

ADVANCED POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY CAPITALISM



INSTRUCTOR

Simone Gubler

CONTACT

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LECTURE TIMES

1:25PM - 2:15PM

LECTURE LOCATION

CW105

OFFICE HOURS

Wednesday and Friday 10AM-11AM

OFFICE LOCATION

Caldwell 214A

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is capitalism? Why are so many people so passionate in its defense and critique?

In this course, we will survey classical theories and critiques of capitalism. We will engage in careful reading of canonic thinkers including Adam Smith, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, John-Stuart Mill, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Henry George, John Maynard Keynes, Milton Friedman, Elizabeth Anderson, and Thomas Piketty.

By the end of this course, students will have:

- Become conversant with major philosophical attempts to theorize and critique capitalism
- Developed familiarity with classic and contemporary texts in the history of social and economic thought
- Practiced applying abstract theories to real problems of economic and social conduct
- Laid the theoretical groundwork for a reflective career as a bourgeois revolutionary or a captain of industry

POLICIES

Office Hours

All students are encouraged to visit me during my office hours. I want each of you to come at least once, early on in the semester, so that I can get to know you. In the first class, I will pass around a sign-up sheet, so that you can make an appointment to meet with me in Week Two. After that, you are welcome to drop by at any time during office hours, or by appointment as necessary. Office hours represent a good opportunity to discuss any questions you might have in relation to the course, as well as to troubleshoot any challenges that threaten your academic success.

Readings

All assigned readings are compulsory. The readings may be found on Sakai. Readings consist of edited extracts from longer works, so be sure to use the versions on Sakai in preparation for class.

Disabilities

Accommodations will be made for students with disabilities. If you think that you are likely to need accommodations, please contact Accessibility, Resources and Service (details here: <https://ars.unc.edu/accommodations>), and present your Accommodation Letter to me as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the requirements of the student Honor Code (<https://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/honor-code/>). You will be asked to sign the honor pledge as a condition of submitting assignments for this course. Suspected violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

Electronic Devices

No phones are to be used during class time. Use of other electronic devices is discouraged. Electronic devices are distracting - not merely for you, but for the people around you. A bonus: studies suggest that you'll enjoy better recall if you take notes by hand (see for example: <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/05/to-remember-a-lecture-better-take-notes-by-hand/361478/>).

Charity

Some of the ideas that we'll deal with in this class are likely to seem very odd to you. You might even want to reject them outright. That's perfectly normal. When we encounter new or unfamiliar ideas and arguments, especially when they seem to threaten our standard ways of thinking about things, there's a strong impulse to reject them. But the art of being a good philosopher is, in part, the art of pushing through (and then rationally investigating) that initial reaction of repulsion to a strange idea. So, to that end, let's operate according to a guiding principle: 'the principle of charity':

"The principle of charity governs the interpretation of the beliefs and utterances of others. It urges charitable interpretation, meaning interpretation that maximizes the truth or rationality of what others think and say"

- R. Feldman, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

I'd like us to follow this principle in all of our work in this class — in our interactions with each other, with invited guests, as well as with the ideas in the set readings.

So, when someone makes an argument or claim:

- Start from the assumption that the person is rational and is trying to communicate something interesting and meaningful to you.
- Be generous: try to give the best possible interpretation to their statement.
- Be patient: avoid attributing wrongness or confusion until you've carefully considered whether a relevant insight may be derived from their statement.

ASSESSMENT

15% **Short Essay: And is it good? (2-3 pages)**
Write a 2-3 page paper in response to the essay prompt posted on Sakai. Due in class on January the 24th.

10% **In-Class Reading Quizzes**
These five quizzes contain questions that anyone who has done their reading should be able to address. When will I give them? Only time (and diligent class attendance) will tell!

10% **Group Exercise: Introduce a major figure**
You will be assigned to groups in class on January the 13th. Each group will be given a thinker to formally introduce to the class. When we arrive at the first reading for your assigned figure, your group will make a powerpoint presentation to the class, engagingly identifying arguments and ideas that distinguish your thinker's contribution to social and economic philosophy.

