

PHIL 4326 - Major Figures: Karl Marx

Fall 2021 Syllabus

Tuesdays, 7:00-9:45pm

Professor Matthew J. Brown

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Office Location and Hours: JO 4.120

TBD

Appointments: <https://doodle.com/mm/matthewjbrown/book>

This class is concurrent with PHIL 6391: Major Figures.

Course Description

This seminar focuses on the philosophy and thought of Karl Marx, including his political, economic, epistemological, and ethical views. After a brief look at his early work, this seminar will focus on analyzing the arguments of his masterwork, *Capital*, in detail.

While particular knowledge of the history of philosophy or economics is **NOT** presupposed, nor any mathematical skills, any of the following prior background would help students reach a deeper understanding of the material: the works of Kant, Hegel, and the German Idealists; the classical economists including Smith and Ricardo; basic linear algebra.

Student Learning Objectives

1. Student will demonstrate knowledge of the significance of Karl Marx in the history of philosophy, economics, and political thought through class discussion and writing assignments.
2. Through engaging with the works of Karl Marx, students will articulate and employ the methodologies of philosophical enquiry and textual engagement in class discussion and writing assignments.
3. Student will engage with central philosophical concepts and ideas concerning value, justice, alienation, authenticity through discussion and make use of those concepts and ideas in their written work.
4. Students will demonstrate philosophical argumentation and clear communication through writing assignments.

Required Textbooks

- Karl Marx, *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society* (Hackett Classics)
- Karl Marx, *Capital* Volumes I-III (Penguin Classics)

You must also obtain at pack of 100+ **4x6, ruled index cards** (white or pale shade). (Incorrectly sized, unruled, or vivid/dark colors not accepted.)

Recommended Secondary Sources

These sources will help you better understand the structures and arguments of Marx's texts, especially *Capital*.

- Paul M. Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development: Principles of Marxian Political Economy*
- Robert Paul Wolff, *Understanding Marx: A Reconstruction and Critique of Capital*
- Robert Paul Wolff, *Moneybags Must Be So Lucky: On the Literary Structure of Capital*
- Allen W. Wood, *Karl Marx* (Second Edition)

Suggested Primary Sources

- Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* - Marx's notebooks of 1857-58, consisting of a length unfinished manuscript on "Fundamentals of a Critique of Political Economy." Valuable in tracing the development of Marx's thinking in *Capital* and on clarifying certain aspects of his theories.
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* - Marx's most widely read and programmatic work.

Suggested Secondary Sources

- David Harvey, *A Companion to Marx's Capital: The Complete Edition* - Another valuable source of aid in grasping the core ideas and arguments of Marx's *Capital*.
- Sidney Hook, *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx: A Revolutionary Interpretation* - An influential early interpretation of Marx by an American philosopher and student of John Dewey.
- William Clare Roberts, *Marx's Inferno: The Political Theory of Capital* - Situates Marx's work in the context of political theory, the worker's movement, and the literary structure of Dante's *Inferno*.
- Joan Robinson, *An Essay on Marxist Economics* - A reading of Marx's theories by a leading post-Keynesian economist.
- Tom Rockmore, *Marx's Dream: From Capitalism to Communism* - Situates Marx in the philosophical tradition primarily as a moral philosopher.

- Helena Sheehan, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Science: A Critical History* - Traces the influence of Marx on the history of the philosophy of science.
- Jonathan Wolff, *Why Read Marx Today?*
- G.A. Cohen, *If You're an Egalitarian, How Come You're So Rich?* - Explores the connections between Marxism and Rawlsian liberalism.

Class Schedule by Week

1. Introduction
2. Marx's Early Economic Philosophy
3. Marx's Conception of Philosophy and Practice
4. The Theory of Value: Smith and Ricardo
5. Marx's Theory of Value
6. Irony and Mystification: Literary and Methodological Issues
7. The Concept of Capital
8. Exploitation and Surplus Value
9. Technical Progress
10. Economic and Social Reproduction
11. Prices and Profits
12. The Accumulation of Capital
13. Capitalist Crises
14. Original Accumulation
15. *Fall Break*
16. Wrap-up and Marx's Influence

Assignments and Grading

1. Attendance and Participation (15%) - Come to class regularly, well-prepared, and participate in class discussion and peer activities.
2. Quizzes (15%) - In class, short answer questions over the required readings.
3. Discussion Questions (20%) - Each week students will submit 1-2 substantive, interpretive or evaluative questions about the reading on an index card at the beginning of class.
4. Term paper (50%) - 2,500-4,000 word paper engaging philosophically with some aspect of Marx's thought covered in the course. The paper will have multiple preparatory stages such as topic proposal, initial bibliography, outline draft.

Course and Instructor Policies

Class Meeting expectations

You are expected to have **read the assignments *before* class**, and it would be to your benefit to also read them again after class. You are expected to have

the readings for each day's class open to refer to during discussion. You are expected to **listen respectfully** to the professor and your fellow students, and **participate** in class discussions and activities.

Late Work, Make-Up, and Completion

It is important to stay on track with the class schedule, or else you will fall behind and not be able to complete the work to a satisfactory standard. Extensions will be given upon request, within reason, as long as you ask *before the deadline*.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Don't do it! If you incorporate any work that is not your own into any project that you do, and you do not cite the source properly, this counts as plagiarism. This includes someone doing the work for you, taking work done by another student, verbatim copying of published sources, *paraphrasing* published work without citation, and paraphrasing in an inappropriate way even with citation. Re-using work created for another course also counts as plagiarism in most contexts. Unless group work is *explicitly* permitted or required, it is expected that all of the work that you turn in is original and your own, and that any sources that you make use of are correctly cited. If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing, it is absolutely mandatory for me to turn you in to the Dean of Students Office of Community Standards and Conduct.

University Policies

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus: <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>