



Integrative Studies 231B, Moral Issues, The Arts, and Humanities

Analysis of Capitalistic Culture

Fall Semester 2006,
Michigan State University

Dr. Christian Lotz

Tentative Schedule (last UPDATE: November 03, 2009)

Number	Date	Topic	Reading	Information	General Assignments
1	Aug 29	Overview	No reading	<i>The Nation</i> article	
	Aug 31	Overview	No reading		
Segment I: Classical Analysis of Capitalism: Marx					
2	Sep 5	Introduction	Marx, <i>The Marx Reader</i> , pp. 85-95	Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on Marx ; Marx (1); Marx (2); Marx (3)	
3	7	Alienation	Marx, <i>The Marx Reader</i> , pp. 85-95		
4	12	Destruction of Morality	Marx, <i>The Marx Reader</i> , pp. 124-134		
5	14	History	Marx, <i>The Marx Reader</i> , pp. 175-196		
6	19	Commodities	Marx, <i>The Marx Reader</i> , pp.458-488		
Transition: Film (Charlie Chaplin, Modern Times)					
7	21	Film+Analysis	Chaplin, <i>Modern Times</i>		Assignment will be passed out in class (due Sep 26) (counts towards your participation points)
Segment II: Classical Analysis of Capitalism: Weber					
8	26	Capitalism and Rationality	Weber, <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i> , Introduction; pp. 1-39	Weber	
9	28	Work Ethic	Weber, <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i> , Introduction; pp. 1-51	Usury and religion	
10	Oct 3	Calvinism	Weber, <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i> ; pp. 53-102	Check Wikipedia entries on Calvinists; Mennonites; Quakers; Pietism; Puritans	
11	5	Asceticism	Weber, <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i> , pp. 102-126		
12	10	Exam 1 (Marx/Weber)	Exam 1 (Marx/Weber)		Exam 1 (Marx/Weber)

Segment III: The Consequences of Contemporary Capitalism I: Living

13	12	Individuality	Bauman, Liquid Modernity, foreword, pp. 1-16, chapter 2, pp. 53-91	Bauman	
14	17	Time/Space	Bauman, Liquid Modernity, chapter 3, pp. 91-130		
15	19	no class	no class		discussion sessions meet as scheduled
16	24	no class	no class		discussion sessions meet as scheduled
17	26	Work	Bauman, Liquid Modernity, chapter 4, pp. 130-168		

Segment IV: The Consequences of Contemporary Capitalism II: New Economy

18	31	Bureaucracy	Sennett, The Culture of the New Capitalism, pp. 15-83	Sennett ; Read review	
19	Nov 2	Uselessness	Sennett, The Culture of the New Capitalism, pp. 84-131		
20	7	Social Capitalism	Sennett, The Culture of the New Capitalism, pp.131-199		
21	9	Exam 2 (Sennett/Baumann)	Exam 2 (Sennett/Baumann)		Exam 2 (Sennett/Baumann)

Segment V: The Consequences of Contemporary Capitalism IV: Culture Industry

22	14	Entertainment Industry	Adorno, The Culture Industry, pp.61-98	Adorno ; Stanford Encyclopedia Entry on Adorno	
23 NEW	16	Film	Chomsky, Manufacturing Consent	Chomsky	Response Paper Topic 1 (Chomsky) will be passed out in class (due Nov 28)
24	21	no class	no class		
26	23	no class	no class		
25 NEW	28	Entertainment Industry	Adorno, The Culture Industry, pp.61-98		

Intermezzo II: Film (Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice)

27	30	Film	Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice		Response Paper Topic 2 (Shakespeare) will be passed out in class (due Dec 5)
28	Dec 5	Film	Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice		
29	7	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up

Class Meetings:

Days: TTH
 Time: 3:00pm-4:20pm
 Place: 008 Holden Hall

Office:

Phone: 517.353.9721
 Place: 507 S. Kedzie Hall
 Hours: TTH (1:00-2:00pm), by appointment and by phone

Exceptions:

Other Contact:

E-mail: lotz@msu.edu
 Home Phone: 517.337.8524

Webpage

URL: <http://www.msu.edu/~lotz/classes>
 (Please check the webpage *regularly* for the current schedule)

Box

You will find my box in the front office of the philosophy department (and in front of my office)

Teaching Assistant 1: Douglas Ponticos

Office:

Phone: 517.353.9380

Place: 528 South Kedzie Hall

Hours: Tuesday 1:00-2:00pm; Wednesday 10:00-11:00am

Other Contact:

E-mail: ponticos@msu.edu

Teaching Assistant 2: Matthew Johnson

Office:

Phone: 517.353.9380

Place: 528 South Kedzie Hall

Hours: TW (1:00-2:00p) and by appointment

Other Contact:

E-mail: john2603@msu.edu

Course Description:

In this class, we will critically explore our social environment by investigating the nature of capitalistic culture, as it has evolved in modernity. As we will not focus specifically on economic questions, we will instead ask how capitalism determines our attitudes, our way of life, our beliefs, the working environment, our psychological health, art, and our concept of freedom. We will read texts from classical philosophy/economics (Marx) and from classical sociology (Weber), as well as two contemporary authors (Sennett, Bauman). In addition, we will study the course topic by reading Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice," and, finally, we will analyze two movies (Chaplin, Shakespeare). Students who are not willing to study complex texts intensively, which requires spending a good deal of time with these texts outside of the classroom, are advised not to take this class.

IAH Course Goals

Integrative Studies at MSU seeks to assist students to become more familiar with ways of knowing in the arts and humanities and to be more knowledgeable and capable in a range of intellectual and expressive abilities. IAH courses encourage students to engage critically with their own society, history, and culture(s); they also encourage students to learn more about the history and culture of other societies. They focus on key ideas and issues in human experience; encourage appreciation of the roles of knowledge and values in shaping and understanding human behavior; emphasize the responsibilities and opportunities of democratic citizenship; highlight the value of the creative arts of literature, theater, music, and arts; and alert us to important issues that occur among peoples in an increasingly interconnected, interdependent world.

Note

Real learning is not properly measured by multiple-choice tests; especially since in the humanities there is no specific content of a sort that may be covered well in standardized examinations, which every student in the humanities should be expected to master. Instead, you will - hopefully - come to recognize that philosophy as a general intellectual reflection on what we are and why we are here, deals with your dignity as human beings and with your intellect and reason, which is best expressed in a form of learning that is based on understanding and insight, and not mere learning by heart. It is hoped that the class will stimulate the view that intellectual activity (and therefore human reality) has to do with the *passion* of thinking, and the passion of *understanding* of our world.

Specific Course Goals

This lecture class should students introduce to

- analysis of society and our social environment
- two classical approaches to the analysis of modern capitalism: Marx and Weber
- contemporary developments regarding modernity, labor, poverty, and consumption
- the analysis of capitalistic culture in the arts, such as painting, theater, and literature (in this class we will read Shakespeare)
- the idea that we cannot *simply* pose capitalism as a moral problem; rather, we first have to understand *what it is*

Required Texts

We will read important portions of the following texts, which you must purchase in the bookstore:

- Marx, Karl, The Karl-Marx Reader
- Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism
- Bauman, Liquid Modernity
- Sennett, Richard, The Culture of the New Capitalism
- Adorno, The Culture Industry
- Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice

Additional Texts for Discussion Sections

Logos articles on capitalism: [one](#), [two](#), [three](#), [four](#)

Course Organization

The course will be organized such that, ideally, each class period will include [i] "interactive" lecture, [ii] discussion time or [iii] response time. Students will be asked to intensively prepare a certain text or part of a text for the next class period.

Course Requirements

- Daily reading and studying (around 15 pages)
- 5 response sheets
- 2 exams
- 2 response papers
- assignments and active participation (discussion section)

Film Analysis

Check out the following site: <http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/>

Note

The class and my lectures are solely based on the texts selected for class and require a thorough study and preparation of the material. I will primarily lecture on the readings, which will help you to more fully understand the texts. *Therefore* it is not sufficient for students to come to class without having prepared the texts. And indeed, in your papers and in the exam you have to demonstrate whether you have appropriately prepared the readings selected for each lecture.

Make-Up Exam

Students who need to miss the exam for *excusable* reasons must inform me ahead of time, and will be permitted to make up the exam. I will only accept official doctor notes (no faxes, no emails) or letters from other professors.

Class Attendance

I hope and strongly encourage that students attend all lectures. However, I will not require attendance, as I think that college students should manage their own class attendance decisions. Nevertheless, please be aware that you should not make *me* responsible for a failure that results out of *your* decision. You should be aware that chances to master this class are minimal, if you do not show up for class or if you do not prepare the readings (=studying).

Response Sheets

Every student is asked to submit "reponse sheets" after my lectures. Every student can submit up to 5 reponse sheets over the course of the semester.

[Click here to download the response sheet](#) (Word document)

Note: I will only accept responses that are given on this form.

Response Time

Selected response sheets will be addressed at the beginning of each class. The rest of the response sheets will be handed over to the TA, who will use them to address selected questions in his/her sections. This procedure will help you to clarify problems, reflect on topics, and to find answers to questions that came up during the lecture.

