University of Victoria
Department of Political Science
POLI 306
Introduction to Marxism

Lecture Times: T, Th 4:30-5:50 pm
Location: COR B111

Instructor: James (Jamie) Lawson, PhD
Office: DTB (David Turpin Bldg.) A-346
Office Hours: MTTh 3:00-4:00 pm
Office Telephone: 250-721-7496
Email: lawsonj@uvic.ca (Please put “POLI 306” at start of subject heading)

Introduction
An overview of historical dialectical materialism or the “philosophy of praxis”\(^1\). The course focusses on the origins of this revolutionary tradition in the work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, most notably in Marx’s *Capital*. It also examines some traditions and debates that grew up in their wake, primarily in various Western and some Global-South schools of thought. At the centre throughout are key concepts and ideas of historical dialectical materialism, its critique of political economy, its political theory, and its philosophy.

Required Readings
I have labelled required readings clearly in the reading list that forms the latter portion of the course syllabus. (Other “supplementary” readings are there for your interest or for starting final papers. They are not on the exam, and you are not responsible for reading them.) The required readings are available free online, accessible electronically through the university library collection or links posted on the CourseSpaces site, and/or uploaded on the library’s electronic course reserves.

Please note that some electronic access through the Library’s electronic collection is difficult if you are attempting to gain access to them off-campus. Please make advance measures to ensure you have the readings you need for the week they are assigned.

The course is designed to build on some sections that we all read, but then branches out into a number of sections where separate groups within the class will each read more specialized readings and present the core points to the class. For the purposes of the exam, you are responsible only for your specialized group each week: exam questions will be drawn up to accommodate a wide range of reading choices.

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\(^1\) A favoured phrase of Antonio Gramsci’s, the Italian Communist Party leader and theorist of the 1920s and 1930s.
Assignments – Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight (%)</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
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</table>
| Take-Home Mid-Term          | 15%        | Issued Friday, February 7  
                           |            | Due Friday, February 14 (end of day midnight) |
| Paper Proposal              | 15%        | Friday, February 28 (end of day midnight) |
| Final Paper*                | 30%        | Friday, March 27 (end of day midnight) |
| Final Exam                  | 25%        | Scheduled during regular exam period (TBA) |
| Attendance and Participation| 15%        | Throughout |

*Regardless of the date you submit your proposal and how large the late penalties are, a paper proposal must be submitted by at least March 15 for a final paper to be accepted. Exceptions may be made in cases of documented illness, bereavement, or similar disruption (see below).

Assignments – Detailed Breakdown

(Page lengths assume a Times New Roman font, 12-point size, and standard margins similar to those in this syllabus.)

Attendance and participation: I circulate an attendance sheet regularly. This forms 10% of the total course grade.

Quality of participation depends on general preparation and engagement, in particular with respect to work on reading clusters. This forms 5% of the total course grade.

Persistently substandard performances in participation and classroom engagement impair the participation mark. I recognize different modes of participation and engagement. For example, one person may talk more than another, but the two may both demonstrate that they are committed to the class.

Mid-Term (take-home): This test covers all required readings and lectures up to the week of the test. It will emphasize core concepts, scholarly positions, and arguments. I will outline the format well in advance. You will download the question paper from the CourseSpaces site, and upload your answers to the same location.

Paper Proposal (4 pages maximum, including bibliography but excluding any cover page): This explores your final paper topic, builds a proposed line of argument on a tentative thesis statement, and reports on your progress. You should engage with concepts and debates from the Marxist canon for this proposal and in the final paper. You can, of course, discuss other approaches, and you should certainly approach central issues critically. But Marxism and debates in and about Marxism should be at the centre of the work. Read the detailed requirements for final papers carefully before researching your topic. (These requirements will be distributed and discussed in class, and will be posted on the CourseSpaces site.)

Upload the proposal in one electronic document (rtf, pdf, or MS-Word readable formats only, please; I cannot work with “.pages”). It has 3 distinct sections: 1) a preliminary summary of the
final paper topic, key research questions, and key themes (1 page maximum, or about 250 words, **double**-spaced); 2) a report on your progress, including key successes and problems encountered (1 page maximum, or about 250 words, **double**-spaced); and 3) a bibliography.

The bibliography consists of a) two annotated items that will be particularly influential for your final paper and b) at least four other works, properly formatted but not annotated, that will also be helpful. “Annotation” means you provide a paragraph of your own writing on the work, outlining its chief topics and central arguments, and some critical assessment of what the work will contribute to your paper. The two you annotate may be two peer-reviewed scholarly works (books, journal articles, or book chapters), or at most one peer-reviewed scholarly work and one high quality non-scholarly analysis of similar length (total bibliography: 1 page for the annotated items, **double**-spaced; other items on a second page).

