

Soc 7: Modern Capitalism

2015-2016

Course organizers: Prof. Lawrence King (lk285@cam.ac.uk)

Time: TBC

Room: TBC

The paper is designed to teach students the fundamentals of the sociological or “continental” tradition of the Political Economy of Capitalism. Such a broad theme must obviously be selective, but we will cover many crucial works and topics. The student should come away with a good understanding of how the political and economic processes of modern capitalism work, with special focus on the first (the UK) and the biggest (the US) systems. We will also look at whether contemporary capitalism is implicated in the production of global poverty.

This version of political economy is distinct from the Anglo-American tradition that emphasizes individual rationality and formal mathematical models. Instead, it focuses on power in all its forms, and looks at how political and economic forces mutually interact to socially construct the market and the state. It pays special attention to social groups that are anterior to, and participate in, both economic and political struggles (like classes and status groups). Although “continental” political economy is taught and practiced in most of the social science disciplines, it has never been restricted to the academy, and various “radicals” (marxian, anarchist, or other) have always contributed to debates as well.

The course will be held in a seminar style, and students are expected to read the required material and be prepared to discuss the topic question(s). The exam will consist of two parts, each worth 50% of the final grade. In the first part, students will be required to answer 12 out of 15 questions, each in one paragraph. These questions will be drawn from all weeks of the course. In the second part, students will be required to answer 1 out of 3 essay questions.

Supervisions will be arranged by Luke Hawksbee (lh372@cam.ac.uk), and carried out by Luke Hawksbee and Victor Roy (victorroy@gmail.com).

It is recommended that you buy the most recent edition of the following books from any online vendor:

- (1) Who Rules America, G. William Domhoff. 2009. McGraw Hill;
- (2) Field Guide to the Global Economy, Sarah Anderson et al. 2005. The New Press;
- (3) Economics: The User's Guide, Ha-Joon Chang. 2014. Pelican.

Most required and suggested readings will be available in libraries, and as many as possible will also be made available in electronic format. Click the word 'Download' to download a .pdf file of a text on the reading list.

The readings are selective, and while we will address many crucial debates no attempt has been made to assign readings on all sides of these debates or to cover all such debates. Students interested in additional material for any week's topic should contact the course organizer.

Class 1: Adam Smith and the philosophy of limited *laissez-faire* (Date TBC)

Required reading:

None

Suggested reading:

Ha-Joon Chang, “Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom” in *Economics: The User’s Guide*, Pelican, 2014. Pp. 108-169 ([Download](#))

Robert O’Brien and Marc Williams, “Approaches to Global Political Economy” in *Global Political Economy: Evolution and Dynamics*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2010. Pp. 9-29. ([Download](#))

Class 2: Marx's critique of capitalism (*Date TBC*)

Required reading:

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. [Except "Socialist and Communist Literature" and the various Prefaces] (15 pp.) [If you have already read this, read the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts instead] ([Download](#))

David Harvey, "The Geography of Class Power" in *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography*, Routledge, 2001. Pp. 369-393. ([Download](#))

Suggested reading:

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. [Prefaces] (15 pp.) ([Download](#))

Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. (81 pp.) ([Download](#))

Adam Przeworski, "Proletariat Into a Class: The Process of Class Formation from Karl Kautsky's 'The Class Struggle' to Recent Controversies," in *Politics and Society* 7(4) 1977: 343-401. ([Download](#))

Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, Norton, 2005. (1284 pp.) ([Download](#))

Class 3: The transition from feudalism to capitalism *(Date TBC)*

Required reading:

Robert Brenner, “Property and Progress: Where Adam Smith Went Wrong” in Chris Wickham, *Marxist History-writing for the Twenty-first Century*, British Academy Occasional Papers, 2007. Pp. 49-111. ([Download](#))

Suggested reading:

The Brenner Debate, Edited by T. H. Aston and C. H. E. Philpin, Cambridge University Press, 1987. (352 pp.) ([Download](#))

Class 4: Capitalist development and the state (*Date TBC*)

Required reading:

Ha-Joon Chang, “Kicking Away the Ladder: The ‘Real’ History of Free Trade”, FPIF Special Report December 2003: 1-20. ([Download](#))

Ha-Joon Chang, “Leviathan or the Philosopher King?” in *Economics: The User’s Guide*, Pelican, 2014. Pp. 375-403. ([Download](#))

Geoff Ingham, “Schumpeter and Keynes” in *Capitalism*, Polity Press, 2008. Pp. 36-52. ([Download](#))

Suggested reading:

Greg Grandin, “What the Modern World Owes Slavery (It’s More Than Back Wages),” 2014. (5 pp.) ([Download](#))

Richard Kozul-Wright, “The myth of Anglo-Saxon Capitalism: Reconstructing the history of the American State” in H.-J. Chang and R. Rowthorn (eds.), *The Role of the State in Economic Change*, Clarendon Press, 1995. Pp. 81-113. ([Download](#))

Block, Fred, and Peter Evans, “The State and the Economy” in *Handbook of Economic Sociology (second edition)*, edited by Richard Swedberg and Neil Smelser, Princeton University Press, 2005. Pp. 505-526. ([Download](#))

Wolfgang Schluchter, “Modes of Capitalism” in *Rationalism, Religion, and Domination*, University of California Press, 1989. Pp. 281-314. ([Download](#))

Class 5: Class structure and class mobility in modern capitalism (*Date TBC*)

Required reading:

Reinhard Bendix, "Inequality and Social Structure: A Comparison of Marx and Weber" in *American Sociological Review* 39(2) April 1974: Pp. 149-161. ([Download](#))

G. William Domhoff, "Class and Power in America" in *Who Rules America?* McGraw Hill, 2009. Pp. 1-19. ([Download](#))

Maurice Zeitlin, "Corporate Ownership and Control: The Large Corporation and the Capitalist Class" in *American Journal of Sociology* 79(5) 1974: 1073-1119. ([Download](#))

Suggested reading:

G. William Domhoff, "Interlocking Directorates and the Corporate Community," October 2013. (~13 pp.) ([Download](#))

Aaron Bernstein, "Waking up from the American Dream," in *Businessweek*, November 30, 2003. (2 pp.) ([Download](#))

G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History, A Defence*, Oxford University Press, 2000. Pp. 63-78. ([Download](#))

Tom Bottomore, *Classes in Modern Society*, Vintage Books, 1991. (111 pp.) ([Download](#))

John Scott, "Controlling Constellations in Britain" in *Corporate Business and Capitalist Classes*, Oxford University Press, 1997. Pp. 79-91. ([Download](#))

John Scott, *Who Rules Britain?* Polity, 1991. Pp. 63-152 ([Download](#))

Sam Aaronovitch, *The Ruling Class: a study of British Finance Capital*, Lawrence and Wishart, 1961. Pp. 37-113. ([Download](#))

G. William Domhoff, "Social Cohesion & the Bohemian Grove," April 2005. (~14pp.) ([Link](#))

Class 6: The rise of the corporation (*Date TBC*)

Documentary:

The Corporation, 2003, directed by Mark Achbar and Jennifer Abbott. (165 min.) ([Stream](#))

Required reading:

Ha-Joon Chang, “Dramatis Personae” in *Economics: The User’s Guide*, Pelican, 2014. Pp. 170-201. ([Download](#))

Ted Nace, *Gangs of America*, (Table 1.1) Berret-Koehler, 2005. (2pp.) ([Download](#))

TRAC – *U.S. Prosecution of Corporate Crime Varies Widely by Location, Program and Agency*, 2016. ([Download](#))

Suggested reading:

Ted Nace, *Gangs of America*, Berret-Koehler, 2005. Pp. 19-140. ([Download](#))

Charles Perrow, *Organizing America*, Princeton University Press, 2005. (232 pp.) ([Download](#))

Class 7: Capitalism and inequalities (*Date TBC*)

Required reading:

Simon Szreter, “Wealth, Population, and Inequality: A Review Essay” in *Population and Development Review* 41(2) June 2015: Pp. 343-368. ([Download](#))

Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page, “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens” forthcoming in *Perspectives on Politics* (Fall) 2014. (42 pp.) ([Download](#))

Thomas Piketty (interview), “Dynamics of Inequality” in *New Left Review* (85) 2014: Pp. 103-116. ([Download](#))

Suggested reading:

Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, *The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone*, Bloomsbury Press, 2011. (230 pp.) ([Download](#))

Class 8: Capitalism and identity (*Date TBC*)

Required reading:

Frances Fox Piven, “Globalizing Capitalism and the Rise of Identity Politics” in *Socialist Register* (31) 1995: Pp. 102-116. ([Download](#))

Jeffery M. Paige, *Abstract Subjects: 'Class', 'Race', 'Gender' and 'Modernity'*, Manuscript (work in progress), 2000. ([Download](#))

Suggested reading:

Eric Hobsbawm, “Some Reflections on 'the Break-up of Britain'” in *New Left Review*, (105) (September-October) 1977. ([Download](#))

Eric Hobsbawm, “Identity Politics and the Left” in *New Left Review*, (217) (May/June) 1996: Pp. 38-47. ([Download](#))

Class 9: Capitalism, democracy and dictatorship ***(Date TBC)***

Required reading:

Goran Therborn, “The Rise of Capital and the Rule of Democracy” in *New Left Review* (103) 1977: 3-41. ([Download](#))

Ian Kershaw, “Politics and Economics of the Nazi State” in *The Nazi Dictatorship*, Oxford University Press, 2000. Pp. 47-68. ([Download](#))

Suggested reading:

Doug McAdam, “The Historical Context of Black Insurgency 1876-1954” in *Political process and the development of black insurgency, 1930-1970*, University of Chicago Press, 1999. Pp. 65-115.
([Download](#))

John D. Stephens, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Evelyn H. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, University of Chicago Press, 1992. (398 pp.) ([Download](#))

Class 10: The capitalist class and the state (*Date TBC*)

Required reading:

G. William Domhoff, “The Class-Domination Theory of Power,” February 2012. (13 pp.) ([Download](#))

G. William Domhoff, “How the Power Elite Dominate Government” in *Who Rules America?* McGraw Hill, 2009. Pp. 85-113, 147-209. ([Download](#))

Suggested reading:

G. William Domhoff, *Who Rules America?* McGraw Hill, 2013. (288 pp.) ([Download of Fifth Edition](#))

Geoffrey Ingham, *Capitalism Divided*, Palgrave MacMillan, 1984. Pp.40-151. ([Download](#))

John Scott, *Who Rules Britain?* Polity, 1991. Pp. 63-152. ([Download](#))

Sam Aaronovitch, *The Ruling Class: a study of British Finance Capital*, Lawrence and Wishart, 1961. Pp. 37-113. ([Download](#))

Class 11: Oligopoly, innovation and the state in contemporary American capitalism (*Date TBC*)

Documentary:

Taken for a Ride, 1996, directed by Jim Klein. (55 min.) ([Stream](#))

TED Talk:

Government - Investor, Risk-taker, Innovator by Mariana Mazzucato, (14 min.) ([Stream](#))

Required reading:

Elon Musk, “All Our Patent Are Belong To You” on the Tesla Motors blog ([Link](#))

Fred Block and Matt Keller, “Where do Innovations Come From? Transformations in the U.S. National Innovation System 1970-2006” in *Socio-Economic Review* 7(3) 2009: 459-483. ([Download](#))

Mariana Mazzucato, “The State behind the iPhone” in *The Entrepreneurial State: Debunking Public vs. Private Sector Myths*, Anthem Press, 2013. Pp. 87-140. (No download available yet)

Walter Adams and James Brock, *The Bigness Complex*, Stanford University Press, 2004. Pp. 3-76. (No download available yet)

Suggested reading:

Walter Adams and James Brock, *The Bigness Complex*, Stanford University Press, 2004. (386 pp.) (No download available yet)

Marcia Angell, *The Truth about the Drug Companies: How They Deceive Us and What to Do about It*, Random House, 2005. (319 pp.) ([Download](#))

