

SOCI 355 ¹

The Corporation, Capitalism, and Globalization

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Course Description:

As the dominant economic system organizing labour, production, and the distribution of wealth, capitalism exerts a pervasive influence over our lives, relationships, societies, and the natural environment. In an increasingly globalized world where transnational corporations wield unprecedented power—often dwarfing that of nation-states—and environmental, financial, political, and cultural crises threaten not only the wellbeing of humans and non-humans but also the possibility of life itself, questions of capitalism’s organization and ruling elite, its challengers, and the viability of alternatives are once again coming to the fore. This course offers a critical sociological approach to these important questions, exploring the depth to which corporate-capitalist imperatives, values, and processes shape our lives, communities, social groups, and places—often in destructive or oppressive ways. In the latter part of the course we turn to the study of movements challenging the rule of corporate capital and the alternative visions they project.

Mode of Delivery:

This is an online course that will consist of one “live” or synchronous meeting per week, taking place from 4:30-5:45pm Pacific Time every Tuesday. It will also involve self-directed asynchronous activities throughout each week.

Course Objectives:

Students will gain a good rudimentary understanding of capitalism’s inner-workings, the roles they play in its ongoing function, and the ways in which it shapes their lives and the world around them. Assignments and activities will support the development of oral and written communication skills and group work, with extensive use of breakout group discussions.

Course Pre-requisites:

None beyond other 300-level Sociology courses.

¹ This outline is only intended to give an overall sense of the course. A detailed course outline will be made available in August before the first day of class. Only that outline is to be considered official.

Topics May Include:

Corporate-capitalism and climate crisis; global capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism; race, gender, and sexuality under capitalism; economic, political, and cultural modalities of corporate power; capitalist ideology and hegemony; capitalism and popular culture; the development of Canadian capitalism; capitalism, technology, and media; the myth of TINA (There is No Alternative)

Required Resources May Include:

Carroll, W.K. and J.P. Sapinski (2018) *Organizing the 1%: How Corporate Power Works*. Halifax: Fernwood.

Brand, Ulrich and Markus Wissen (2021) *The Imperial Mode of Living: Everyday Life and the Ecological Crisis of Capitalism*. London: Verso

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