The bibliography should emphasize scholarly (peer-reviewed) works and original key Marxist texts. It may also contain quality non-scholarly works. Avoid short, non-analytical news reports or opinion blogs, general reference works, introductory textbooks on politics, or similar overviews of a whole field. The works included should substantively aid your paper-writing in some understandable way, and therefore should not include everything that you managed to turn up.

Final Paper (approximately 3000 words of text – that is, between about 2750 and 3500 -- **double**-spaced, plus title page and bibliography): This research paper should a) explore (in an analytical manner) a concrete historical or contemporary problem that is related to themes or theories presented in the course, and/or b) address a theoretical problem in the Marxist literature. A list of possible topics will be provided early in the term for those who feel uncertain about their own choices.

**NOTE:** The paper proposal due date is near the end of February. I will not mark the final paper if I do not have a proposal for it by mid-March. The same applies if documentation for the submitted draft of the paper (footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical quotations, plus an appropriate bibliography) is grossly unprofessional in deployment or in style, or is grossly insufficient.

Final Exam (three hours): This exam covers all required readings and lectures from the whole course. The exam will emphasize core concepts, scholarly positions, and arguments. The format and time for the exam will be outlined in advance.

**Style and Submission of Written Assignments**

**Presentation:** Type or use a word processing programme. Edit the final copies of the review articles and final paper before submission. Clear, accurate vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, style, and spelling are important in scholarship: serious deficiencies in these mechanical matters can lower your grade in this course. If you become aware of a weakness in these areas, the Library’s Centre for Academic Communication (“Writing Centre”) can help you identify and correct them. They will not edit your paper for you, but they can train you to write better. An excellent basic guide for editing for clear prose is the style section in Strunk and White’s *Elements of Style* (multiple editions available in print and on line). Another handy reference is William E. Messenger et al., *The Concise Canadian Writer’s Handbook*, 3rd edition, available

**Documentation:** Footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical (in-text) citation are all acceptable forms of documentation. You should use consistently one generally recognized style in the humanities and social sciences for the proposal and the final paper. Regardless of the style you choose, citations must include specific page references, except in citing the accomplishments of the work as a whole. A comprehensive footnoting guide (based on the Chicago style) is at the University of Victoria Department of History website: [http://www.uvic.ca/humanities/history/assets/docs/styleguide.pdf](http://www.uvic.ca/humanities/history/assets/docs/styleguide.pdf). Messenger et al. (see “Presentation”, above) also summarizes a few key formats.

**How to Submit Your Work:** Upload written work directly to the CourseSpaces link for the specific assignment. Submit in either Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx), or MWord-readable formats such as .odt or .rtf (Rich Text Format). In particular, I cannot work with “.pages”. For editing reasons, I do not accept papers in “.pdf” or alternative formats if I cannot open and edit them with Microsoft Word or Adobe software, using the comment functions of those programmes, in a way you can then read.

Under exceptional circumstances, late papers may also be submitted in electronic form (attachment in the formats described above) to my email address. **Do not slip an assignment under my office door or under the door of the department office.** Also, please do not use the assignment drop box marked “Lawson” by the department office: because I handle papers electronically, it is rarely used, and your paper copy might come to me late.

**Backup Copies Required:** Students must always retain at least one paper copy or one electronic copy of the final version of every writing assignment. I normally consider a missing paper that you cannot rapidly replace to be a non-existent paper.

For my part, I will make every effort to keep assignments secure during marking. The CourseSpaces system is reliable, provided you verify a successful upload has occurred. You can and should verify your uploading of assignments by checking CourseSpaces after submission. In cases where you send me your paper by email (for instance, if there is a problem with CourseSpaces or a late submission has been arranged with me), I will confirm receipt of your email submissions.

**How I Mark and Return Assignments:** Papers will be marked with comments electronically, and returned via CourseSpaces. The same dialogue box by which you upload your assignment also has a place for me to attach a feedback file. That is where I put your marked papers. If you send a paper by email because it was late or you had technical problems, I will normally return the marked copy via CourseSpaces, unless I indicate otherwise.

Note that in returning your work by CourseSpaces, **I do not separately fill in the special section of the dialogue box for marks or comments.** They are all in the uploaded copy of your paper. You must open your marked copy from me to get the mark and my comments.
Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

**General remarks:** By third year, I expect you to know and adhere to academic standards of integrity. This includes avoidance of plagiarism and cheating. For the university policy on academic integrity and enforcement procedures, see pages 45-47 on the undergraduate university calendar [https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2020-01/](https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2020-01/). Lack of sufficient care or knowledge about academic dishonesty is not an excuse.

