

**Course: Poli 114BR, Marxist Political Thought, Summer Session 1, 2023**

(Syllabus version 7/2/23, subject to change.)

Meetings: Asynchronous

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TA Office Hours: By appointment. Zoom Address: TBD

*Description:* This course is about the ideas of Karl Marx, those who influenced him, and those whom he influenced. We will begin with an overview of three of Marx's key predecessors: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Adam Smith. Our emphasis will be on how these predecessors understood historical progress, freedom, and the state. We will move next to Marx's ideas, particularly his theories of alienation, ideology, history, the state, and morality. Finally, we will examine Marx's influence through a discussion of the German Social Democratic Party, the Bolsheviks, and the Frankfurt School. My goals are for you to think about Marxism as both a social scientist and a political theorist. This entails precisely defining Marxian concepts (e.g., alienation), understanding the historical contexts in which Marxism was developed, and evaluating the plausibility of Marxian ideas.

*Format:* I will record two lectures per week and post them to Canvas. The lectures will help you do well on the quizzes and better understand the material that I expect you to integrate into your final paper. My goal for each lecture is to historically situate the topics under discussion, give necessary background, analyze key portions of the readings, discuss possible applications, and so on.

*Readings:* All of the assigned and optional readings are either hyperlinked below or are posted on Canvas under "modules." Some of these are difficult and I don't expect you to understand every sentence. My role as instructor will be to help fill in these gaps. Because we will only meet for 5 weeks, succeeding in this course will require a lot of reading. I expect you to integrate the readings into your final paper.

*Assignments:* There will be 4 quizzes based on the lectures, two short “check-in” assignments related to your final paper, and the final paper itself. Each quiz is worth 9 points (36 points total), the first final paper check-in is worth 3 points, the second paper check-in is worth 6 points, and the final paper is worth 70 points. There are thus 115 total points.

*Final Paper instructions:* See Canvas for further instructions.

*Academic Integrity:* This course presupposes familiarity with the rules and regulations set by UCSD’s Office of Academic Integrity. In addition, please note that your instructional team is adept at recognizing AI-generated text. Students who use AI tools for assistance with the quizzes and final paper will receive an F in the course and be referred to the Office of Academic Integrity.

*Some useful links:*

*Accommodations:* [Accessibility and Accommodations](#)

*Academic Support:* [Teaching and Learning Commons](#), [Writing Hub](#)

*Physical and Psychological Support:* [Basic Needs Center](#), [Triton Food Pantry](#), [CAPS](#).

*Support from your instructional team:* Please do not hesitate to let me and your TA know how we can support you. We likely faced some of the same challenges as you when we were undergraduates. And we’ve likely faced some of them as graduate students. We are happy to talk about any issues you may be facing, both professional and personal.

## **Tentative reading and assignment schedule:**

### **Lecture 1: Introduction**

Listen: “Brian Leiter explains why we should think about Marx.” *Elucidations Podcast*, 2018.

Link [here](#).

Read (optional): Wolff, J. & Leopold, D. (2021). “Karl Marx”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Link [here](#).

## **Lecture 2: Predecessors part I, Rousseau & Hegel**

Read: Rousseau, J.J. (1754). *Discourse on Inequality*. Read Part 2. (See canvas for .pdf)

Listen (optional): “Melissa Lane on Rousseau on Modern Society.” *Philosophy Bites Podcast*, 2008. Link [here](#).

Listen (optional): “Hegel's Philosophy of History.” *BBC In Our Times Podcast*, 2022. Link [here](#).

## **Lecture 3: Predecessors II, Hegel & Adam Smith**

Read: Smith, A. (1776). *Wealth of Nations*. Read Book 1, Chapter X, Part 2; and Book 3 Chapter IV. (See canvas for .pdf)

Listen (optional): “The Wealth of Nations.” *BBC In Our Times Podcast*, 2015. Link [here](#).

***Quiz 1 due Wednesday July 12 at 11:59pm.***

***Final paper topic approval due Thursday July 13 at 11:59pm.***

## **Lecture 4: Marx on Alienation and Ideology**

Read: Marx, K. (1844). *Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Read “Estranged Labor.” Link [here](#).

Listen (optional): “Jonathan Wolff on Marx on Alienation.” *Philosophy Bites Podcast*, 2008. Link [here](#).

## **Lecture 5: Marx’s Theory of History**

Read: Marx, K. & Engels, F. (1848). *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Read Chapters 1-2. Link [here](#).

***Quiz 2 due Wednesday July 19 at 11:59pm.***

***Final paper thesis statement & outside sources due Friday July 21 at 11:59pm.***

## **Lecture 6: Marx on the state and morality**

Read: Miliband, R. (1969). *The State in Capitalist Society*. Basic Books. Read Chapter 1. (See canvas for .pdf)

### **Lecture 7: German Social Democracy and Bolshevism**

Read: Lenin, V. (1905). *The Beginning of the Revolution in Russia*. Link [here](#).

Read: Lenin, V. (1914). *The War and Russian Social Democracy*. Link [here](#).

***Quiz 3 due Wednesday July 26 at 11:59pm.***

### **Lecture 8: Bolshevism and the nationalities question**

Read: Stalin, J. (1913). *Marxism and the National Question*. Read Introduction and Parts 1-2 and Part 7. Link [here](#).

Read (optional): Connor, W. (1984). *The national question in Marxist-Leninist theory and strategy*. Princeton University Press.

Read (optional): Martin, T. D. (2001). *The affirmative action empire: nations and nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*. Cornell University Press.

### **Lecture 9: Frankfurt School**

Read: Marcuse, H. (1964). *One Dimensional Man*. Beacon Press. Read Introduction & Chapter 1. (See Canvas for .pdf)

Watch (optional but highly recommended, great old UCSD footage!): “Herbert's Hippopotamus - Marcuse and Revolution in Paradise.” (1997). Link [here](#).

Watch (optional): “Marcuse and the Frankfurt School.” *Men of Ideas*. (1978). Link [here](#).

Listen (optional): “The Frankfurt School.” *BBC In Our Times Podcast* (2010). Link [here](#).

***Quiz 4 due Wednesday August 2 at 11:59pm.***

### **Lecture 10: Recap and the future of Marxism**

No readings.

***Final paper due Thursday August 3 at 11:59pm.***