

New York University
Department of Media, Culture, and Communication
**Special Topics in Critical Theory:
Marx**

Course number MCC-GE 3013

SPRING 2018

Prof. Alexander R. Galloway
galloway@nyu.edu

Time: Wednesdays 2:00-4:50pm
Location: East Building, Room 741
Office hrs: Tue 2-4pm; Thu 9-10:30am

Course Description

Much of critical theory finds its origin in the work of Karl Marx. This doctoral seminar will focus on reading (most of) Marx's *Capital, vol. 1*. Then, during the final three weeks of the semester, students will pursue individual/group inquiry into a Marxist text of their own choosing. Overall the course will emphasize Marxism as a political and economic theory, but will also address Marxism as a critical methodology applicable to disciplines beyond political and economic theory. Themes include the commodity, alienation and reification, surplus-value, labor, machines, ideology, and community.

Required Book

Karl Marx, *Capital, volume 1: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin, 1976/1992).

PART 1 -- CAPITAL

January 24 -- course introduction

January 31 -- Introduction, Prefaces, and Postfaces

Marx, *Capital*, 11-120.

February 7 -- The Commodity

Marx, *Capital*, 125-244.

February 14 -- Capital; Absolute Surplus-Value

Marx, *Capital*, 247-339.

February 21 -- The Working Day

Marx, *Capital*, 340-416.

Paper topics announced

February 28 -- Relative Surplus-Value; Manufacture

Marx, *Capital*, 417-491.

March 7 -- Machinery

Marx, *Capital*, 492-553.

First paper due

March 14 -- spring break

March 21 -- Machinery (cont.)

Marx, *Capital*, 553-639.

March 28 -- Absolute and Relative Surplus-Value; Wages; Accumulation

Marx, *Capital*, 643-746.

April 4 -- Accumulation (cont.); Primitive Accumulation

Marx, *Capital*, 762-802, 873-940.

April 11 -- no class

PART 2 -- INDIVIDUAL/GROUP INQUIRY

April 18, April 25, and May 2

Each student will select one of the following books and pursue individual or group inquiry as necessary. Students will report each week on their reading progress, allowing for group discussion of problems and questions, as well as for planning the final paper.

1. Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2005).
2. Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991).
3. Kojin Karatani, *Transcritique: On Kant and Marx*, trans. Sabu Kohso (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).
4. Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital*, trans. Agnes Schwarzschild (New York: Routledge, 1951).
5. Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

Friday, May 11, 5pm -- Final paper due.

Course Assignments

Reading -- Students are expected to read the assigned text in advance of class.

Discussion Leaders -- Students are required to act as a discussion leader for two different weeks during the semester.

Writing -- Each student will write a midterm and final paper, each approximately ten pages long. Suggested paper topics will be provided. Papers should adhere to standard format (12 point font, double spaced, one inch margins, no spaces between paragraphs, etc.) and follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*. All writing should demonstrate a close reading of the required materials and exhibit a method of critical analysis.

Grade Formula

Papers	80%
Class participation	20%

Laptop Policy

I discourage the use of laptops, tablets, and phones in class and consider them to be detrimental to the social and pedagogical climate of the classroom. Exceptions can be made for readings that have been distributed in electronic format, and for students with special learning needs.