**I will be enforcing these standards, and will be personally insulted by violations.**

Violations and penalties go to the departmental level, and form part of your academic record. (Who needs that trouble?)

Implicitly, you claim authorship of all ideas and words that appear under your name in an academic paper, if you do not otherwise identify them as coming from others.

Citing and borrowing ideas with proper credit is one of the marks of high-quality scholarship. So do not avoid referencing: well handled, it is essential to a high-level debate or conversation. But plagiarism – a false claim about authorship – is a serious academic offence.

**Precautions in note taking to avoid plagiarism:** When you take notes, mark clearly the source and page number for the source. If you are copying the exact words from a source, mark clearly the points where the quotation begins and ends, so that you can always distinguish your ideas and reactions from the original material. Make a clear visual distinction between a direct quotation, your own rephrasing of another author’s ideas, and your personal comments, interpretations, and views.

**Precautions in the review article and final paper to avoid plagiarism:** Give full credit (i.e., provide citations) for 1) the actual words of other people, and 2) the ideas, concepts, findings, and arguments of other people. Rule 2) applies, even if you use your own words to describe them. WHEN IN DOUBT, DOCUMENT!

**Documentation Style:** You must format citations and bibliographies professionally, using a generally accepted documentation style. In-text citations, footnotes, or endnotes are acceptable to me and to political science as a discipline. Notice that in footnote or endnote systems, the style in the note is different from the style in the bibliography. Provide the specific pages where the quotation, idea, or argument can be found. Style handbooks for scholarly documentation exist. They include the MLA Handbook, Kate Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (an adaptation of the Chicago style), and others available at the bookstore. Again, the History Department has a detailed style guide online, also based on Chicago style: [http://web.uvic.ca/history/files/styleguide.pdf](http://web.uvic.ca/history/files/styleguide.pdf).

**Other infringements of academic integrity:** These include submitting an assignment someone else has written, writing an assignment for someone else, bringing notes into closed-book tests or exams, secret communications during tests or exams, helping others to cheat, and presenting one
assignment to two different courses without previous arrangement and agreement with the course instructors (see below).

**Joint Assignments:** You can arrange for joint assignments for submission to two different courses that include this one, if all the course instructors involved, including me, agree to it from the proposal stage. Usually a joint assignment is equivalent in purpose, size, and difficulty to the sum of the assignments it replaces.

**Late policy and academic concession arrangements**

**Due Dates:** All written assignments are due by midnight at the end of the due date. I judge timely submission based on the time shown for submission on CourseSpaces, or on my server in the case of an email that delivers your assignment by attachment. If I grant an extension, I generally do not adjust the due date in the submission box, but I do ignore overdue notices up to the new due date.

I recommend that you not leave submission to the last minute, even though I have been there myself!

Late assignments will be penalized at 5% per day beyond the official due date, Monday through Sunday inclusive.

**Extensions or deferrals:** Students must document valid excuses for not meeting official deadlines (such as illnesses requiring time off work, or bereavement), usually with written evidence acceptable to the instructor. They must also agree with me about a suitable substitute date. This discussion should occur as soon as possible upon return to work. I generally consider the substitute date to be final, and failure to observe it will normally result in a grade of zero for the assignment.

An extension is handled with the professor and is resolved before the end of term. A deferral request is something you must submit to the registrar’s office, and then passes to me and to the chair of the department for assessment.

**Notice of application for deferral or extension:** The earliest possible contact with me seeking extensions and deferrals is always preferable to surprising me later. Contact of any kind is preferable to none at all.

On the other hand, please do not damage your own health, or bring a serious contagious disease to school, just to deliver such a message. I’d rather have an email message than a virus, and that is surely true for your colleagues!

**End of term: Deferrals, Aegrotat:** University regulations place a strict final limit on ordinary extensions. Special arrangements apply beyond the ordinary grade submission date (see University Grading Scheme, above). The university grants these only for reasons that clearly forbid timely completion and that are beyond the student’s personal control (e.g., a major, well-documented medical problem).
Deferrals are the standard means of handling such problems. Aegrotat grades (that is, grades based purely on the work already completed) are rare. Both are subject to a formal application process (Application for Academic Concession). Forms are available at the University Centre. Deferrals are serious procedures, but all levels in the system treat serious situations seriously and sympathetically.

