New York University  
Department of Media, Culture, and Communication  
**Marx (Special Topics in Critical Theory)**  
Course number MCC-GE 3013 -- FALL 2023

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Office hrs: Tu 3:30pm-5; Wed 10am-12pm

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 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 economics. Themes for the seminar will include the commodity, alienation and reification, surplus-value, labor, machines, ideology, and community.

**Schedule**

9/6 -- Course Introduction  
9/20 -- The Commodity. *Capital*, 125-244.  
10/11 -- no class  
11/1 -- Machinery (cont.). *Capital*, 553-639.  
11/8 -- Absolute and Relative Surplus-Value; Wages; Accumulation. *Capital*, 643-746.  
11/23 -- Thanksgiving Break  

11/29, 12/6, and 12/13 -- Each student will select one of the following books to read as part of a group. 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.


12/18 (Monday), 5pm -- Final paper due.
Required Books
2. One of the following four books: *The New Spirit of Capitalism, Empire, Black Marxism*,
   or *Marx in the Anthropocene*.

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 prior to Thanksgiving Break.
- *Writing* -- Each student will write a final paper. Length expectations are 20 pages for
  doctoral students and 16 pages for MA students. 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*. A bibliography is not necessary. All writing should
  demonstrate a close reading of the required materials and exhibit a method of critical
  analysis.

Grade Formula
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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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. Please bring physical books and paper for
taking notes. Exceptions can be made for students with particular learning requirements.