

Power, Identity, Resistance II

Social Sciences (SOSC) 11200
Winter Quarter 2017

Professor: Aaron Benanav
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Office: Gates-Blake Hall Room 303
Office Hours: Tu/Th 2:00pm-2:50pm

Section 8: Tu/Th 12:00pm-1:20pm, Pick 319
Section 14: Tu/Th 3:00pm-4:20pm, Pick 319

Course Description

This seminar is the second quarter of a three-quarter sequence in the social sciences. It examines the ways in which power both constitutes and is constituted by economics, politics and culture in the modern era. We look at the different modes by which power is exercised as well as at various means of resisting domination. We also look at the ways in which economic, political and cultural forces interact to shape our identities. Through exposure to canonical texts, this seminar will provide you with tools for thinking through social problems and will enhance your argumentative skills. More broadly, it will help you develop your capacity for critical reasoning and writing. This winter, we will examine theories of the emergence, structure and historical trajectory of capitalist economies. We will ask: what are the consequences of capitalist patterns of economic development for politics and society more generally? Our texts this quarter are by Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Karl Polanyi, T.H. Marshall, Wilhelm Roepke, and Michel Foucault.

Required Texts

- Smith, *Wealth of Nations* (Modern Library)
- Marx, *Capital Volume 1* (Penguin Classics)
- Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Beacon)
- Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics* (Picador)
- Other texts will be made available on Chalk

Breakdown of Grades

- First Paper, 20 percent
- Second Paper, 20 percent
- Third Paper, 20 percent
- Short Assignments, 10 percent
- Attendance, 10 percent
- Classroom Participation, 20 percent

Course Expectations

This course serves as an introduction to social thought. Class time will be spent reconstructing and evaluating the arguments of classic texts as well as comparing these arguments to one another. The course will work best if it is a collective effort in which we all participate. For that reason, your attendance is required. One absence per quarter will be excused, as long as you notify me of your absence by email before the start of class (exceptions will be made for emergencies). Additional absences will result in the loss of 3.33 points off of your final grade.

Of course, not only attendance but also participation in discussion is essential for a successful seminar. Please take notes by hand rather than on a computer, as screens put distance between classroom participants. Students are expected to bring their own, marked-up copies of the readings to class. Read all of the required reading and to be prepared to discuss it in detail. Over the course of the quarter, you will be also expected to complete a series of writing assignments.

Writing Assignments

There are two kinds of writing assignments in this class. Short writing assignments should take about one hour. Longer assignments should take 8 hours (that is to say, an afternoon and probably an evening as well). These time estimates are suggestive of what I am looking for in terms of content. Short assignments should be approximately 300 words, single-spaced, with parenthetical citations as needed. By contrast, long assignments must be 1200-1500 words, double-spaced, and in 12pt font with one-inch margins. Long assignments should also use proper, Chicago-style footnotes for citations. For all assignments, include your name, my name, and the course number, including the section number, at the top. Also, always give your paper a substantial title. Any papers that are longer than a page should include page numbers at the bottom of each page.

Short assignments. These are meant to be “exploratory” writings. Use writing as a way to figure out what you think about a text. Here are some questions to consider. What (theoretical/practical) problem does the author address? What are his or her main points? How does the author seek to prove these points? What sort of reasoning does he or she provide and what evidence? If you had the author sitting next to you, what would you say to him or her? How would you evaluate the author’s arguments? How do the author’s points reflect on the way you choose to live your life? Please note: you don’t have to answer all of these questions in your paper. You will be given a check for any writing that shows you are making a real effort (half-credit is also possible).

Long assignments. For these, you are expected to do exploratory writing on your own and then to organize your thoughts into a polished piece of writing. One week in advance of each assignment’s due date, I will provide two questions from which you will choose one. In your essay, be sure to explain what theoretical problem or question you will address. Then, put forward an argument based on your reconstruction and evaluation of positions taken by the authors we read in class. Essays should be well organized and well written. Each paragraph must have a clear topic sentence that advances the argument by one step. You should back up the points you make using both reasoning and evidence, but note that in this class, evidence will consist solely of quotations from the texts we read, properly cited. At the end of your essay, be sure to explain the significance of the arguments you have reconstructed as well as of your evaluations (why does any of this matter?). Also, please include a works cited section with proper bibliographic information.

Note that short assignments will not be accepted late. Long assignments will be accepted late, but they will be marked off by a third of a letter grade for every day a paper is late (unless arrangements have been made with me before the original due-date has passed).

