MODULE
DESCRIPTION

Level 3
Credit Value 20
Semester Taught One
Semester Examined One
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This is an abridged reading list for POL3030. If you are a student taking this module and would like to access the full handbook, please visit the module’s Blackboard MOLE site.

THIS MODULE WILL FAMILIARISE students with Karl Marx’s corpus and guide them in examining a series of key historical processes—such as the development of capitalism and the modern states-system, imperialism and colonialism—from a Marxist lens. The first part of the module acts as a survey of the development of Marx’s own thought against the background of epochal socio-economic and political transformations that took place in the late 18th and 19th centuries. The second part focuses on a number of thematic issues and explores how Marx engaged with the questions of political strategy, labour mobilisation, gender, social reproduction and the impact of the violent expansion of capitalism beyond Europe. The second half of the module also focuses on putting Marx’s thought and Marxist theory in dialogue with other critical approaches, including, but not limited to, Feminism and Postcolonialism. The module concludes with a session that unpacks the relevance and utility of Marxist analyses of contemporary political and socio-economic issues, such as the aftermath of the global economic crisis of 2007–8, climate breakdown, struggles against neoliberalism and authoritarian statisms, and the crisis and reinvention of social democratic and socialist politics.
SEMINAR TOPICS

1. The Rise of Industrial Capitalism and Utopian Socialism
2. Foundations of Historical Materialism I
3. Foundations of Historical Materialism II
4. The Critique of Political Economy I
5. The Critique of Political Economy II
6. Marx and Revolutionary Politics
7. Marx and Global Politics
8. Marx and Global History
9. Marx on Gender and Social Reproduction
10. The Present and Future of Marxism(s)
— I —

THE RISE OF INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM AND UTOPIAN SOCIALISM

“We do not dogmatically anticipate the world, but only want to find the new world through criticism of the old one”.

CORE READING


RECOMMENDED READING


“It was by no means sufficient to investigate: Who is to emancipate? Who is to be emancipated? Criticism had to investigate a third point. It had to inquire: What kind of emancipation is in question? What conditions follow from the very nature of the emancipation that is demanded?”


CORE READING


RECOMMENDED READING


“According to the materialist view of history, the determining factor in history is, in the final analysis, the production and reproduction of actual life. More than that was never maintained either by Marx or myself. Now if someone distorts this by declaring the economic moment to be the only determining factor, he changes that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, ridiculous piece of jargon”.


**CORE READING**


**RECOMMENDED READING**


THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

“The devaluation of the world of men is in direct proportion to the increasing value of the world of things. Labour produces not only commodities: it produces itself and the worker as a commodity—and this at the same rate at which it produces commodities in general.”

— Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844.

CORE READING


RECOMMENDED READING


THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY II

“[N]ature does not produce on the one hand owners of money or commodities, and on the other hand men possessing nothing but their own labour-power. This relation has no basis in natural history, nor does it have a social basis common to all periods of human. It is clearly the result of a past historical development, the product of many economic revolutions, of the extinction of a whole series of older formations of social production”.


CORE READING


RECOMMENDED READING


MARX AND REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS

“It is altogether self-evident that, to be able to fight at all, the working class must organize itself at home as a class and that its own country is the immediate arena of its struggle—insofar as its class struggle is national, not in substance, but, as the Communist Manifesto says, ‘in form’. But the ‘framework of the present-day national state’, for instance, the German Empire, is itself, in its turn, economically ‘within the framework’ of the world market, politically ‘within the framework’ of the system of states. Every businessman knows that German trade is at the same time foreign trade, and the greatness of Herr Bismarck consists, to be sure, precisely in his pursuing a kind of international policy.”

— Marx, “Critique of the Gotha Programme” (1875).

CORE READING


RECOMMENDED READING


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**MARX AND GLOBAL POLITICS**

“When an oligarchy of 300,000 slaveholders dared to inscribe, for the first time in the annals of the world, ‘slavery’ on the banner of Armed Revolt, when on the very spots where hardly a century ago the idea of one great Democratic Republic had first sprung up (...) when on those very spots counterrevolution (...) maintained slavery to be ‘a beneficent institution’, indeed, the old solution of the great problem of ‘the relation of capital to labor’, and cynically proclaimed property in man ‘the cornerstone of the new edifice’—then the working classes of Europe understood at once (...) that the slaveholders’ rebellion was to sound the tocsin for a general holy crusade of property against labor, and that for the men of labor, with their hopes for the future, even their past conquests were at stake in that tremendous conflict on the other side of the Atlantic”.

— Marx, “Address of the International Working Men’s Association to Abraham Lincoln” (1865).

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**CORE READING**


**RECOMMENDED READING**


MARX AND GLOBAL HISTORY

“When reading the histories of primitive communities written by bourgeois writers it is necessary to be on one’s guard. They do not even shrink from falsehoods. Sir Henry Maine, for example, who was a keen collaborator of the British Government in carrying out the violent destruction of the Indian communes, hypocritically assures us that all the government’s noble efforts to support the communes were thwarted by the spontaneous forces of economic laws!”


CORE READING


RECOMMENDED READING


MARX ON GENDER AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

“However terrible and disgusting the dissolution of the old family ties within the capitalist system may appear, the large-scale industry, by assigning an important part in socially organized processes of production, outside the sphere of the domestic economy, to women, young persons and children of both sexes, does nevertheless create a new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of relations between the sexes.”


CORE READING


RECOMMENDED READING


THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF MARXISM(S)

“If cooperative production is not to remain a sham and a snare; if it is to supersede the capitalist system; if united cooperative societies are to regulate national production upon a common plan, thus taking it under their own control, and putting an end to the constant anarchy and periodical convulsions which are the fatality of capitalist production—what else, gentlemen, would it be but Communism, ‘possible’ Communism?”

— Marx, The Civil War in France (1871).

CORE READING


RECOMMENDED READING


