

Economics 7004-001
Political Economy / Critique II

Spring 2015, Tu/Th 11:00am-12:20pm, OSH 360, Credit Hours: 3

Instructor: Minqi Li, Associate Professor
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Course Content / Description

The course applies Marxian, Ecological, and World System approaches to the study of the capitalist world system. It focuses on the structural contradictions of historical capitalism and evaluates possibilities of social transformation in the 21st century.

Course Objectives

Students will study and apply the following basic theoretical approaches/concepts: historical materialism, the endless accumulation of capital, core/periphery/semi-periphery, capitalist accumulation and crisis, long waves, hegemonic cycles, ecological limits to growth, socialism and communism.

Textbooks:

Robert C. Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*, second edition (W. W. Norton & Company, 1978).
Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Essential Wallerstein* (New Press, 2000)

Teaching and Learning Methods

This course uses lectures, class discussions/presentations, exams, and term paper

Course Requirements and Grading:

Attendance: 10%
Presentation: 20%
Term Paper: 30%
Final Exam: 40%

Presentation: each student is required to make two in-class presentations on the reading topics (see the section on “Reading Topics”).

Term paper: each student is required to complete a 15-20 page, double-spaced paper that applies Marxist, post-Keynesian, Ecological, or World System theories to study the historical dynamics/structural contradictions of a capitalist economy chosen by the student.

The paper is due in the last class (April 28).

Grading Schedule:

A: 90-100%
A-: 85-89.9%
B+: 80-84.4%
B: 75-79.9%
B-: 70-74.9%
C+: 65-69.9%
C: 60-64.4%
C-: 55-59.9%
D+: 50-54.9%
D: 45-49.9%
D-: 40-44.9%
E: 0-39.9%

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the [Center for Disability Services](#), 162 Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

Accommodations Policy

Some of the readings, lectures, films, or presentations in this course may include material that may conflict with the core beliefs of some students. Please review the syllabus carefully to see if the course is one that you are committed to taking. If you have a concern, please discuss it with the instructor at your earlier convenience. For more information, please consult the University of Utah's Accommodations Policy, which appears at: <http://www.admin.utah.edu/facdev/accommodations-policy.pdf>.

Faculty Responsibilities

This instructor will:

1. Convene classes at their scheduled time unless a valid reason and notice is given.
2. Perform & return evaluations in a timely manner.
3. Inform students at the beginning of class of the following:
 - a. General content
 - b. Course activities
 - c. Evaluation methods
 - d. Grade scale
 - e. Schedule of meetings, topics, due dates.
4. Ensure that the environment is conducive to learning.
5. Enforce the student code.

Should the instructor be late for class due to weather or other reasons, the department will be notified and a departmental representative will meet the class and inform

students regarding when the class will begin. If the instructor is late, students may inquire by calling the economics department at 581-7481.

All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Student Code, spelled out in the student handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article III of the Code. The Code also specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the code carefully and know they are responsible for the content. According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty responsibility to enforce responsible class behaviors, and the instructor will do so, beginning with verbal warnings, and progressing to dismissal from class, to a failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the student behavior committee.

Reading Topics:

(For detailed reading list, find it from <http://content.csbs.utah.edu/~mli/>)

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Historical Materialism**
- 3. The Capitalist World System**
- 4. Accumulation and Crisis: Marxian Approaches**
- 5. Accumulation and Crisis: Post-Keynesian Approaches**
- 6. Understanding the “Great Recession”**
- 7. Neoliberalism and After**
- 8. The End of the Capitalist History?**
- 9. Capitalism and the Global Environmental Crisis**
- 10. Spring Break**
- 11. Capitalism and Peak Oil**
- 12. Climate Change: Barbarism or Socialism?**
- 13. Historical Socialism: Economics**
- 14. Historical Socialism: Politics**
- 15. Historical Possibilities of the 21st Century**
- 16. Review and Conclusion**