

## **POLS 4450 Marxian Political Thought**

---

**Professor:** Marcus E. Green

**Office:** Towers 216

**Office Hours:** TR 11:00-11:50 · W 5:15-5:45  
or by appointment

**Phone:** (614) 823-1106

**Email:** mgreen@otterbein.edu

**Quarter:** Spring 2012 | Jan 30 - May 17

**Section #:** 01

**Schedule #:** 21354

**Class Time:** TR 12:00-1:45

**Location:** Library 126

**Website:** access through Blackboard

---

### **Course Description and Objectives**

---

This course examines the political thought and political practice arising from the works of Karl Marx and the Marxist tradition. The course offers students the opportunity to consider the works of Marx, Engels, V.I. Lenin, Antonio Gramsci and other Marxists in their own words, to critically assess the merits of their ideas, and to develop elements of historical knowledge necessary to seriously assess the legacy of their contributions to political theory and analysis. The course will examine some of the classic texts and theoretical debates that arose from the Marxist tradition, as well as the principal concepts of Marxism, such as the notions of historical materialism, dialectics, alienation, the critique of political economy, and revolutionary practice. Through this process we will also examine the origins, history, and nature of capitalism.

The striking characteristic of this course is not what it includes but what it excludes in its analysis of Marxism. It is impossible to sufficiently cover the foundations of Marxism, early-twentieth century Marxism, and contemporary Marxism in one semester. For an expansive view of the various forms of Marxism, consider Leszek Kolakowski's *Main Currents of Marxism*, David McLellan's *Marxism after Marx*, and the journals *Historical Materialism*, *Monthly Review*, *New Left Review*, *Rethinking Marxism*, *Science & Society*, *Socialism and Democracy*, *Socialist Register*, and *Thesis Eleven*.

### **Learning Objectives**

1. To help students gain an awareness of the main features of Marxism and the issues and debates that arise in its relation to political theory and political economy.
2. To introduce students to a number of the leading late modern and contemporary thinkers.
3. To assist students in developing their critical readings skills and skills of textual analysis and interpretation.
4. To assist students in the development of their analytical, critical thinking, writing, and communicative skills.

---

### **Assignments & the Determination of Final Grade**

---

#### **a. Two Essays (20% each)**

Students are expected to write two 8-10 page essays for this course, each worth 20% of the final grade. There are no exams. Each essay is intended to address particular readings, issues, and concepts covered in a particular period. The essay assignments are designed for you to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the theoretical arguments under review and to provide a critical analysis of them. "Critical analysis" does *not* mean a dismissal of particular ideas or concepts. Rather, it entails a critical investigation of a set of ideas in order to reveal the

limits, flaws, and/or problems related to them. Students are expected to engage with the primary texts for each essay. I will provide a list of recommended questions and topics for each essay assignment at least two weeks prior to the due date.

### **b. Seminar Presentations (20%)**

Students are required to conduct three in-class seminar presentations during the term (one on Marx's writings and two on another authors) and submit a one page outline for each presentation. The three presentations will be worth 20% of the final grade. Each presentation will be graded on the 4-point scale, and the grades from the three presentations will be averaged at the end of the term. Students will be asked to sign up for particular readings to present.

#### **Seminar Presentation Instructions**

- The in-class oral presentations should be between 6 and 12 minutes.
- Students are required to submit a one page outline of their presentation, due on the day of the presentation. The outlines should be typed (single-space, 12 point font) and should be one page.
- The outline of the presentation should follow the format below.

#### **Introduction**

1. Provide your own argument or theme to encompass presentation.
2. State the author's argument.
3. Provide social, political, and/ intellectual context to frame the author's argument.