Absences and attendance marks

Shorter, occasional absences
I assume that a person might be away for a few class sessions because of illness or the pressures of student life. You do not need to inform me about absences of this kind. We are all adults, and a rare absence will not offend me. One or two absences also make virtually no difference to your attendance mark (try the arithmetic yourself). However, if you miss a lecture, you should arrange to borrow notes from a classmate.

Longer or more frequent absences will certainly detract from your mark. I may excuse such absences, if they have occurred for legitimate reasons such as illness or bereavement. If you have had serious problems attending class, or anticipate such problems, you should be in touch with me at the earliest possible moment, especially if there has been a legitimate reason for them.

Exceptionally long or frequent absences affect a student’s ability to catch up. This is so, quite apart from the degree of control you have over them, or how sympathetic I might be about your situation. Deferral or retroactive withdrawal from the class may sometimes be in your own long-term best interest in such a situation. If events beyond your control have overwhelmed you, there is no shame in seeking these solutions.

If you attend less than two-fifths of the lectures, I will ordinarily assign an N grade (failure due to non-completion), regardless of your performance in other assignments. (Note that you must also complete the major assignments of the course to avoid an N grade.)

You are responsible for drawing longer absences to my attention, and for documenting them. Strive to do this in a timely fashion. I will not normally accept such notification or documentation after the last day of class or after a long period of resumed attendance, unless you can document valid reasons for the delay.

Life is More Important than School. You are always welcome to talk with me about your situation and your options, which I will treat confidentially. That said, it is not my place to pry into your private affairs, and I do not have training as a counsellor. When in trouble, reach out to your personal network of friends or relatives, and remember to seek professional medical, psychiatric, and social work help where appropriate, especially if people you trust are suggesting it. For those who find such support valuable, the university has a multi-faith chaplaincy service. The university offers confidential counselling services to help you deal with serious personal circumstances.

This course is hard work, especially if you care anything about it. I want to reward your best efforts, good planning, and diligent application. But remember:
1) If you feel in despair about your academic situation or about other things, you do not have to be alone in addressing them. Among other supports you may have, university resources, including confidential counselling, are there to help.

2) Department offices, department advisors, university counselling offices and websites, as well as posters in many washrooms around campus, can provide you contact information.

3) However important this material and your studies are to you, *you* are far more important to yourself, to your intimates, and to the wider world than any problem you are facing.

4) Reach out to others and seek help if things are going wrong.

5) Do not harm yourself or others.

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**Grading Calculation Scheme**

In this class, I give major assignments a set percentage value or letter grade. I then convert that result to a standard percentage when adding up the final grade.

The percentage values of any letter grades will normally be the median value in each letter grade range, as those ranges are laid out in university policy (see chart below). Thus, I assign an A-assignment a percentage value of 82%, unless otherwise noted, because 82% is the mid-point between 80% and 84%, and that is the percentage range for “A-” (see below).

Intermediate grades, such as “B+/A-” will be assigned the lowest percentage value for the higher letter grade. Thus, “B+/A-” will receive a percentage grade of 80%, because 80% is the lowest percentage in the A-range.

The chart below also explains what we are trying to communicate about your performance by assigning you a particular percentage. I adjust terms like “good comprehension” to the course level. These signals differ from some secondary schools, as well as some other universities, in the sense that a B here is not necessarily the same percentage equivalent as a B there. The chart below accompanies your transcript after you graduate.

I calculate your final grade without rounding the individual assignments, but the final result is rounded to a percentage in whole numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passing Grades</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90 – 100</td>
<td>An A+, A, or A- is earned by work which is technically superior, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>85 – 89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>80 – 84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>77 – 79</td>
<td>A B+, B, or B- is earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student’s full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>73 – 76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>70 – 72</td>
<td></td>
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more complex understanding and/or application of the course material. Normally achieved by the largest number of students.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>65 – 69</td>
<td>A C+ or C is earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>60 – 64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>A D is earned by work that indicates minimal command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Failing Grades</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 – 49</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemetal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 – 49</td>
<td>Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**UVic Official Grade Descriptions of Passing Grades**

A+ Outstanding scholarship and originality. Complete mastery of subject matter.

A Excellent scholarship displaying strong knowledge, synthesis and application of concepts.

A- Very good scholarship showing depth of knowledge and analytical ability.

B+ Good scholarship, high knowledge level and good application of information.

B Steady performance, not outstanding in knowledge or application.

B- Good knowledge but some lack of understanding, ability, or background.

C+ Satisfactory knowledge, limited application and demonstration of understanding.

