Course Description

In this course, we will explore what was arguably the most important philosophical and political movement of 19th and 20th century Europe: Marxism. In particular, after spending several weeks on Marx himself, we will turn to look at how Marxists used his work in order to respond to political events and developments across a century and a half.

Throughout this course, we will be concerned with the evolution of such concepts as class, ideology (base and superstructure), political engagement, and capitalism. This class will also explore Marxist aesthetics and the political potential of works of art. Finally, we will investigate the relationship between existing Communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, oppositional Communist movements in Western Europe, and the philosophical work of Marxists in the twentieth century.

This class will be taught in a seminar format. We will be holding an intense conversation with and about the philosophers whom we are reading and working together to understand their historical contexts. Your informed and engaged participation is crucial to the success of this class.

Prerequisites

This course presupposes a working knowledge of the major events in European history. If you are unsure of your background, please speak to me as soon as possible so we can determine if this course is right for you.

This course does not assume that you already have experience with intellectual history; however, a familiarity with the basic methods of intellectual history and the major philosophers and philosophical trends of the period will be helpful.

Assignment and Grading

Your grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

10% Class Introduction
15% Response Papers
15% Short Paper (5pp.)
30% Final Paper (8-10pp.)
30% Participation

All written work must be completed in order to receive credit for this course.

Once during the semester, you will be called upon to do a brief introduction at the start of class. This introduction should last 5-10 minutes and should discuss the historical events to which the texts for that week refer. I have assigned the topic for each introduction, but you should feel free to (in consultation with
me) adjust your topic to your interests. You may offer some preliminary thoughts about how the texts respond to these events, but this is less important than your providing an introduction to the context of the readings. Feel free to bring in hand-outs or display images, etc. as seems relevant.

Over the course of the semester, you will be writing response papers for 10 class sessions of your choice. These response papers should be 2 pages long, and engage with the texts which we have read for that week. At the end of the response paper, you should include at least two discussion questions. You are required to turn in your response paper by **Tuesday at 10am** before each class meeting to me. You may do so either via email or via the digital dropbox on blackboard. If you choose to use the digital dropbox, please include your last name in the title of your response paper. Response papers will be graded on a check-minus, check, check-plus system and will be returned to you at the start of each class.

You will write a 5 page paper that is worth 15% of your grade on the work of Marx himself. I will give a choice of topics for this paper in the fourth week of the semester and the paper itself will be due right before Spring Break.

30% of your grade is based on a 7-9 page paper on a topic of your choice. A draft of this paper is due on **May 6th**. This draft must be turned in to me and your reading group. The reading group consists of 3 people. You must comment on the papers of others in your group between the time you turn in drafts and the last class. 10% of your own paper grade will be determined by your comments on the other drafts in your reading group.

It is possible for you to combine the two papers and write one longer (15-20pp.) paper worth 55% of your grade. It may be useful for those of you who are considering graduate work to think about taking this option. If you choose this option, you must write a three page prospectus with an attached annotated bibliography and submit it by March 11th. Based on the quality of the prospectus and the viability of your project, I will decide whether I will allow you to write this paper.

**If you turn in either the short or long paper late late, it will be marked down 1/3 of a grade for each day it is late.**

You have the option to turn one response paper in late (by late, I mean in class on the day of discussion, no later). These papers are crucial means for you to prepare for class discussion, thus, after this one late paper, no other late response papers will be accepted. In other words, you can miss response papers for two weeks, and turn in an additional response paper "late" without penalty. The remaining nine response papers must be turned in by Tuesday at 10am the day of our discussion. For each response paper you miss (beyond these exceptions), your grade for the class will be lowered by 1/6th of a grade (i.e. if you miss two, your grade for the class will go down 1/3rd of a grade).

All work for this class is governed by the honor code. You must write and sign the honor code pledge at the end of each assignment. If you have further questions, please go to: [http://www.oberlin.edu/students/links-life/rules-regs.html#honor](http://www.oberlin.edu/students/links-life/rules-regs.html#honor).

