



ALTERNATIVE ECONOMICS

PHI 272

CLASS OVERVIEW

INSTRUCTOR

Taylor R. Genovese, Ph.D.

(he/him/his)

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Office Hours: Mondays: 9:00am–10:00am

Tuesdays: 9:00am–10:30am

Thursdays: 9:00am–10:30am

Note on communication: I will make every effort to respond to emails within 24 hours. However, please note that I only check and respond to email between 8am and 5pm, Monday through Friday.

DETAILED COURSE INFORMATION

PHI 272 – Special Study Project – Alternative Economics

CRN #:

MEETING INFORMATION

Fall 2026

Mondays, 12:30pm–1:45pm

SUNY – Dutchess Community College

Hudson Hall 408M

COURSE INFORMATION

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course begins with the premise that our survival and dignity is being threatened by the current capitalist economic system. To that end, we will begin by examining capitalist economic theory on its own terms before moving on to explore an array of alternative economic frameworks from around the world, all of which seek to build a more robust and just democratic practice for human flourishing. We will critically engage with a rigorous academic reading list (along with several films) and participate in robust conversations together in an attempt to diagnose an array of politico-economic issues plaguing our existence and imagine possible positive solutions for our collective future.

ASSESSMENT

1. Participation (50%) All students are expected to arrive to class on time having read assigned readings ahead of our meeting and attend the entirety of class sessions. Students must bring in a written précis to class that consists of a 1-5 sentence summary of the readings being discussed that day as well as a section of the reading that they would like to interrogate collectively.
2. Paper or Project (50%) Students will write a 2,000–4,000 word position paper analyzing or comparing an alternative economic system to our current hegemonic capitalist system using a dialectical framework. Alternatively, students can choose to work on a multimodal project (combining writing with another form of communication, such as photography, drawing, painting, film, podcasting, etc.). If you are interested in a multimodal project, please see me so we can discuss specifics.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Roland Boer, *Socialism with Chinese Characteristics: A Guide for Foreigners* (Springer, 2021)
- Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Zero Books, 2009)
- John Bellamy Foster & Fred Magdoff, *The Great Financial Crisis* (Monthly Review Press, 2009)
- David Graeber, *Bullshit Jobs: A Theory* (Simon & Schuster, 2018)
- Leo Huberman & Sybil H. May, *The ABC of Socialism* (Monthly Review, 1953)
- Pyotr Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread and Other Writings* (Cambridge University Press, 1995)
- Marcel Mauss, *The Gift* (Routledge, 1990)
- Deric Shannon et al., *The Accumulation of Freedom: Writings on Anarchist Economics* (AK Press, 2012)
- Manfred Steger & Ravi Roy, *Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2010)
- Guillaume Suing, *Communism, the Highest Stage of Ecology* (Iskra Books, 2025)
- Robert C. Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader, Second Edition* (W.W. Norton & Company, 1978)
- Helen Yaffe, *We Are Cuba! How a Revolutionary People Have Survived in a Post-Soviet World* (Yale University Press, 2020)

COURSE OUTLINE

Class Meeting	Topic / Readings
^M August 24	<u>Introduction to the Course</u> No reading.
^M August 31	<u>(Very) Basics of the Capitalist Mode of Production</u>  Read the Glossary of terms here (click around to the other hyperlinks as needed) for "Capital"; "Capital as a Social Relation"; "Contradictions in Capital"; "Wage Labour and Capital"; "The Rate of Profit"; "General Rate of Profit"; "Falling Rate of Profit"; "Conflicts within the Capitalist Class"; "Concentration of Capital"; "Natural Capital"; "Social Capital"; "Human Capital"; "Capitalism"; "Historical Development"; "The Destruction of Capitalism"
^M September 7	NO CLASS – LABOR DAY
^M September 14	<u>(Very) Basics of Socialism</u>  Frederick Engels, "Principles of Communism."  Leo Huberman & Sybil H. May, <i>The ABC of Socialism</i> [Read all; 60 pages]
^M September 21	<u>Neoliberalism</u>  Manfred Steger & Ravi Roy, "What's 'neo' about liberalism?"; "First-wave neoliberalism in the 1980s: Reaganomics and Thatcherism"; "Second-wave neoliberalism in the 1990s: Clinton's Market globalism and Blair's Third Way" from <i>Neoliberalism: a Very Short Introduction</i> p. 1–75
^M September 28	<u>Capitalist Alienation: Part One</u>  Karl Marx, "Estranged Labor" in <i>Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844</i> from <i>The Marx-Engels Reader</i> , p. 70–81  David Graeber, "On the Phenomenon of Bullshit Jobs"; "What is a Bullshit Job?"; "What Shorts of Bullshit Jobs Are There?" from <i>Bullshit Jobs: A Theory</i> p. xiii–66
^M October 5	<u>Capitalist Alienation: Part Two</u>  David Graeber, "Why Do Those In Bullshit Jobs Regularly Report Themselves Unhappy?"; "What Is It Like To Have a Bullshit Job?" from <i>Bullshit Jobs: A Theory</i> p. 67–144
^M October 12	NO CLASS – INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY

Class Meeting	Topic / Readings
^M October 19	<u>Capitalist Alienation: Part Three</u> 📖 David Graeber, "Why Are Bullshit Jobs Proliferating?"; "Why Do We as a Society Not Object to the Growth of Pointless Employment?"; "What Are the Political Effects of Bullshit Jobs, and Is There Anything That Can Be Done About This Situation?" from <i>Bullshit Jobs: A Theory</i> p. 145–286
^M October 26	<u>The Chinese Model</u> 📖 Roland Boer, "Introduction: Marxism as China's Special Skill" from <i>Socialism with Chinese Characteristics</i> p. 1–24 📖 Roland Boer, "China's Socialist Market Economy and Planned Economy" from <i>Socialism with Chinese Characteristics</i> p. 115–138 📖 OPTIONAL: Roland Boer, "Xi Jinping on Marx and Engels" from <i>Socialism with Chinese Characteristics</i> p. 273–297
^M November 2	<u>Finance Capitalism</u> NO CLASS MEETING – FILM AND READING DAY 🎬 Watch the film <i>The Big Short</i> (2015) 📖 John Bellamy Foster and Fred Magdoff, "Introduction" from <i>The Great Financial Crisis</i> p. 11–26 📖 John Bellamy Foster and Fred Magdoff, "Monopoly-Finance Capital" and "The Financialization of Capitalism" from <i>The Great Financial Crisis</i> p. 63–90
^M November 9	<u>The Anarchist Model</u> 📖 Deric Shannon et al., "Anarchist Economics: A Holistic View" from <i>Accumulation of Freedom</i> p. 11–39 📖 Uri Gordon, "Anarchist Economics in Practice" from <i>Accumulation of Freedom</i> p. 204–218 📖 OPTIONAL: Skim through Pyotr Kropotkin's <i>The Conquest of Bread</i>
^M November 16	<u>Indigenous Models</u> NO CLASS MEETING – FILM AND READING DAY 🎬 Watch the film <i>Gather</i> (2020) 📖 Subcomandante Marcos, "The Fourth World War Has Begun." 📖 LANDBACK, "The LANDBACK Manifesto." (and browse the whole website) 📖 Marcel Mauss, "Introduction" and "The Exchange of Gifts and the Obligation to Reciprocate (Polynesia)" from <i>The Gift</i> p. 1–23

Class Meeting	Topic / Readings
^M November 23	<u>The Cuban Model</u>  Ernesto "Che" Guevara, "Socialism and Man in Cuba."  Guillaume Suing, "Acroecology: A Little-Known Socialist Achievement" from <i>Communism, the Highest Stage of Ecology</i> p. 25–50  Helen Yaffe, "The Challenge of (Socialist) Development" from <i>We Are Cuba!</i> p. 13–36  Watch the six episodes of The War on Cuba on YouTube
^M November 30	<u>A New Multipolar World?</u> NO CLASS MEETING – VIDEO LECTURE AND READING DAY  Watch the YouTube video "Multipolarity and the Role of the Left"  Torkil Lauesen, "The Socialist Transitional State and the Contradictions of the Multipolar World-system."  Sarah Shamim, ""Multipolar world': What Xi and Putin announced after Beijing summit."
^M December 7	<u>Nostalgia, Western Doomerism, and (Resisting) Capitalist Realism</u>  Mark Fisher, <i>Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?</i> (Read all; 81 pages)
^M December 14	NO CLASS – FINALS WEEK Final Paper or Project due via email by 12/14 @ 11:59pm