30% **Midterm Take-home Exam**
The take-home exam will be distributed in class on the 28th of February and will cover all material up to that date. Answers are due in class on the 2nd of March.

35% **Final Paper (8 pages)**
Topics for the final paper will be distributed on the 16th of March. This assignment has two components.

1. You are to produce a 2 page blueprint for the paper, including a topic sentence, paragraph by paragraph argument plan and an annotated bibliography. The blueprint is worth 1/4 of the final paper grade. It is due on the 30th of March. You will receive feedback on the 8th of April.
2. The final 8 page paper is due on Sakai, on Thursday, April 30th.

ASSESSMENT

Attendance

Attendance is compulsory. Each student is permitted a maximum of two unexplained absences. Each further unexplained absence will result in a 2% reduction in the overall course grade.

Extra Credit

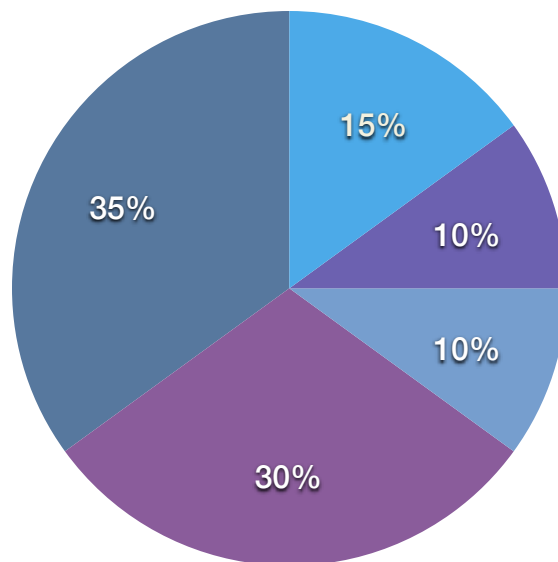
2%

Your education does not end at the classroom doors. As an incentive to participate in, and benefit from, the research activity of the university at large, 2% extra credit is on offer to students who attend events that are relevant to this class (1% per event, maximum of two events). There is a list of eligible events on Sakai (you may also apply to the instructor to add an event to the list). You will need to email the instructor a 1-2 paragraph critical summary of the event in order to claim credit for it.

FINAL GRADE BREAKDOWN

A	94-100	A-	90-93
B+	87-89	B	84-86
B-	80-83	C+	77-79
C	74-76	C-	70-73
D+	67-69	D	64-66
D-	60-63	F	0-59

- Short Essay - 15
- Reading Quizzes - 10
- Group Exercise - 10
- Mid-Term Exam - 30
- Final Paper - 35



**SCHEDULE
OF CLASSES**

WEEK ONE Wednesday, January 8		<i>Syllabus</i>
WEEK ONE Friday, January 10		<i>How to do Political Philosophy</i> G.A. Cohen
WEEK TWO Monday, January 13		<i>How to do Political Philosophy</i> G.A. Cohen
WEEK TWO Wednesday, January 15	Background	<i>The Anarchy: The East India Co.</i> William Dalrymple
WEEK TWO Friday, January 17		<i>The Anarchy: The East India Co.</i> William Dalrymple
WEEK THREE Monday, January 20	Martin Luther King Day	No Class
WEEK THREE Wednesday, January 22		<i>What is Capitalism?</i> James Fulcher
WEEK THREE Friday, January 24	Letter assignment due in class	<i>What's so Wrong with Capitalism?</i> Erik Olin Wright
WEEK FOUR Monday, January 27		<i>The Fable of the Bees</i> Bernard Mandeville
WEEK FOUR Wednesday, January 29	Smith	<i>The Wealth of Nations, Vol I, Chapters 1 & 2</i> Adam Smith
WEEK FOUR Friday, January 31		<i>On Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations: Methodology</i> Samuel Fleischacker
WEEK FIVE Monday, February 3		<i>The Wealth of Nations, Vol I, Chapters 4&5</i> Adam Smith
WEEK FIVE Wednesday, February 5		<i>On Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations: Foundations of Economics</i> Samuel Fleischacker

