjamin, "Capital as Religion" <http://tems.umn.edu/pdf/Benjamin-2-11-Capitalism%20as%20Religion.pdf>

- **29/11 Discussion Day**
 - **Essay Two Due**
- **6/12 Haunted Lives and Afterlives**
 - **Arundhati Roy, Capitalism A Ghost Story, (entire text)**
- **13/12 Discussion**
- **20/12 Essay 3 Due, No Class**
- **Final Essay Due January 8**