C Satisfactory knowledge, definite lack of some information, no application.

D Marginally satisfactory (but not failure), noticeable gaps in knowledge and understanding.

Professors adjust these grade descriptions to course level. We expect more in a third-year course than in a second-year course, and less than in a fourth-year course.

If a student has not completed the exam or some other major course requirement, but has submitted work that totals more than 49% of the total grade for the course, the instructor will still assign a percentage grade of 49% or less when assigning an N grade.

- **“DEF”** -- A DEF grade may apply if a student has experienced an unavoidable, serious disruption to their studies, normally a serious illness or family bereavement. A DEF grade allows the student to complete exam or paper assignments after term ends. After the student completes the missing course work, the instructor submits a form to submit the full grade the student has earned.
A DEF grade comes only after a student has filled in a Request for Academic Concession, accompanied by appropriate documentation (usually medical note or similar documentation) and after the instructor (Dr. Lawson) and department chair have approved it. As part of this process, the professor indicates to the Registrar’s office what the failing grade should be if the student does not complete the assignments by the set date. That result must be below 50%, regardless of how well the student has done so far in the course.

Until an Academic Concession process is complete, starting from the end of the term in question, the affected student normally receives a formal “N” grade for the course. If an N shows up soon after the course completes, and you were expecting to see a “DEF” grade because of a deferral request, don’t panic! This simply means the course requirements are not complete (hence the “N”) and the Concession request is still being processed. When the paperwork is complete, the university administration changes the grade to DEF while you complete the course work and the professor marks it. If the Concession request is not resolved or if one level or another denies approval, the N grade stands.

### Readings and Schedule

**PLEASE NOTE:** I MAY ANNOUNCE CHANGES TO READING ASSIGNMENTS IN CLASS. IN SUCH CASES, I WILL POST ANY ADDITIONS OR REPLACEMENTS AVAILABLE ON THE COURSESPACES SITE OR BY MASS EMAIL FOR THE COURSE.

<table>
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<th>Weeks &amp; Days</th>
<th>Lecture Topics and Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Marxism … Really? Really.</td>
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</table>
| Jan 7, 9     | Required reading: (2 + 24 + 3 + 8 = 37 pages)  
*(Desai, professor at the University of Manitoba, is perhaps this country’s foremost proponent of geopolitical economy, a mode of political economy that continues to stress the analytical importance of nation states and a multi-centred vision of world capitalism. See her work at [https://geopoliticaleconomy.org/people/radhika-desai/](https://geopoliticaleconomy.org/people/radhika-desai/))*  
Lukács, a founder of “Western” Marxism, suggests that adherence to Marx’ dialectical method (and thus his debts to Hegel) is “orthodox” Marxism, rather than the Communist party line on particular propositions. Lukács’ argument in this regard was seen as foundational to Western approaches to Marxism in the post-war period. He wrote when the New School for Social Research or Frankfurt School was in formation in Germany, and this gave rise to a Western tradition of wide-ranging “critical theory” in the post-war. Lukács was Hungarian, and family names are placed before given names in Hungarian. The family name is commonly pronounced “Loo’-kahtch”) His given name is sometimes anglicized to “George”).

Silvia Federici, “Marx and Feminism tripleC 16, no 2 (2018): 468-475 (8 pages)

Silvia Federici is among the most famous and influential feminist political economists in the Marxist tradition. She comes from the autonomist Italian tradition of feminism which initiated a key ongoing debate about “reproductive labour”, including the pioneering 1970s campaign on Wages for Housework.)


Marx came to his theory of dialectics against both the idealist dialectics of Hegel and the unhistorical materialism of Feuerbach. Given Marx is attacking Feuerbach, a noted anti-religious “materialist”, what kind of “materialism” does Marx favour, and why does he reject Feuerbach’s?

2 A special note is warranted about the expression “dirty-jewish” in Thesis I of Marx’s Theses on Feuerbach. The question of Marx and anti-semitism is complex: it does not seem to me to be a matter of indifference, nor does it do (in my view) to dismiss Marx’s wider message because of this unpleasant language.

First, Marx was working in a comprehensively anti-semitic and racist/colonial European context. The culmination of the latter was the fascist/Nazi phase of the twentieth century that implemented the Shoah, namely the mass murder of about six million Jews, alongside homosexuals, Roma and Sinti, and political prisoners, as well as the mass persecution, imprisonment, torture, forced labour, branding and other abuse of many, many more.