Class 12: Corporate capitalism and the mass media (Date TBC)

Documentary:

Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media, 1992, directed by Mark Achbar & Peter Wintonick. (167 min.) ([Stream](#))

Required reading:

Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Pantheon Books, 1988. Pp. 1-35. ([Download](#))

Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman (interview by Andrew Mullen Andrew Mullen), “The Propaganda Model after 20 Years” in *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* (November) 2009. (6 pp.) ([Download](#))

Suggested reading:

Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Pantheon Books, 1988. (393 pp.) [Strongly suggested: at least one other chapter] ([Download](#))

Jeffery Klaehn, “A Critical Review and Assessment of Herman and Chomsky’s ‘Propaganda Model’” in *European Journal of Communication* 17(2) 2002: 147-182. ([Download](#))

Class 13: Crisis and austerity (*Date TBC*)

Documentary:

Inside Job, 2010, directed by Charles Ferguson. (120 min.) ([Stream](#))

Required reading:

Robert Brenner, “Towards the Precipice” in *London Review of Books* 25(3) 2003: 18-23. ([Download](#))

Suzanne J. Konzelmann, “The Political Economics of Austerity” in *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 2014. (41 pp.) ([Download](#))

Suggested reading:

Robert Brenner, *What’s Good for Goldman Sachs is Good for America: The Origins of the Current Crisis*, 2009. Pp. 1-73. ([Download](#))

James Crotty, “The Great Austerity War” in *Cambridge Journal of Economics* (36) 2012: 79-104. ([Download](#))

Pasquale Tridico, “Financial Crisis and Global Imbalances” in *Cambridge Journal of Economics* (36) 2012: 17-42. ([Download](#))

Matt Taibbi, “The Great American Bubble Machine” In *Rolling Stone* (1082-83) 2010. ([Download](#))

Class 14: Capitalism and global poverty (*Date TBC*)

Required reading:

Sarah Anderson et al, *Field Guide to the Global Economy*, The New Press, 2005. Pp. 28-95. ([Download](#))

Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Bogle-L'Ouverture, 1983. Pp. 224-238. ([Download](#))

Suggested reading:

Michael Chossudovsky, *The Globalization of Poverty and the New World Order*, Global Research, 2003. Pp.15-72. ([Download](#))

Ha-Joon Chang, *Bad Samaritans*, Bloomsbury Press, 2007. (280 pp.) ([Download](#))

John Perkins, *Confessions of an Economic Hitman*, Berrett-Koehler, 2004. (250 pp.) ([Download](#))

Paul A. Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth*, Monthly Review Press, 1957. (475 pp.) [Very advanced] ([Download](#))

Robert Brenner, "The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism" in *New Left Review* (104) 1977: 25-92. [Very advanced] ([Download](#))

Class 15: Consumerism (*Date TBC*)

Documentary:

Happiness Machines (Episode 1 of *Century of the Self*), 2002, directed by Adam Curtis. (58 min.) ([Stream](#))

Required reading:

Juliet Schor, “A Life at Hard Labor”: Capitalism and Working Hours” in *The Overworked American*, BasicBooks, 1993. Pp. 43-82 ([Download](#))

Juliet Schor, “The Insidious Cycle of Work-and-Spend” in *The Overworked American*, BasicBooks, 1993. Pp. 107-138. ([Download](#))

Suggested reading:

Naomi Klein, *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*, Picador, 1999. Pp. 25-78. ([Download](#))

Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. (184 pp.) ([Download](#))

Class 16: Is there an alternative? (*Date TBC*)

Required reading:

Adam Przeworski, "Social Democracy as a Historical Phenomenon" in *New Left Review* (122) 1980: 27-58. ([Download](#))

Terry Mollner, "Mondragon: A Third Way," in *Review of Social Economy*, 42(3) 1984: 260-271. ([Download](#))

Suggested reading:

Diane Elson, "Market Socialism or Socialization of the Market?" in *New Left Review* (172) 1988: 3-44. ([Download](#))

Gosta Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Polity Press, 1996. ([Download](#))