#### **Summary Section**

4. Summarize the author's evidence to support his/her argument,
5. Identify the most important concept(s)/point(s) in the text.
6. Cite brief passages that demonstrate your points

#### **Concluding Section**

7. Introduce your views of the text. Possible topics to discuss:
  - a. The strengths and weaknesses of the author's work
  - b. Discuss the issues that you find interesting
  - c. Discuss the issues that require further elaboration/detail
8. How does the material compare and contrast with other readings that we have already studied in the course?
9. Pose questions for discussion and address students' and professor's questions.

### **c. Class Participation (20%)**

Because this is a seminar course, students are expected to engage in class discussions throughout the semester, and students are expected to lead portions of the class sessions. Students are not graded on attendance, but they are graded on participation. In addition to the formal essay requirements, successful achievement of course objectives requires active class participation, which is an important and valuable aspect of the learning experience. Therefore, 20% of the final course grade is determined by class participation. This means that I expect students to contribute and participate in class discussions. You will only receive an acceptable grade for class participation if you attend class and participate in discussion. You should come to class prepared to discuss particular issues, topics, and readings.

Your participation grade will be determined by the quality and quantity of your participation performance. Student participation grades will be based on substantive and constructive (i.e. respectful) participation in class discussions. Substantive and constructive participation entails a combination of both speaking out and listening. The four components of your participation grade are:

- quantity of contributions to class discussions (ideally: speaking out regularly, but not dominating the discussion)
- quality of contributions to class discussions (meaning substantive contributions that address the course readings and directly-related topics).
- raising new points or questions for discussion
- responding effectively to points or questions raised by others

**Participation Grade Breakdown**

Participation Points	Grade
12	4.0
11	3.8
10	3.7
9	3.3
8	3.0
7	2.7
6	2.3
5	2.0
4	1.7
3	1.3
2	1.0
1	0.7
0	0.0

Participation grades will be determined by the quality and quantity of student performance. For each discussion question a student successfully answers, the student will receive one point. At the end of the semester, students’ participation grades will be calculated based upon their total raw participation points following the scale to the left. For instance, a student with 11 participation points, will receive a grade of 3.8 for participation.

**d. Reading journal (20%)**

For each class, except the introductory classes of week 1, write a journal entry that discusses the assigned readings for that class. The journal should discuss all of the readings for that class, although it need not devote equal space to each of them. No more than one-half of the journal should summarize the readings; the remainder should be a critical engagement with the ideas raised in the reading(s) – critique, contextualization, analysis of argument, reasoning, evidence, etc. The journal must conclude with one or two questions for class discussion.

The journal entries should be short (350-500 words) and will be graded on a pass/fail basis. In order to receive full credit, journal entries must fulfill all of the following requirements:

1. 350-500 words, in full-sentence, paragraph form (not point form), typed in single space;
2. mentions all readings for that class session;
3. provides a description of the main argument for each reading;
4. at least one-half of your written entry is devoted to critical engagement with (not a summary of) the readings;
5. contains at least one question for class discussion;
6. must be handed in (by the author) at the beginning of class in which those readings are discussed.

Late journal entries will not be accepted.

## Reading Journal Grade Breakdown

Reading Journal Entries	Grade
24	4.00
23	3.80
22	3.60
21	3.40
20	3.20
19	3.00
18	2.80
17	2.60
16	2.40
15	2.20
14	2.00

Reading Journal Entries	Grade
13	1.80
12	1.60
11	1.40
10	1.20
9	1.00
8	0.80
7	0.60
6	0.40
5	0.20
0-4	0.00

There are 25 days of course readings. To receive full credit, you must submit 24 reading journal entries.

