



Phil 850: Graduate Seminar

Marx, Capital

Summer 2012
Michigan State University

Prof. Christian Lotz

Tentative Schedule (last **UPDATE**: May 23, 2012)

NUMBER	DATE	TOPIC	REQUIRED READING	ADDITIONAL MATERIAL (voluntary)	PROTOCOL	BRIEF PRESENTATION	CONCEPT PAPER
Introduction							
1	May 15	How to read Marx?	All post- and prefaces to all four editions of Capital	Heinrich, Development of Capital			
2	May 17	Capitalism as a Social Form; What is the <i>Gegenstand</i> of Capital? What is <i>Capital</i> about?	Marx, Grundrisse, Introduction (copy per pdf)	Balibar/Althusser, Reading Capital, chapter 8	Tom		Category/Kant (Monica)
3	May 22	Capitalism as a Social Form; What is the <i>Gegenstand</i> of Capital? What is <i>Capital</i> about?	Marx, Grundrisse, Introduction (copy per pdf)				Category/Hegel (Dan) Form/matter (Andrea)
Conceptual Basis: Commodities, Money, Capital							
4	May 24	Commodity and Value	Marx, Capital, chapter 1, section 1-3;	The Myth of Simple Commodity Production (Arthur) Marx, Notes on Wagner , remarks on commodity and value Marx, Critique of Political Economy (1859), pp.1-8;	Andrea		Force/Thing/Hegel (Tom)
5	May 29	Fetishism and Exchange	Marx, Capital, chapter 1, section 4, chapter 2	Zizek, The Unconscious of the Commodity Form ; Toscano, Real Abstraction Revisited ; Toscano, The Open Secret of Real Abstraction	Andrew		Real abstraction/Sohn-Rethel (Craig) Fetishism/Zizek (Nick)

6	May 31	Money	Marx, Capital, chapter 3	Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, <u>section on money</u> ; Marx, <u>Comments on Mill</u> , remarks on money	Monica	Tom	Money/Marx 1844 (Becky)
7	Jun 5	Capital, Labor Power	Marx, Capital, chapter 4+5+6	Fineschi, <u>The four levels of abstraction of Marx's concept of "capital"</u>	Nick		Subject/Hegel (Samantha) Dialectics/Hegel (Andrew)
8	Jun 7	Labor and Valorisation	Marx, Capital, chapter 7+8	Marx, Capital, chapter 10/1+2+7	Dan	Andrew	

Historical Unfolding: Valorization, Technology, Accumulation

9	Jun 12	Cooperation and Labor Division	Marx, Capital, chapter 13+14	EP Thompson, Time, Work Discipline and Industrial Capitalism; Foucault, chapter on prison control in DP	Craig	Andrea + Dan	
10	Jun 14	Technology I	Marx, Capital, chapter 15/1-5	Harvey, Companion, chapter 7	Becky	Samantha	
11	Jun 19	Technology II	Marx, Grundrisse, machine fragment, pp. 690-711	Virno, <u>General Intellect</u> Wendling, <u>The Strife between Technology and Capital: Machines in the Communist Future</u>		Monica	
12	Jun 21	Accumulation	Marx, Capital, chapter 25		Samantha	Craig	
13	Jun 26	Primitive Accumulation	Marx, Capital, chapter 26-32	Sassen, <u>Contemporary Versions of Primitive Accumulation</u>		Nick	
14	Jun 28	Where to go from here?	Deleuze, TBA Althusser, TBA Harvey, TBA Haug, <u>Marx within Feminism</u>	Deleuze, Postscript on Control Societies		Becky	

Paper

Aug 10

TBA

Paper due
Appointments for discussions of your papers (voluntary)

Class Meetings:

Days: T+TH
Time: 6 PM - 9 PM
Place: 530 South Kedzie Hall

Office:

Phone: 517.355.4490 [dept.]
Place: 509 South Kedzie Hall
Hours: TBA

Other Contact:

E-mail: lotz@msu.edu
Home Phone: please ask
Webpage: <http://christianlotz.wordpress.com>

Box

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

Teaching Assistant: no teaching assistants

Course Description [[Flyer](#)]

Hence, our motto must be: reform of consciousness not through dogmas, but by analyzing the mystical consciousness that is unintelligible to itself, whether it manifests itself in a religious or a political form. It will then become evident that the world has long dreamed of possessing something of which it has only to be conscious in order to possess it in reality. (Marx to Ruge, 1843)

The recent devastating cultural, social, ecological, and economic developments that led to the global triumph of capital and neoliberalism resemble in many ways the conditions of the 19th Century (land grabbing, precariat, asocial upper classes, unimaginable synthesis of wealth and power). A rigorous study of Marx is, accordingly, still necessary in order to understand theoretically capitalist social reproduction and the forces we find ourselves surrounded by. In this graduate seminar we will "bracket" worldview Marxism(s) and, instead, closely study Marx's later social theory of capitalism from a fresh perspective. In fact, Capital is often mentioned, but rarely studied. Moreover, the reception of Marx's later work has been distorted by Engels and classical Marxism. Finally, the new critical edition (MEGA) shows that the text of Capital was part of an ongoing project and was not supposed to lead to a *universal* theory of economic value. We will start by reading selections from Marx's Grundrisse that fundamentally outline Marx's project, after which we will move on to reading central sections of the Grundrisse and Capital with an eye to philosophical issues and his social theory. In addition, we will briefly look at selected issues that are of importance for contemporary discussions, such as commodity exchange, money, technology, capitalist accumulation, real abstraction, and the transition from money to capital. Reading and studying the primary texts is the focus of this summer seminar. The seminar is also open to graduate students from other fields and programs.