WEEK FIVE Friday, February 7		<i>The Wealth of Nations, Vol I, Chapters 4&5</i> Adam Smith
WEEK SIX Monday, February 10		<i>The Wealth of Nations, Vol I, Chapters 6&7</i> Adam Smith
WEEK SIX Wednesday, February 12		<i>On Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations: Distributive Justice</i> Samuel Fleischacker
WEEK SIX Friday, February 14		No Reading - final discussion of Wealth of Nations
WEEK SEVEN Monday, February 17	Ricardo	<i>On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation</i> David Ricardo
WEEK SEVEN Wednesday, February 19	The Invisible Hand	<i>Invisible Hand Explanations</i> Robert Nozick
WEEK SEVEN Friday, February 21		<i>Invisible Hand Explanations</i> Edna Ullmann-Margalit
WEEK EIGHT Monday, February 24	Mill	<i>Principles of Political Economy</i> John Stuart Mill
WEEK EIGHT Wednesday, February 26		<i>Principles of Political Economy</i> John Stuart Mill
WEEK EIGHT Friday, February 28	Mid-term exam distributed	Mid-term review
WEEK NINE Monday, March 2	Mid-term exam due in class	<i>The System of Economic Contradictions, or The Philosophy of Poverty</i> Pierre-Joseph Proudhon
WEEK NINE Wednesday, March 4	Proudhon	<i>What is Property I?</i> Pierre-Joseph Proudhon
WEEK NINE Friday, March 6		<i>What is Property II?</i> Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

WEEK TEN Monday, March 9	Spring Break	No Class
WEEK TEN Wednesday, March 11		No Class
WEEK TEN Friday, March 13		No Class
WEEK ELEVEN Monday, March 16	Marx	<i>Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 I</i> Karl Marx
WEEK ELEVEN Wednesday, March 18		<i>Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 II</i> Karl Marx
WEEK ELEVEN Friday, March 20		<i>Capital (extract from Vol I)</i> Karl Marx
WEEK TWELVE Monday, March 23	Weber	<i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i> Max Weber
WEEK TWELVE Wednesday, March 25		<i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i> Max Weber
WEEK TWELVE Friday, March 27	Blueprint due in class	<i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i> Max Weber
WEEK THIRTEEN Monday, March 30	Georgism	<i>Progress and Poverty</i> Henry George
WEEK THIRTEEN Wednesday, April 1	Keynes	<i>The End of Laissez-Faire & Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren</i> John Maynard Keynes
WEEK THIRTEEN Friday, April 3	Capitalism and Freedom	<i>Two Concepts of Liberty</i> Isiah Berlin

WEEK FOURTEEN Monday, April 6		<i>Capitalism and Freedom</i> Milton Friedman
WEEK FOURTEEN Wednesday, April 8		<i>Freedom and Money</i> G.A. Cohen
WEEK FOURTEEN Friday, April 10	Holiday	No Class
WEEK FIFTEEN Monday, April 13	Markets and Measures of Value	<i>The Ethical Limitations of the Market</i> Elizabeth Anderson
WEEK FIFTEEN Wednesday, April 15		<i>What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limit of Markets</i> Michael J. Sandel
WEEK FIFTEEN Friday, April 17	Inequality	<i>Cost-Benefit Analysis and the Environment</i> Cass R. Sunstein
WEEK SIXTEEN Monday, April 20		<i>Inequality and Economic Growth</i> Joseph E. Stiglitz
WEEK SIXTEEN Wednesday, April 22		<i>Inequality in the Long Run</i> Thomas Piketty
WEEK SIXTEEN Friday, April 24		<i>Private Government</i> Elizabeth Anderson
EXAM WEEK Monday, April 27		No Class
EXAM WEEK Thursday, April 30	Final Paper Due on Sakai	