## Determination of Final Grade

Assignments	Date	Points	Grades
Essay 1 (8 – 10 pages)	Thu, Mar 8	4	
Essay 2 (8 - 10 pages)		4	
3 Class Presentations (1 page each)	varies	4	
Participation	n/a	4	
Reading Journal	n/a	4	
<b>Total Possible Points</b>		<b>20</b>	
<b>Average</b>		<b>4</b>	

Due during finals week.  
Average of the three presentations

Final Grade = average of assignments & participation  
- deductions for absences

## Calculation of Final Grade

The calculation of the final grade for the course is determined by the average of the two essay grades, the 3 presentations, the class participation grade, and the reading journal grade. The final grade recorded for the course follows the grade scale below. The final grade average must meet the minimum threshold of the grade scale for each corresponding grade. For example, to receive an A- in the course, a student's final grade average must be 3.7 or above. In the case of a marginal final grade within .05 of a point, I will round up. For instance, if a student's final grade average is 3.66, I will record the final grade as an A-, but a final grade average of 3.60 will be recorded as a B+.

## Grade Scale for Final Grade

The grading system for this course follows Otterbein University's four-point grade scale found in the University Catalog: [http://catalog.otterbein.acalog.com/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=700&returnto=search#Grade\\_Symbols](http://catalog.otterbein.acalog.com/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=700&returnto=search#Grade_Symbols)

Grade Scale	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Description
3.85 – 4.00	A	4.0	Exceptional
3.7 – 3.84	A-	3.7	Excellent
3.3 – 3.69	B+	3.3	Above Average
3.0 – 3.29	B	3.0	Above Average
2.7 – 2.99	B-	2.7	Above Average
2.3 – 2.69	C+	2.3	Average
2.0 – 2.29	C	2.0	Average
1.7 – 1.99	C-	1.7	Below Average
1.3 – 1.69	D+	1.3	Below Average
1.0 – 1.29	D	1.0	Below Average
0.0 – 0.99	F	0.0	Failure

Grades for all assignments and the final grade will follow the Grade Scale in first column. This Grade Scale will be used to determine the final Letter Grade.

---

## **Course Policies**

---

### **Course Seminar Format**

The course is organized as a seminar. The success of a seminar course depends crucially on the seminar participants' capacity and willingness to engage in class discussion. I will do very little (if any) lecturing. Class sessions will be divided between student presentations and discussions, which will be based upon readings from the required texts. The discussions shall provide students with a forum in which they can examine and discuss the key concepts of the texts under review with their classmates and the professor. Students are responsible for knowing the material covered in the assigned readings, student presentations, and the material covered in discussions. Therefore, students are encouraged to attend class, read before class, participate in class discussions, and to take notes.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is required but you are not graded for it. You are permitted up to 4 unexcused absences without penalty. After your fourth unexcused absence, I will deduct .1 of a point from your final grade average for each additional absence. For example, 5 absences = -0.1 point; 6 absences = -0.2 point, etc. If you need to miss more than three classes for university approved reasons, please see me to make arrangements. Sickness short of hospitalization or incapacitation does not constitute grounds for an excused absence. I may make exceptions for truly unusual and unanticipated events, but such arrangements must be discussed with me. Colds, flus, hangovers, doctor appointments, changes in work schedules, etc. do not count as either unusual or unanticipated. You are permitted four unexcused absences to deal with such events.

### **Tardiness**

If you are regularly late to class, I reserve the right to reduce your final grade average by .1 point for each instance of tardiness.

### **Classroom Environment**

This course is designed to challenge your written and verbal communicative skills, which are, in my view, not only necessary to the learning process but vital to the development of democratic culture and citizenship. Just like writing, the public exchange of ideas requires skill. It requires a level of confidence to speak in front of others and a level of maturity and respect to listen to others. It can be said that this course is Socratic in the sense that our discussions are similar to workshops in which we workout different thoughts and ideas in coordination with one another. Because of this, I will work to make the classroom environment respectful and comfortable for all, and I expect you to do the same.

### **Blackboard**

I will distribute course information and materials on Blackboard. Therefore, it is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with Blackboard and to login periodically for course updates.

### **Submitting Essays**

I require students to submit a hard copy of each paper and to submit an electronic copy through Blackboard. Make a copy of each paper before you turn it in. It is the responsibility of students to keep duplicate copies of their papers.