Appendix: Additional Course Policies

Disabilities: Please contact me and Student Disability Services (<https://disabilities.uchicago.edu/request-review>) by the end of the second week if you have a documented disability so we can make reasonable accommodations. All discussions will remain confidential.

Citations: For essay assignments, cite by author, title and page number any ideas that are (a) not common knowledge and (b) not your own idea. Anything covered in lecture counts as common knowledge. Put quotations in quotation marks and, again, identify their source. When possible, paraphrase from sources (and cite them) rather than quoting them directly. For citation style, I prefer the Chicago Manual of Style, which uses footnotes for citations. If you are unfamiliar with this citation style, please see: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/03/>

Academic Dishonesty: Acts of plagiarism, cheating, or copying work from other students, as well as other sorts of academic dishonesty, are serious violations of university policy. Do not copy ideas, quotations, portions of papers or entire papers from friends, websites, books, articles, or term-paper mills. You will get caught, either in this course, or in a later one. The consequences of cheating for your education and your moral character will last a lifetime.

Discrimination, Intimidation & Harassment: It is the right of all students to have equal access to course content in an environment free of prejudice, discrimination, and harassment. Learn your fellow students names. Treat them with respect regardless of differences of perspective.

Questions: If you have any questions, do not hesitate to visit me in office hours. I will also answer emails pertaining to the course, but I will do so only during my office hours and only when I do not have students in my office. In other words, I prefer that if you have a substantial question, you ask me in person. If you cannot come to my office hours because of a scheduling conflict, or for any other reason, we can always arrange to meet at another time. I am also regularly in my office, so feel free to come by and say hello. Please use email primarily for administrative issues, such as notifying me of an absence or requesting a meeting outside of regularly scheduled times.



READING SCHEDULE

Week I

- January 3rd: Introduction
January 5th: Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Plan of Work (xxiii-xxvi); Book 1: Chapters 1-8.*
*skip the middle of 43 to 52, and skip all footnotes added by the editors.

Week II

- January 10th: Smith, *Wealth*, Book 1, Ch. 9-10, Ch. 11 conclusion (284-8), Book 2, Ch. 3
January 12th: Smith, *Wealth*, Book 3, Ch. 1-4, Book 4, Ch. 2, Book 5, Ch. 1, Parts 2-3 only

Week III

- January 17th: Smith, *Wealth*, Book 4, Ch. 7-8
January 19th: Marx, *Capital*, Preface to the First Edition (89-93), Ch. 1-2

Week IV

- January 24th: Marx, *Capital*, Ch. 3, Part 2a-b (198-220), Ch. 4-8
January 26th: Marx, *Capital*, Ch. 9 Parts 1-2, Ch. 10 Parts 1-2 & 5-7, Ch. 12

Week V

- January 31st: Marx, *Capital*, Ch. 13, Ch. 14, Part 1, Ch. 15, Parts 1-5
February 2nd: Marx, *Capital*, Ch. 23, 24 Part 1, 25 Parts 1-4

Week VI

- February 7th: Marx, *Capital*, Ch. 26-33
February 9th: Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, Ch 1-7

Week VII

- February 14th: Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, Ch. 9-13
February 16th: Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, Ch. 16-21

Week VIII

- February 21st: Marshall, "Citizenship and Social Class,"
Roepke, *Humane Economy*, Ch. 3
February 23rd: Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, 1-100

Week IX

- February 28th: Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, 101-184
March 2nd: Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, 185-266

Week X

- March 7th: Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, 267-318
March 9th: READING PERIOD

Finals Week

WRITING SCHEDULE

Week I

January 3rd:
January 5th: Reading Response (Smith)

Week II

January 10th:
January 12th:

Week III

January 17th:
January 19th: Reading Response (Marx 1)

Week IV

January 23rd: **First Paper Due Monday in Gates-Blake 310 by 4:30pm**
January 24th:
January 26th:

Week V

January 31st: Reading Response (Marx 2)
February 2nd:

Week VI

February 7th:
February 9th: Reading Response (Polanyi)

Week VII

February 13th: **Second Paper Due Monday in Gates-Blake 310 by 4:30pm**
February 14th:
February 16th:

Week VIII

February 21st:
February 23rd: Reading Response (Foucault)

Week IX

February 28th:
March 2nd:

Week X

March 7th:
March 9th: READING PERIOD

Finals Week

March 15th: **Final Paper Due Wednesday in Gates-Blake 310 by 4:30pm**