

Huron Brief Course Outlines

Fall/Winter 2023-2024

Course Title: Critique of Capitalism

Course Number and Section

CGS

2004F - 550

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

Capitalism has been touted as the best worst economic system in the history of humankind. This course takes an in-depth look at the socio-economic form of capitalism and examines its development and spread in a rapidly globalizing world. We begin by investigating the historical conditions that facilitated capitalism's emergence and its various stages (i.e., mercantile, industrial, finance). During this short introduction, we identify the key characteristics by which capitalist political economy operates (i.e., division of labour, primitive accumulation, production of surplus value). Next, we look at the philosophical foundations of industrial and neoliberal capitalism, beginning with Smith and Marx. Finally, we examine the historical and ongoing relationship between capitalism and settler colonialism from various critical neo-Marxist perspectives, including feminist, Indigenous and Asian. Here, we consider the logics and mechanisms by which capitalism participates in the processes of dispossession, alienation, and racialization. We close with a critical study of community economies, which serves as both a critique of capitalism and the affirmation of a future beyond the present crisis of capitalism. Throughout the course, we pay special attention to the ways in which capitalism participates in the reproduction of social, political and economic inequities on local and global scales.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify and define the key characteristics of a capitalist economy.
2. Outline the history and development of capitalist political economy.
3. Explain the relationship between capitalism and settler colonialism.
4. Summarize and evaluate key critiques of capitalism from Indigenous, feminist and anti-racist perspectives.
5. Critically assess potential alternatives to capitalism.
6. Demonstrate the academic skills of synthesis, analysis, and scholarly critique.

Textbooks and Course Materials:

Fulcher, J. (2015). *Capitalism: A Very Short Introduction*, 2nd Edition. Oxford University Press.

In addition, students will read a variety of primary sources from the 1800s to the present, including Smith, Marx, Weber, Friedman, Fraser, Coulthard, Day, and Gibson-Graham.

Methods of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Op-Ed	October 1	20%
Critical Review	November 12	20%
Final Essay	December 8	30%
Final Exam	Dec. exam period	30%

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.