The question is how Marx’ interventions sit within this wider context. The often-sarcastic Marx may be invoking commonly used anti-semitic language to reference base economic self-interest, which he himself actually attributes to capitalists in general, NOT invoking actual Jews in particular. One whole class is playing out a particular structural role in a particular class system. Favouring this interpretation, notice that he uses the term, and passes on to write about his issues with Feuerbach: he does not centre his programme (as many of his contemporaries did) on anti-Jewish calumnies.

Second, Marx himself was Jewish on both sides of his family, his father converting to Protestantism in a career-driven decision that overlapped with a move to a secular education and career. Third, consistent with his criticism of Feuerbach for not getting past the opposition of atheism/secularism, Marx writes elsewhere (On the Jewish Question) about Jewish integration into an officially Christian society. Rather than rail on about biological or cultural difference, his main point is that both Christians and Jews should get past religion and atheism entirely, which
In-class Required Viewing:

Further Readings NOT Required but of possible interest:


Week 2
Jan 12, 18

**Historical, Dialectical, Materialist: Marx’s Method**
(Note: this stuff is hard, and if this is your first introduction to it, you probably won’t get it at the first reading. Do read it, and don’t abandon the course if it goes over your head at first! As Marx said, there are no “royal roads” to science – it is a hard slog, but with application, you will get there.)

**Required Readings:**

ALL STUDENTS READ ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CLUSTERS:

i. Dialectic: Doctrine of Being and the “Negation of the Negation”

he considered to be a distraction from the worldly injustices that were class issues rather than sectarian ones.

That said, this term obviously grates on modern ears, as it should. (So should some of his more controversial remarks about the role of capitalism in the Global South.)


**ii. Dialectics and Abstraction (I) (9 + 8 + 11 = 28 pages)**


**iii. Dialectic and Abstraction (II) (25 + 8 = 33 pages)**


**Further Interest:**


David Harvey, Selection from “Commodities, Values and Class Relations” Limits to Capital (1982; London: Verso, 1999): 1-4. 4 pages


G.A. Cohen, Karl Marx’s Theory of History: A Defence (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978). This is a foundational statement for the mainly American “analytical” Marxists, who retain Marx’s central theses while rejecting his dialectical method and the labour theory of value that flows from it. The first chapter (1-27) engages Marx’s debts to Hegel almost without reference to the
dialectic as such. Joan Robinson and Piero Sraffa were other influential figures who shared some or all of these positions. Ellen Meiksins Wood and Robert Brenner were loosely associated with this school. Cohen is noteworthy for his careful glossary of terms, typical of the “analytical approach”, although the definitions are sometimes controversial.


Selection from Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar, “The Errors of Classical Economics: Outline of a Concept of Historical Time” Reading Capital, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, (1968) 2009) Read only to the asterisk (*) Available at https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1968/reading-capital/ch02.htm. Last accessed December 28, 2019. In contrast to Albritton, Althusser suggests that the mature Marx of Grundrisse and Capital had a scientific dialectic that did not rest on an internal unfolding from one basic origin, at least not one that resulted in a unified social totality that evolved in a single rhythm, but rather one with diverse temporalities linked to one another.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Jan 21, 23</th>
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**The Historical Establishment of Capitalism: Dispossession, the Creation of Capitalist and Wage Worker, and the Shifting Roles of Economic and Non-Economic Coercion**

**Required Readings:**
ALL READ THE FOLLOWING: (23 pages)

ALL READ ONE OF THE FOLLOWING (20 or 21 or 24 pages):

**Further interest:**

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<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Jan 28, 30</th>
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| **Capital Theory and the Critique of Political Economy I**  
(Commodities: Use Value, Exchange Value, Value, and Money) | |
| **Required Readings:** (14 + 7 + 13 = 34 pages) | |
| **Further interest:** | |

*If you have extra time or special interest in money, survey the next pages in Harvey: David Harvey, *A Companion to Marx’s Capital* 54-83 (London: Verso, 2010). 29 pages.*


*Itoh and his student Thomas Sekine present some of the best tradition of Japanese Marxism, which is both theoretically rigorous in a Hegelian sense, and mathematically demanding.*


*This is an accessible insight into Japanese ”systematic” Marxists (Uno School) on the question of dialectical reasoning, its origins in a single “cell-form”, and its ontological confinement to the question of capital.*


Notice that Elson inverts the more familiar expression, “the labour theory of value”. You should ask yourself why this is the case?