**Texts Available for Purchase**


All texts available for purchase are available on reserve. However, please be careful as some of the reserve editions are different than those which we are reading in class. If you are using the reserve copies, let me know so that I can tell you which pages to read from them.

There are additional readings which will be available on blackboard. These readings are marked with an asterix.

**Schedule of Readings and Discussions**

February 8: Introduction

February 15: Marx and the Utopian Socialist Tradition
   Presentation: Utopian Socialism
   Readings: Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts from 1844, *Marx and Engels Reader* (MER), 66-125

February 22: The Marxist Economic Critique
   Presentation: The Industrial Revolution
   Readings: Capital, vol. 1, MER, 294-438

March 1: Revolutionary Marxism
   Presentation: The Revolutions of 1848
   Readings: Marx, *Communist Manifesto*
   Friedrich Engels, "The Principles of Communism"

March 8: Revisionism
   Presentation: German Social Democracy 1875-1914
   Eduard Bernstein, "Evolutionary Socialism":
   [http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/bernstein-revsoc.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/bernstein-revsoc.html)
   The Internationale:
   [http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/INTERNAT.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/INTERNAT.html)
   Karl Kautsky, "The Road to Power" (1909):

**If you are writing one long paper for the class, your prospectus is due March 11th at noon.**

March 15: Revolutionary Marxism and the Vanguard
   Presentation: The Russian Revolution of 1905
   *Luxemburg, "The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade Unions," Rosa Luxemburg Speaks, 153-218
   *Vladimir Lenin, "What is To Be Done?," *The Lenin Anthology* (New York: Norton Press, 1975), 12-114
   *Lenin, "Lecture on the 1905 Revolution," *The Lenin Anthology*, 278-292
March 22: Georg Lukács and Reification
Presentation: The Revolutions of 1917-1919: Russia, Germany & Hungary
Readings: Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 1-122

**SHORT PAPER DUE THURSDAY MARCH 24TH AT 5PM**

SPRING BREAK

April 5: Aesthetic Marxism
Presentation: Culture in the Weimar Republic
Film: Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny (Screening Monday April 4, 7-9:40pm, location: tba)
*Benjamin, "What is Epic Theater?" Illuminations* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1968), 147-154

April 12: Antonio Gramsci and Hegemony
Presentation: Italian Fascism

April 19: Reacting to Nazism
Presentation: The Frankfurt School
Readings: Adorno & Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 3-42, 120-208

April 26: Mass Culture & Marxism
Presentation: Americanism & Anti-Americanism in Western Europe
*Paul Corrigan & Simon Frith, "The Politics of Youth Culture," Resistance through Rituals, 231-239
*Frederic Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" New Left Review 146 (July-August 1984): 53-92. (another electronic copy available through obis)

May 3: Marxism—Authority or Rebellion?
Presentation: 1968
Readings: Martin Malia, "To the Stalin Mausoleum" (1989): [http://faculty.goucher.edu/history231/Malia.htm](http://faculty.goucher.edu/history231/Malia.htm)
*Rudi Dutschke, "On Anti-Authoritarianism" New Left Reader, 243-253
*Daniel & Gabriel Cohn-Bendit, "The Battle of the Streets: 'C'est Pour Toi Que Tu Fais La Révolution," New Left Reader, 254-266
*Imre Nagy, "Reform Communism," From Stalinism to Pluralism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 82-87
*Georg Lukács, "Contemporary Problems of Marxist Philosophy," Stalinism to
Pluralism, 88-93
*Ludv'k Vakul'c, "Two Thousand Words to Workers, Farmers, Scientists, Artists, and Everyone," *Stalinism to Pluralism*, 126-130
*Popper, "Marx's Theory of the State," *Popper Selections* 325-337

MAY 6—TURN IN LONG PAPER DRAFT TO ME AND YOUR READING GROUP

May 10: 1989 and the future of Marxism
    Presentation: 1989

Return paper drafts (& comment sheets) to your reading group members

FINAL PAPER DUE THURSDAY, MAY 19TH AT 9:00AM