## **Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty**

Otterbein policies regarding academic integrity will be strictly enforced. All submitted work must be your own – *including presentations* – and it is the responsibility of all students to understand the methods of proper citation and to apply those methods in all written assignments. I will investigate indications of copied or plagiarized work, and I reserve the right to administer an oral exam and to question the student, if I suspect a student has submitted work that may be plagiarized.

According to the Otterbein Campus Life Handbook, “any use of the words or ideas of someone else as though they were the student’s own words, constitutes plagiarism. This definition applies to the use of both printed and unprinted sources, including the work of other students or faculty.” (See: <http://www.otterbein.edu/public/CampusLife/HealthAndSafety/StudentConduct/JudicialPolicies.aspx> ). In other words, plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional use of someone else’s words or ideas presented as your own.

Plagiarism occurs when a writer reproduces the words of another author without acknowledgment or when a writer paraphrases the ideas or arguments of another author in such away as to lead the reader to believe that the ideas or arguments originated with the writer. Plagiarism can be intentional or unintentional. According to Andrea A. Lunsford in *The Everyday Writer* (4<sup>th</sup> ed): “If your paraphrase is too close to the wording or sentence structure of a source (even if you identify the source); if you do not identify the source of a quotation (even if you include the quotation marks); or if you fail to indicate clearly the source of an idea that you obviously did not come up with on your own, you may be accused of plagiarism even if your intent was not to plagiarize” (p. 191).

I will report violations of academic dishonesty to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. According to Otterbein policy, students who violate standards of academic integrity are subject to disciplinary sanctions, which include the “failure on the given assignment or a failing grade for the course.”

## **Disability Accommodation**

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact me to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs and explore potential accommodations. I rely on the Disability Services Coordinator for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Disability Services Coordinator (x1618 or [LMonaghan@otterbein.edu](mailto:LMonaghan@otterbein.edu)), I encourage you to do so.

## **Email**

Outside of my office hours, I can be reached via email, and I will usually respond within 24 hours. Note: In the subject, include the course number (POLS 4450), and in the body of the message, please include your first and last name.

## **Electronic Devices**

**Recording Lectures:** In accordance with federal regulations, students may not make audio recordings of class lectures without the prior written consent of the instructor. Students who have registered and documented disabilities may make audio recordings with the consent of the instructor.

**Cell Phones & iPods:** Please turn off cell phone ringers during class, no texting, and no iPod listening in class. If I see a student texting in class, I will automatically subtract one point from the student's participation points.

**Drop Dates & Withdrawal Policy**

Students who wish to drop the course may do so using the regular procedures. It is not the responsibility of the professor to drop students from the course.

- Last day to drop classes with no grade recorded on transcript: March 2, 2012
- Last day to drop with “W” on transcript: March 30, 2012

**Required Texts**

1. Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*. Hackett. ISBN: 9780872202184
2. V. I. Lenin, *State and Revolution*. International Publishers. ISBN: 9780717801961
3. V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. International Publishing Company. ISBN: 9780717800988
4. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. International Publishers. ISBN: 9780717803972
5. David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital: and the Crises of Capitalism*. Oxford University Press, 2010 (Hardcover 978-0199758715) / 2011 (Paperback ISBN: 978-0199836840).