### Week 5
Feb 4, 6
(Mid-term release: Feb 7)

**Capital Theory and the Critique of Political Economy II**
*(Labour Power versus Actual Labour, Value, Exploitation, Surplus Value)*


**Further Interest:**

### Week 6
Feb 11, 13
Mid-term due:

**Capital Theory and the Critique of Political Economy III**
*(Technological Change, Absolute and Relative Surplus Value)*
### Required Readings:
ALL STUDENTS READ ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CLUSTERS:

**Cluster A:**

**Cluster B:**

**Cluster C:**

### Supplementary Readings:


### Week 7
**Reading Break (No Lectures)**

### Week 8
**Feb 25, 27**
**Paper proposal due:**
**Feb 28** (midnight)

**Capital Theory and the Critique of Political Economy IV (Crisis and Reproduction of Capital)**

### Required Readings
ALL STUDENTS READ ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CLUSTERS:

**CLUSTER A: Crisis and Reproduction**


CLUSTER B: Harvey’s Take on Crisis Theory from Volume 1

*Harvey is associated with a “three-cut” take on crises in capitalism, as set out in the three volumes of Capital. Here, his main focus is what the first volume offers.*

CLUSTER C: Inferring a Theory of Crisis from Volume 2’s “Reproduction Schemas”

*Luxemburg engages with those chapters in Marx’s Capital Vol. 2 that cover what have become known as the reproduction schemas. David Harvey’s Companion to Marx’s Capital Vol. 2 provides a good companion through the tough prose in this section.*

**Required In-Class Viewing and Discussion**

**Further Interest:**
Socialist Register 2011 (“The Crisis this Time”) and 2012 (“The Crisis and the Left”)
Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin, “Capitalist Crises and the Crisis This Time” Socialist Register 2011.

**Week 9**
Mar 3-5

**Imperialism and Marxisms of the Global South**

**Required Readings:**
ALL STUDENTS READ ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CLUSTERS:

a) Bolivia and the Gramscian legacy
Jeffrey R. Webber, “The indigenous community as "living organism": José Carlos Mariátegui, Romantic Marxism, and extractive capitalism in the Andes” Theory and Society 44, No. 6 (December 2015): 575-598 (access through McPherson Library catalogue for journal)


b) Super-exploitation and Imperial Rent


c) Articulation of Modes of Production (read one of these three)


d) One American-Centred Empire or Multi-Centred Capitalism


Week 10
Mar 10, 12
(Final date for accepting all delinquent

Capital’s Need for a Bleeding Edge: Accumulation by Dispossession, Black Marxism, Autonomist Feminism, and Jason Moore’s “Cheaps”

Required Readings.
Part A: ALL STUDENTS READ ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:
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<td><strong>Part B:</strong> ALL STUDENTS READ ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CLUSTERS:</td>
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**Further interest:**  
Luxemburg’s “Section 3: The Historical Conditions of Accumulation”, (329-467) at the Marxist Internet Archives gives a good overview of the range of imperialist
expansion/primary accumulation as Luxemburg views it, capital’s struggle against its “outside”.


**Week 11**
Mar 17, 19

**Gramsci and Gramscians: Socialist Strategy in the West**
(Gramsci is commonly pronounced, “Gram’-shee”)

**Required Readings:**
ALL STUDENTS READ ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CLUSTERS:

**CLUSTER A:**

**CLUSTER B:**

**CLUSTER C:**

**Further interest:**

Selections on core Gramscian concepts:
on intellectuals: 5-14 (pdf pages 134-147);
on concept of hegemony (“egemonia”) 44-47, 52-60, particularly the footnotes! (pdf pages 191-196, 202-216);
on Machiavelli and the Modern Prince 125-156 (pdf pages 316-366);
on analysing concrete socio-political situations 175-185 (pdf pages 397-412); on civil society, organic crisis and Caesarism 206-223 (pdf pages 445-471); on war of position and war of manoeuvre 229-239 (pdf pages 481-497); on Americanism and Fordism 279-318 (pdf pages 561-623).


Benedetto Fontana, On the Relation between Gramsci and Machiavelli (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993)


Joseph Femia, “Hegemony and Consciousness in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci” Political Studies 23.1 (March 1975)

Michael Alexander, director. Gramsci: Everything that Concerns People BBC 4 Available in full online at numerous sites, including https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLNePLHL1KI. Available at 13 August 2016.

