



Integrative Studies 231A, Human Values, The Arts, and Humanities

Topic: The Culture of Capitalism

Spring Semester 2009,
Michigan State University

Dr. Christian Lotz

Tentative Schedule (last **UPDATE**: February 08, 2010)

Number	Date	Topic	Reading	Information	Oral Present.	General Assignments
1	Jan 13	Introduction				
2	Jan 15	Exploitation, Global Capitalism, Poverty	Robbins, Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism, pp.1-10 and pp38-57 (pdf per email)	Capitalism		
Classical Position I: Marx						
3	Jan 20	The Importance of Labor	Marx, The Marx Reader, pp.171-174; 85-95 (Theses on Feuerbach; Alienated Labor)	Marx		
4	Jan 22	Alienation and the Individual	Marx, The Marx Reader, pp.171-174; 85-95 (Theses on Feuerbach; Alienated Labor)			
5	Jan 27	The Role of Private Property	Marx, The Marx Reader, pp.95-104 (Private Property and Communism)			
6	Jan 29	Social Relationships in Capitalism	Marx, The Marx Reader, pp.124-134 (On James Mill)			
7	Feb 3	Private Property, Environmentalism and the Communal Good	Marx, The Marx Reader, pp.175-198 (The German Ideology: Preface-Communist Revolution)			
8	Feb 5	The Role of the Family	Marx, The Marx Reader, pp.175-198 (The German Ideology: Preface-Communist Revolution)			
9	Feb 10	Example: Capitalism and Sports	Cudd, Capitalism and Sports (pdf per email)			
Classical Position II: Weber						
10	Feb 12	Introduction to Weber	Weber, The Protestant Ethic, pp.1-51	Weber		
11	Feb 17	Critique of Marx, Role of Ethics	Weber, The Protestant Ethic, pp.1-51			
12	Feb 19	Asceticism and Human Life: Suppression of Enjoyment, Daily Work Life	Weber, The Protestant Ethic, pp.51-103			
13	Feb 24	Catholicism versus Luther and Calvin	Weber, The Protestant Ethic, pp.51-103			
14	Feb 26	Asceticism: Modern Life and	Weber, The Protestant Ethic, pp.103-			

		Protestant Ethics	126		
15	Mar 3	Asceticism: Modern Life and Protestant Ethics	Weber, The Protestant Ethic, pp.103-126		
16	Mar 5	In-class exam (Marx/Weber)	In-class exam (Marx/Weber)	In-class exam (Marx/Weber)	In-class exam (Marx/Weber)
17	Mar 10	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break
18	Mar 12	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break
Arthur Miller: Death of a Salesman					
19	Mar 17	Introduction to Miller	Miller, Death of a Salesman	Miller	
20	Mar 19	Miller and Marxism	Miller, Death of a Salesman, additional texts TBA		
21	Mar 24	Miller and Weberianism	Miller, Death of a Salesman, additional material passed out in class		
22	Mar 26	Social Relationships and Economic Relationships	Miller, Death of a Salesman		Assignment for Response Paper I will be passed out in class
Modern Position I: Milton Friedman					
23	Mar 31	Economics and Politics	Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom, chapter 1-2	Friedman	Response Paper I due in my box
24	Apr 2	On Friedman	Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom, chapter 6-9	Chicago school of economics	
25	Apr 7	The Role of Government	Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom, chapter 6-9		
26	Apr 9	Whose Freedom? Which Justice?	Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom, chapter 10-13		
Modern Position II: Naomi Klein					
27	Apr 14	Critique of Friedman	Klein, The Shock Doctrine, Introduction + part 1, chapter 2, pp.3-27; 59-88	Klein	
28	Apr 16	class cancelled	class cancelled		
29	Apr 21	Critique of Corporatism	Klein, The Shock Doctrine, part 5, pp.355-408		
Responses?					
30	Apr 23	What can we do?	Film, The Edukators	RAF and resistance	
31	Apr 28	Resistance to Capitalism	Film, The Edukators		
32	Apr 30	Open Discussion	Film, The Edukators		Assignment for Response Paper II will be passed out in class
	May 4				Response Paper II due in my box

Class Meetings:

Days: TTH
 Time: 10:20am-11:40am
 Place: B102 Wells Hall

Office:

Phone: 517.353.9392
 Place: 503 S. Kedzie Hall
 Hours: T (1:00-2:00pm), TH (1-1:30pm), by appointment and by phone

Exceptions:

Other Contact:

E-mail: lotz@msu.edu
 Home Phone: please ask in class

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: Matthew Johnson

Office:

Phone: TBA

Place: 528 South Kedzie Hall

Hours: TH (12:30-2:30pm)

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 we will not exclusively focus specifically on economic questions, we will instead ask how capitalism determines our attitudes, our way of life, and our beliefs. We will ask ourselves how Capitalism determines our social relationships and how it shapes our character. We will read texts from classical philosophy (Marx) and sociology (Weber), from economy (Friedman), as well as contemporary authors (Klein). In addition, we will study the course topic by discussing Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman* and the film *The Edukators*.

