

Economics 345 Marxian Political Economy Syllabus

Portland State University, 1825 SW Broadway, Portland, OR 97210

Professor: Justin A. Elardo
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"There's nothing fundamentally wrong with people. Given a story to enact that puts them in accord with the world, they will live in accord with the world"
(Daniel Quinn, ***Ishmael***)

"It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it."
(Upton Sinclair, ***Campaigning for Governor of California***)

*"Science is not just about seeing, it's about measuring, preferably with something that's **not** your own eyes, which are inextricably conjoined with the baggage of your brain. That baggage is more often than not a satchel of preconceived ideas, postconceived notions, and outright bias."*
(Neil deGrasse Tyson, ***Astrophysics for People in a Hurry***)

Course Days and Time: Monday/Wednesday 2pm - 3:50pm

Classroom: KMC 190

Office Hours: 3pm - 4pm M W, URBN 450U

Credits: 4

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Required Reading: Provided - PDF when necessary otherwise via,
<https://www.marxists.org/english.htm>

Course Content:

This course is an introduction to Marxian Political Economy. The focus of this course is the analysis of Marx's ideas as they pertain to the functioning of a capitalist market economy. The course begins with the philosophical foundations that informed Marx's

thinking. Marx's philosophy is linked to the concept of historical materialism which forms the method on which Marxian economics is developed. Historical materialism represents the basis on which Marx begins his critique of his political economy predecessors as well as contemporaries. Historical materialism also creates the foundation for Marx's examination of the origin of market capitalist economic relations. Following an exploration of historical materialism, the course then turns its attention toward Marx's sociology with an emphasis on the role of social hierarchy as borne of class. For Marx, class represents the social friction of history, a catalyst for conflict and change. Coupling historical materialism to class struggle creates a framework from which Marx makes specific insights with regard to the systemic features of a market capitalist economy.

Instructional Approach:

Economics is a theoretical field. The study of economics requires conceptual, analytical, and critical thought. In order to convey theoretical ideas this course utilizes verbal depictions (including the significant application of anecdotes) as well as graphical analysis. Ideally, students will also have the opportunity to be actively involved in the learning process via class participation and in class assignments that require graphical manipulations.

Tentative Class Schedule

While an exact following of the syllabus is preferred, this schedule is subject to change at any time based on time constraints, class interests, etc. There may be additional reading outside of the required text and it will be provided in class.

Introduction to the course and to Marx

Week 1	Topics	Reading
Monday, January 8	Introduction to course syllabus	No new reading
Wednesday, January 10	Heilbroner, Robert. <i>The Worldly Philosophers</i> Chapter IV. "The Inexorable System of Karl Marx" Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich: <i>Karl Marx A Brief Biographical Sketch</i> ... "Marx, Karl, was born..." Weekly Journal #1 due today	https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1914/granat/ch01.htm
Sunday, January 14	Last day to add or drop classes	n/a

The Philosophy of Marx

Week	Topics	Reading
Week 2; Monday, January 15	No Class – Martin Luther King Holiday	No new reading
Week 2; Wednesday, January 17	<p>Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich: <i>Karl Marx A Brief Biographical Sketch...</i> “The Marxist Doctrine”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marx and Philosophy • Historical Materialism • Class Struggle <p>Marx: “On the Jewish Question (I)”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideology as a Constraint <p>Weekly Journal #2 Due</p>	<p>https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1914/granat/ch02.htm</p> <p>https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/jewish-question/</p>
Week 3; Monday, January 22	<p>Marx: <i>Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844</i></p> <p>“Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy in General”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence as opposed to Abstraction 	https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/hegel.htm
Week 3; Wednesday, January 24	<p>Marx: <i>The German Ideology</i> (1845) “Part I: Feurbach. Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlook”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridging Philosophy, History, and Marxian Social Science <p>Weekly Journal #3 Due today</p>	https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01a.htm#a2