Chantal Mouffe, ed. Gramsci and Marxist Theory (London: Routledge, 1979)

Christine Buci-Glucksman, Gramsci and the State (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1980)


Week 12
Mar 24, 26
(Final paper due: Mar 27, midnight)

**Althusser and His Children: Articulation and Relative Autonomy**

**Required Readings:**

ALL STUDENTS READ ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CLUSTERS:

**Cluster A: De-Centring Working Class Politics and Althusserian Structuralism**


**Cluster B: Post-Marxist Critique of the Contradictory Unity of Capital**


Cluster C: The Relative Autonomy of the Capitalist State: The Poulantzas-Miliband Debate


Further interest:


Week 13
Mar 31, Apr 2

**Marxism Today: Remembering State Socialism; Setting State Socialism Aside**

**Conclusion and Evaluation**

**Required Readings:**
ALL STUDENTS READ ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CLUSTERS:

**Cluster A: Technical Problems in State-Socialist Planning and Hayek’s Critique** (44 pages)

**Cluster B: Luxemburg and Trotsky Criticize Emerging Tendencies in the Soviet Experience**
Leon Trotsky, *The New Course* [1923] Available at [https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1923/newcourse/index.htm.](https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1923/newcourse/index.htm.) Last accessed January 1, 2020. (Trotsky had this published during the last days of Lenin’s life; it reflected the emergence of “anti-bureaucratic” (and therefore democratic) faction within the Bolshevik party, and launched the course that saw Trotsky purged, exiled and murdered for opposing Stalin.

**Cluster C: Recent Western Marxist Analysis of “Real” or “Actually Existing Socialism”** (57 pages)
Michael Burawoy, “Working in the Tracks of State Socialism” *Capital and Class* 98 (June 1, 2009): 33-66. 33 pages Available electronically through Macpherson Library’s copy of *Capital and Class.*

**Further interest:**
Boris Kagarlitsky (various works on the Soviet Union)
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<td>Piotr Kropotkin, “Western Europe” <em>Memoirs of a Revolutionist</em> [1924] ed. N.K. Lebedev, trans. Marshall Shatz, reprinted in <em>The Conquest of Bread and Other Writings</em> Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1995. [Please note that this Russian version of the text differs significantly from the version published online at theanarchistlibrary.org. This version covers material of more particular interest to the course. Note his critique of the increasingly parliamentarist, non-revolutionary and therefore anti-democratic “Social Democrats” (including Marx) and of <em>Capital’s</em> account of violence in capital accumulation.]</td>
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APPENDIX: READING MARX, READING CAPITAL

Some online reading lists:
http://www.marxists.org/
http://davidharvey.org/
http://libcom.org/

Selected Guides to Reading Capital:

Many interpretations of Marx’s Capital are available. They should be read both for their insights into what Marx meant, and for their particular positions on that question: often, these are two sides to the same question. Here are some that are particularly good and are widely cited in the West:

David Harvey also has two lecture series available for streaming and MP3 download at www.davidharvey.org. The first series is a guide to reading Capital, Vol. 1; the second covers Vols. 2 and 3. The first series led to Harvey (2010), the second to Harvey (20xx).
Harvey is arguably the pre-eminent Marxist geographer, and among his obvious influences is Rosa Luxemburg in her argument that capital is not self-sustaining but requires an outside world to exploit. Her theory of imperialism rivaled Lenin’s and is currently enjoying a revival.

Ben Fine and Alfredo Saad-Filho, *Marx’s ‘Capital’, 5th ed.* (London: Pluto Press, 2004). Ben Fine is an important scholar in food studies and borrows from Freudian psychology to think about consumption studies from a Marxist viewpoint. (Saad-Filho)


Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar, *Reading Capital* (London: Verso, [1970] 2009) Perhaps the most important statement of Althusser’s “structuralist” Marxism, which drew on Freudian psychoanalytic theory for the concept of overdetermination. Influential for post-modernists and post-Marxists such as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe and the Marxist version of the régulation school such as Michel Aglietti and Alain Lipietz.

Robert Albritton, *Economics Transformed: Discovering the Brilliance of Marx* (London: Pluto Press, 2007) [This work is more interesting than the cheerleading title might suggest. It is an accessible account of the Japanese Uno school in its “systematic” reading of Marx’ Capital.]

feminist Marxism, which in many ways draws on it, it also has interesting things to say about work and the working class beyond paid factory labour (unemployed, unpaid reproductive labour, etc.)

James O’Connor “The Second Contradiction of Capitalism” *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 1 (Fall 1988): 11-38. Reproduced with four critical commentaries in Ted Benton, ed. *The Greening of Marxism* 197-221. (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 1996). A foundational figure in eco-Marxism, O’Connor is also known as a theorist of the Marxist theories of crisis. Here, he re-reads *Capital* as centred on a contradiction between the forces and relations of production, in which labour is central in a struggle against capital; and secondly on a contradiction between the mode of production (the unity of the forces and relations) and surrounding conditions of production. Here ecological and other social movements are central.