Response Sessions

In addition, selected classes will be held as "response sessions." During those classes you will be able to formulate questions in class, though, as you will see, my lectures are always very "interactive."

Response Paper Assignments

There will be 2 paper assignments (2 pages, 600 words, 12pt Times New Roman, 1 inch margin). The paper assignment should lead you to a reflection and consideration of what we have discovered on the theoretical level about capitalistic culture. I expect well constructed essays that begin with an introduction, present a main claim and are *explanatory*. Mere summaries or simple "reflection" and "I feel 'X'" papers will not be satisfactory. I will pass out in class on selected dates (see schedule) questions, the written answer to which you will turn in the *class after the assignment was passed out* (email submissions are *not* acceptable). Late turn ins will result in loosing 20% of your grade. It is your responsibility to get a copy of the assignment from a study buddy in class if you missed class.

Exams

There will be two brief in-class essay exams. You will be offered a set of essay-questions, one of which you will answer in a brief essay about the material that I discussed in my lectures. Note that mere memorization of what I lectured about will not be a satisfactory preparation of the exam; rather, you should demonstrate that you thought about and *understand* the material. You will not be able to answer the exam question(s) if you did not study the texts. ~~Every question on the exam will be a pass/fail question~~ [changed 10/2/2006].

[Click here to download the review sheet for exam 1](#) (pdf)

[Click here to download the review sheet for exam 2](#) (pdf)

Participation

You will receive points for participation and (group work) assignments in your discussion section (see below).

Course Evaluation

You will be evaluated on the basis of:

Lecture:

5 response sheets (to be submitted during the course of the semester)	10 points
2 exams	20/20 points
2 response papers	15/15 points
assignments and participation in discussion section	20 points

	100 points

Grading:

4.0	100 - 93
3.5	92 - 87
3	86 - 82
2.5	81 - 77
2	76 - 72
1.5	71 - 65
1.0	64 - 60
0.0	< 60

GENERIC SYLLABUS (might not be applicable to each class)

Class Attendance

As mentioned above, I do not employ in my classes a class attendance policy. Having said this, you should be aware that class attendance is very important. When engaging in a philosophical and humanistic dialogue it is necessary to be an active and present participant in the ongoing discussion. If you miss class please do not email me asking if you missed anything important. Every class is important. You should get a study buddy for the class; a student in class who will inform you of what you missed. If you miss a class you can come to my office hours or make an appointment to discuss the material, providing you have read the material and you simply want to see if your understanding of the material is on target. Time in office hours will not be used to repeat the class lectures.

Grading Criteria

- [Click here to see my grading criteria for oral presentations \(not required in this class\)](#)
- [Click here to see my grading criteria for papers \(tentative\)](#)
- [Click here to see an EXAMPLE of my grading criteria for essay exams \(taken from an older class\)](#)

Helpful information about oral presentations, paper writing and plagiarism

- [Click here to find help on your presentations and your writing](#)

Online Research Sources

Unfortunately, some people think that the internet as such is a reliable source of information. If you decide to use online sources for additional information or your paper then do not just use one of the common internet search engines, such as Google; rather, use **reliable academic** sources, such as *Britannica Online*, or the [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#). The [Internet Eyclopedia of Philosophy](#) isn't very good, but still acceptable. Check out MSU's [library resources](#)! And, as with other sources, you must cite any online sources to which you refer in your essay.

Writing Center Information

MSU's writing center offers excellent help on all matters regarding writing and learning. Check the website

at <http://writing.msu.edu> for an overview and hours. For more information, please call 517.432.3610 or send an e-mail to writing@msu.edu.

Plagiarism

In any essay or exam answer submitted for assessment, all passages taken from other people's work must be placed within quotation marks, with specific reference to author, title and page. *no excuse* can be accepted for any failure to do so, nor will inclusion of the source in a bibliography be considered inadequate acknowledgement. If the marker decides that plagiarism has occurred, the student may be judged to have failed the class.

Academic Honesty

Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the (insert name of unit offering course) adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide and/or the MSU Web site: www.msu.edu) Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com Web site to complete any course work in (insert course number here). Students who violate MSU rules may receive a penalty grade, including but not limited to a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also <http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html>)

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor, call 353-9642 (voice) or 355-1293 (TTY)

Drops and Adds

The last day to add this course is the end of the first week of classes. The last day to drop this course with a 100 percent refund and no grade reported is (see Academic Calendar). The last day to drop this course with no refund and no grade reported is (see Academic Calendar). You should immediately make a copy of your amended schedule to verify you have added or dropped this course.

Note on Attendance

Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course.

[Back to classes](#)