Marx’s Materialist Conception of History

Week	Topics	Reading
Week 4; Monday, January 29	<p>Stalin, Josef Dialectical and Historical Materialism (1938)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primer on Materialism 	https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1938/09.htm
Week 4; Wednesday, January 31	<p>Althusser, Louis Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical Materialism and Ideology <p>Weekly Journal #4 Due today</p>	https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm

Class Conflict

Week	Topics	Reading
Week 5; Monday, February 5	Marx: <i>The Poverty of Philosophy</i> (1847) “Method in Political Economy” Marx: Preface to <i>A Critique of Political Economy</i> (1859) Historical Materialism Challenges Bourgeois Economics	https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/poverty-philosophy/ch02.htm https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/preface.htm
Week 5 (continued); Wednesday, February 7	Weekly Journal #5 due today	https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/poverty-philosophy/ch01b.htm
Week 6; Monday, February 12	Marx and Engels: <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> Ch. 1 “Chapter I: Bourgeois and Proletarians” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historical Materialism and the History of Class Conflict 	https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm
Week 6; Monday, February 12	Midterm exam administered	n/a
Week 6; Wednesday, February 14	Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich: <i>Karl Marx A Brief Biographical Sketch...</i> “Marx’s Economic Doctrine” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Primer on Marx’s Economics <p>➤ Weekly Journal #6 due today</p> <p>➤ Midterm exam due</p>	https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1914/granat/ch03.htm

Marx’s Economics

Week	Topics	Reading
Week 7; Monday, February 19	Marx: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital Vol. 1: Chapter One: Commodities “Section One - The Two Factors of a Commodity: Use-Value and Value” “Section Two - The two-fold Character of the Labour Embodied in Commodities” 	https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch01.htm#S1

Marx's Economics (continued)

Week	Topics	Reading
Week 7; Wednesday, February 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital Vol. 1: Chapter One: Commodities "Section Three - The Form of Value or Exchange-Value" "Section Four - The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof" <p>➤ Weekly Journal #7 due today</p>	https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch01.htm#S3
Week 8; Monday, February 26	Marx: Capital Vol. 1: Chapter Four "The General Formula for Capital"	https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch04.htm
Week 8; Wednesday, February 28	Marx: Capital Vol. 1: Chapter Six <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The Buying and Selling of Labour-Power" <p>➤ Weekly Journal #8 Due</p>	https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch06.htm
Week 9; Monday, March 4	Marx: Capital Vol. 1: Chapter Seven <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The Labour-Process and the Process of Producing Surplus-Value" 	https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch07.htm
Week 9; Wednesday, March 6	Marx: Capital Vol. 1: Chapter Ten <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The Working-Day" <p>➤ Weekly Journal #5 Due</p>	https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch10.htm
Week 10; Monday March 11	Marx: Capital Vol. 1: Chapter Thirteen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Co-operation" Marx: Capital Vol. 1: Chapter Fifteen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Machinery and Modern Industry" 	https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch13.htm https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch15.htm
Week 10; Wednesday, March 13	Marx: Capital Vol. 1: Chapter Thirty-Two <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation" <p>➤ Weekly Journal #10 Due</p>	https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch32.htm
Week 11; Monday March 18	Final exam administered	n/a
Week 11; Wednesday, March 20	Final exam DUE	n/a

Grading

Grading: 100 Point Scale

- Weekly Journal Entries = 50 Points (10 Entries * 5 Points Apiece)
- Midterm Exam = 25 Points
- Final = 25 Points

Weekly Journal Entries

- Each week students will be given a writing prompt associated with the week's assigned reading.
- Students must submit their work by the conclusion of the last day of class for the week.
- Each weekly journal entry will be graded on a 5 point scale.

Weekly Journal Rubric

Points	Assessment
5	Multiple Paragraphs; Substantive Comments; Addressing Prompt Completely
3	A Paragraph; Partially Substantive Comments; Partially Related to the Prompt
1	Limited Written Discourse; Lacking in Substantive Insights; Unrelated to the Prompt

Exams

- The Midterm Exam and the Final Exam will both be Take Home Exams.
- Students will receive the exam on a Monday and must return the exam on the Wednesday of the week they are administered.
- Exams will be essay based.