**Class Schedule and Readings** (This is a tentative schedule and may change with notice)

Week	Date	Topic/Reading	Presentation
Week 1	Tue Jan 31	Introduction to course	
	Thu Feb 2	Lecture: Pre-Marxist Philosophy & German Idealism Read: Introduction to Marx, <i>Selected Writings</i> , pp. ix-xxxv	
Week 2	Tue Feb 7	<b>Marx &amp; Engels</b> · “On the Jewish Question” in <i>Selected Writings</i> , pp. 1-27	· M. Green
	Thu Feb 9	· Toward a Critique of Hegel’s <i>Philosophy of Right</i> , pp. 27-39 · Excerpt-Notes of 1844, pp. 40-53	· ·
Week 3	Tue Feb 14	<i>Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts</i> , pp. 54-97 · Preface & Alienated Labor (56-68) · Private Property and Communism (68-79) · Critique of Hegelian Dialectic and Philosophy in General (79-97) · Theses on Feuerbach, pp. 98-101.	· · · · M. Green
	Thu Feb 16	<i>The German Ideology</i> · Preface, Ideology in Particular, & Communism (103-132) · Division of Labor, Communism: Production of the form (132-156)	· ·
Week 4	Tue Feb 21	<i>Communist Manifesto</i> , · Intro, Part I, Part II (158-176) · Part III & Part IV (176-186)	· ·
	Thu Feb 23	· <i>The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonapart</i> , 187-208 · Preface to <i>A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy</i> , 209-213	· ·
Week 5	Tue Feb 28	<i>Capital</i> , Volume 1 · Preface, Ch. 1 [sections 1 & 2] (216-230) · Ch. 1 [section 4] (230-243) · Chs. 2 & 3 (244-255) · Chs. 4 & 6 (255-273) · Chs. 7 (274-294) · Chs. 26, 32 (294-300)	· · · · · · M. Green

	Thu Mar 1	<p><b>Elements of Marxian Political Economy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Ellen Meiksins Wood, “The separation of the ‘economic’ and the ‘political’ in capitalism” <i>Democracy against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism</i>. Cambridge University Press, 1995.</li> <li>· Gérard Duménil &amp; Duncan Foley “Marx’s Analysis of Capitalist Production” in <i>The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics</i>, 2nd edition. Edited by Steven N. Durlauf and Lawrence E. Blume. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.</li> </ul>	·
Week 6	Tue Mar 6	<p><b>Marxian Politics &amp; Justice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Marx, <i>The Civil War in France</i> (301-314)</li> <li>· Marx, <i>Critique of the Gotha Program</i> (315-332)</li> <li>· Marx, Marginal Notes on Bakunin’s <i>Statism and Anarchy</i> (333-338)</li> <li>· George DeMartino, “Realizing class justice.” <i>Rethinking Marxism</i> 15.1 (2003): 1-31.</li> </ul>	· · · M. Green ·
	Thu Mar 8	<p><b>[Essay 1 Due]</b>  <b>Vladimir Ilyich Lenin Lenin, <i>State and Revolution</i> (1917)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Ch. 1 Class Society and The State / Ch. 2 The Experience of 1848-51 (7-31)</li> <li>· Ch. 3 The Experience of the Paris Commune of 1871. Marx’s Analysis / Ch. 5 Economic Basis of the Withering Away of the State (32-48, 69-85)</li> </ul>	<b>Essay 1 Due</b> · ·
Week 7	Tue Mar	<b>Spring Break March 10-18. No Class</b>	
Week 8	Tue Mar 20	<p>Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, <i>Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism</i> (1917)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Ch. I. Concentration of Production and Monopolies / Ch. II. Banks and their New Role (16-46)</li> <li>· Ch. III. Finance Capital and the Financial Oligarchy / Ch. IV. Export of Capital (47-67)</li> <li>· Ch. V. Division of the World Among Capitalist Associations / Ch. VI. Division of the World Among the Great Powers (68-87)</li> <li>· Ch. VII. Imperialism as a Special Stage of Capitalism / Ch. VIII. Parasitism and Decay of Capitalism (88-108)</li> <li>· Ch. IX. Critique of Imperialism / Ch. X. The Place of Imperialism In History (109-128)</li> </ul>	· · · · ·
	Thu Mar 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Movie: <i>The Take</i> (2004)</li> <li>· Read: David F. Ruccio, “Cooperatives, Surplus, and the Social,” <i>Rethinking Marxism</i> 23.3 (2011): 334-340.</li> </ul>	
Week 9	Tue Mar 27	<p><b>Antonio Gramsci, Political Writings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· “Socialism and Culture” (Jan 1916) <i>Selections from Political Writings, 1910-20</i></li> <li>· “The Popular University” (Dec 1916) <i>Antonio Gramsci Reader</i></li> <li>· “For a Cultural Association,” (Dec 1917) <i>Selections from Cultural Writings</i></li> <li>· “Philanthropy, Good Will and Organization” (Dec 1917) <i>Selections from Cultural Writings</i></li> <li>· “The Party School” (April 1925) <i>Pre-Prison Writings</i></li> <li>· “Introduction to the First Course of the Party School” (April-May 1925) <i>Selections from Political Writings, 1921-1926</i></li> </ul>	· M. Green
	Thu Mar 29	<p>Antonio Gramsci, <i>Selections from the Prison Notebooks</i> (I)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The Intellectuals (3-23)</li> <li>· On Education (24-43)</li> </ul>	· ·
Week 10	Tue Apr 3	<p>Antonio Gramsci, <i>Selections from the Prison Notebooks</i> (II)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· History of Subaltern Classes (52-55)</li> <li>· The Modern Prince [a] (123-157)</li> <li>· The Modern Prince [b] (157-175)</li> <li>· The Modern Prince [c] (175-205)</li> </ul>	· M. Green · · ·
	Thu Apr 5	<p>Antonio Gramsci, <i>Selections from the Prison Notebooks</i> (III)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· State and Civil Society [a] (206-239)</li> <li>· State and Civil Society [b] (242-276)</li> <li>· Americanism and Fordism (277-318)</li> </ul>	· · ·