Course Goals

Given the complexity of Marx's work and the brevity of this summer session, it is impossible to discuss all aspects of Marx's Capital. It is hoped for that we will get a clearer picture of Marx's social theory, as well as of some aspects important for the contemporary discussion of Marx in philosophy. We will be less concerned with the empirical application of Marx's economics and contemporary economic theory.

Required Texts

- Marx, Capital I (Penguin)

Recommended Texts

- Marx, Grundrisse (I will send around a pdf of the introduction)
- Harvey, A Companion to Marx's Capital
- Balibar/Althusser, Reading Capital
- Heinrich, Introduction to the three volumes of Capital

Links

- Marxist Internet Archive: www.marxists.org
- Capital in lithographs I: <http://www.graphicwitness.org/contemp/marxtitle.htm>
- David Harvey, [Lectures on Capital I+II](#)
- Brendan MacConey, [Capitalism 101](#)
- Marx, [Myth and Legends](#)

FYI

A few important meetings:

<http://www.marxismfestival.org.uk/>

<http://marxismuss2012.wordpress.com/>

<http://www.historicalmaterialism.org/conferences/8annual>

<http://www.leftforum.org/>

Hans G. Ehrbar's annotations:

<http://www.econ.utah.edu/~ehrbar/akmc.htm>

A few good papers can be found here:

<http://marxandphilosophy.org.uk/society/events>

Important English journals:

<http://www.historicalmaterialism.org/>

<http://www.rethinkingmarxism.org/>

<http://cnc.sagepub.com/>

There is also:

South Atlantic Quarterly

New Left Review

Socialist Register

Audio recordings from the 2010 NYC conference on Historical Materialism:
<http://www.hm2010nyc.org/audio-recordings/>

David Harvey recently in NYC:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbd3zdOCUIE&feature=g-vrec>

David Harvey on method in Marx
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90yDWg6z0Gk>

Michael Hardt on subjectivity and crisis (recently at the subversive film forum in Zagreb):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66_W9h5dqy4

Documentary, Capitalism
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYFw3O--2R0>

Course Requirements

- 1 presentation write-up/outline/main point (up to 600 words)
- 1 concept paper (450-600 words)
- 1 protocol (600-900 words)
- 1 research paper, conference style (around 3600 words)

Protocol (German tradition)

The class protocol should cover our discussion in class. Protocols should have a length of 2-3 pages (around 600-900 words), and they will in and outside of the classroom force us to have an ongoing reflection on our texts that we study for class. They can also include problems or questions that the writers had either with our class discussion or with the texts itself, but above all protocols should cover what I lectured about in class and what we discussed afterwards. Protocols should clarify and discuss selected issues in question. Protocols have to be sent out to other students two days before class. I'll radically mark down late turn ins. The student who wrote the protocol will address questions during the first 15 minutes of the next class meeting, and he/she will lead the class discussion.

Presentation

Each student will be responsible for one class and for working out an introductory presentation, which should function as a platform for our discussions. Please focus on one or two aspects of the reading; desired length of presentations: no longer than 20 minutes. Each presenter must distribute copies of his/her write-up two days before class (no more than 600 words). You should not read your write up in class; rather, talk through it.

Concept paper

Each student will be responsible for researching the broader philosophical context for concepts that Marx uses, such as category, substance, subject, etc.. Each presenter should distribute copies of his/her write-up two days before class (no more than 600 words) and briefly talk about the concept in class (5 minutes). This paper should be read in class.

General Remark

Given that this is a graduate seminar, I expect self-motivation, autonomy, as well as self-responsibility. The attendance requires the willingness to intensively study the text selected for class.

Research Paper

The class essay should be well researched and should present a substantial reflection on some parts of the material discussed in class. I expect excellent papers in regard to research, form, and content. I will fail papers that do not comply with formal standards (footnotes, literature, etc.). The research paper should be accompanied by an abstract of no more than 150 words.

Paper Comments

After you have turned in your paper you can setup a meeting with me per Skype for comments (I will give you the date at the end of the semester). I will not provide you with extensive written comments on your papers, though I will send some electronically.

DFs

I will refuse giving DFs in this class, unless you find yourself in a real emergency situation (hospitalization, etc.). You have much more time to write your papers than in non-summer classes. So, do not miss the opportunity to produce a substantial paper.

Course Evaluation

You will be evaluated on the basis of:

1 concept paper (450-600 words)	10 points
1 presentation (write-up: 600 words)	20 points
1 protocol (600-900 words)	pass/fail - 10 points
1 research paper, up to 4000 words, conference paper style	60 points

	100 points

Grading:

4.0 (=A)	100 - 93
3.5	92 - 87
3 (=B)	86 - 82
2.5	81 - 77
2 (=C)	76 - 72
1.5	71 - 65
1.0 (=D)	64 - 60
0.0	< 60

GENERIC SYLLABUS (might not be applicable to each class)

Laptop/Cell Phone Policy (only for undergraduate classes)

You are not permitted to use laptops and cell phones in class. Please do not text under the table. Cell phones should be removed from tables. Failure to follow this policy will lead to unannounced assignments in class or loss of points (at the digression of the instructor).

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 out [this page for grading criteria, example of assignments, etc.](#)

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.

Integrity of Scholarship and Grades (Plagiarism)

The following statement of University policy addresses principles and procedures to be used in instances of academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards, and falsification of academic or admission records, herein after referred to as academic misconduct. [See General Student Regulation 1.00, Protection of Scholarship and Grades.]: [download document](#) (pdf)

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. 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](#)