

37:575:392 Issues in Work: Marx and Work Today

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Fall 2022

Meets Thurs. 5:40-8:40 in the Labor Education Center, Room 131, 10/27-12/1, except Thanksgiving Day.

Class Objectives

The purpose of this course is to integrate class analysis with everyday examples of labor issues in the US and beyond. Students will read both theoretical works from classic philosophers to contemporary periodicals and journal articles to form a deeper understanding of class issues.

Resources

- a. Student resources: <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/about-smlr/fall-2022-information-smlr-students>
- b. Scholarships: <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/academic-programs/scholarships>

Week 1 Introduction: Understanding Historical Materialism Part 1

Required reading (read after class if not before):

<https://jacobinmag.com/2020/09/working-class-peoples-guide-capitalism-marxist-economics>

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/subject/hist-mat/karl-marx.htm> (Engels Abstract from Karl Marx)

https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1890/letters/90_09_21.htm (Engels Letter to J. Boloch)

Week 2 Understanding Historical Materialism Part 2

Required reading before class

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/09/30/thoroughly-modern-marx/>

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm> (Chapter 1 of Marx and Engels' Manifesto of the Communist Party)

<https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/marx-was-right-five-surprising-ways-karl-marx-predicted-2014-237285/>

Optional reading:

[The Utopian Question \(peacelandbread.com\)](https://peacelandbread.com)

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch01.htm> (Chapter 1 of Marx's 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte)

Week 3 Alienated Labor and the Primacy of Economic Power

Required reading before class:

<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2021/12/alienation-reification-commodity-fetishism-philosophy-capitalism>

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1865/value-price-profit/index.htm> (Marx's Value Price and Profit Chapter IV-XI and XIV)

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/06/15/us/amazon-workers.html> (NY Times expose on Amazon)

<https://labornotes.org/2022/04/amazon-workers-staten-island-clinch-historic-victory>

In class:

Videos from Richard Wolff and David Harvey

Clips from Sorry to Bother You

Week 4 Revolution and Imperialism

Required reading before class:

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/> (Lenin's Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism Chap 7 and 9)

Optional reading:

[Anti-Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Class Struggle \(peacelandbread.com\)](https://peacelandbread.com)

<https://redsails.org/china-has-billionaires/>

In class:

Show intro to Black Panther (2018)

Show clips of Snowpiercer (2013)

Week 5 Hegemony

Required Reading before class:

Introduction 1-25 of “Whatever It Takes: How the MCU Avenges Neoliberal Hegemony”

<https://collections.ctdigitalarchive.org/islandora/object/20002%3A860653361?search=manicastro> (Steven Manicastro 2021)

Routledge Critical Thinkers: Antonio Gramsci (Steve Jones Chapter 3: Hegemony)

Clips from Spider-Man: Homecoming

Review course material

Take home exercise/exam due: Thursday Dec. 8th online.

Assessment of what you have learned. The test will be a combination of term ID questions, and true and false questions requiring an explanation of why it is true or false.