Week 11	Tue Apr 10	Antonio Gramsci, <i>Selections from the Prison Notebooks</i> (IV) · The Study of Philosophy (323-343) · Some Problems in the Study of the Philosophy of Praxis (381-418)	· ·
	Thu Apr 12	<b>The Cultural Industry</b> · Adorno & Horkheimer, <i>Dialectic of Enlightenment</i> , ch. 5 “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” (94-136).	·
Week 12	Tue Apr 17	<b>Late Capitalism</b> · Fredric Jameson, “Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,” <i>New Left Review</i> I/146 (July-August 1984): 53-92.	·
	Thu Apr 19	David Harvey, <i>The Condition of Postmodernity</i> · Ch. 7 “Introduction” (121-4) & Ch. 8 “Fordism” (125-140) · Ch. 9 “From Fordism to flexible accumulation” pp. 141-172 · Ch.10 “Theorizing the Transition,” (173-188) & Ch. 11 “Flexible accumulation – solid transformation or temporary fix?” (189-197).	· · ·
Week 13	Tue Apr 24	<b>The Current Crisis</b> David Harvey, <i>The Enigma of Capital: and the Crises of Capitalism</i> · Ch. 1 The Disruption (1-39) · Ch. 2 Capital Assembled (40-57)	· ·
	Thu Apr 26	· Ch. 3 Capital Goes to Work (58-105)	·
Week 14	Tue May 1	· Ch. 4 Capital Goes to Market (106-118) & Ch. 5 Capital Evolves (119-139) · Ch. 6 The Geography of It All (140-83)	· ·
	Thu May 3	· Ch. 7 Creative Destruction on the Land (184-214) · Ch. 8 What is to be Done? And Who is Going to Do It? (215-260)	· ·
Week 15	Tue May 8	<b>Alternative Political Imaginaries: The Common</b> · Michael Hardt, “The Common in Communism.” <i>Rethinking Marxism</i> 22.3 (2010): 346-356. · Gigi Roggero, “Five Theses on the Common.” <i>Rethinking Marxism</i> 22.3 (2010): 357-373. · Aras Özgün, “A Common Word.” <i>Rethinking Marxism</i> 22.3 (2010): 374-381.	· · · M. Green
	Thu May 10	<b>Conclusions and Reflections</b>	
Week 16	Tue May 15	Final Exam Week: Second Essay Due by 4:00 p.m.	<b>Essay 2 Due</b>