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 this class is about a general intellectual reflection on what we are and why we are here. The class 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. Intense confrontation with texts is the center of this class.

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
- two modern approaches to the analysis of modern capitalism: Friedman and Naomi Klein
- a critical position regarding modernity, labor, poverty, and consumption
- the analysis of capitalistic culture in theater (Miller)
- the idea that capitalism is a form of *social relationships* (love, recognition, family, etc)
- the idea that we cannot simply pose capitalism as an economic problem; rather, we first have to understand how capitalism is a way of life and how it shapes our attitudes towards life
- how to discuss classical positions in the contemporary economical situation

Required Texts (Bookstore)

- Marx, Karl, *The Karl-Marx Reader* (ed. by McLellan)
- Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*
- Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*
- Klein, *The Shock Doctrine. The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*
- Miller, *Death of a Salesman* (Norton Critical Edition)

Additional Resources

- Hobsbawm, E. 2008, Interview on Today, BBC Radio 4, British Broadcasting Service, 18 October [Online] Available: http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_7677000/7677683.stm [2008, Oct 29].

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 5-10 pages)
- 5 response sheets
- 1 exam
- 2 response papers
- Assignments and active participation (please note that a large portion of your grade depends upon your performance in the discussion sections)

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.

Reading assignments and preparation for lecture/discussion sections

The reading assignment per session is limited; however, this means that I expect you to come to class having prepared the texts carefully and thoroughly and that you are able to talk meaningfully about the text, raise questions of your own and provide answers when called upon. I will take the liberty to call on students randomly. An approximate preparation time for each class is a minimum of two hours. The reading for the next session, if not clear from the course schedule (below), will be announced at the end of the previous class. "Preparing for class" implies underlining and making excerpts from the text assigned; looking up unfamiliar vocabulary and writing them into a note book (I encourage you to keep a vocabulary booklet for all of your classes). Just reading the text won't be sufficient. You have to *study* the material. If you do not have a dictionary, get yourself one. Some vocabulary might not be sufficiently explained in a regular dictionary (this goes especially for philosophical terms), so it is necessary to consult additional sources (e.g., the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* — online — is an excellent source of information, and the MSU Library Website is a great resource for nearly all questions in this context).

Make-Up Assignments

Students who need to miss the exam or the movie for *excusable* reasons must inform me ahead of time, and will be permitted to make up the exam and movie assignment. 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 "response sheets" after my lectures. Every student can submit up to 5 response 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 Paper Assignments

There will be 2 paper assignments (2-3 pages, 600-900 words, 12pt Times New Roman, 1 inch margin). The paper assignment should lead you to a reflection and consideration of the media content in class. 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 losing 20%-40% of your grade. It is your responsibility to get a copy of the assignment from a study buddy in class if you missed class. I will *not* send you the assignment per email if you missed class.

Movie

We will be watching a version of Miller's *Death of Salesman* in class, and, in addition, we will discuss other material in the form of movies and documentaries. If you miss one of those classes for inexcusable reasons (=medical, with documentation), then it is your responsibility to make up the material on your own.

Exams

There will be one brief in-class essay exam. 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.

Participation

You will receive points for participation and 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)	20 points
1 in-class exam (on Marx/Weber)	30 points
2 response papers (no more than 900 words)	10/10 points

Discussion section:

Assignments and participation in discussion section	30 points

	100 points

Attendance

To get a good grade in this class, regular attendance is required. I will not call roll. Hence, it is up to you to come to class or not. However, if you do not come to class on a regular basis and participate in the class discussion, it is impossible for you to achieve a good grade in this class; so coming to class is your responsibility and your call. If you choose to attend class, please come on time, turn off cell phones and other electronic devices that interfere with your (and others') concentration, have the reading prepared

and be ready to participate. If you are not prepared, do not bother showing up. It is a sign of disrespect to your peers and the instructor to attend class unprepared. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain class notes from a fellow student and to catch up on reading.

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

[check this page](#)

Helpful information about oral presentations, paper writing and plagiarism

[Check this page](#)

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 Encyclopedia 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](#)