THE INTELLECTUAL HISTORY OF CAPITALISM: 1900–PRESENT

Overview:
This course explores the intellectual history of capitalism since the end of the nineteenth century. Readings include texts written by historians, economists, sociologists, and social and political theorists, and central topics include the historicization of capitalism, the decline and revival of \textit{laissez-faire}, the cultural implications of consumerism, the ethics of inequality, the problem of norms in the twentieth-century social sciences, and the relationship between the market economy and democratic structures of governance.

Assignments and Grading:

10%: online postings  
20%: first paper (5–7 pp.)  
30%: participation  
10%: second paper proposal (3–5 pp. plus bibliography)  
30%: second paper (12–15 pp.)

Three times during the semester students should post a response to the readings on Blackboard. These responses should focus on a \textit{problem} in the texts under discussion that you would like to highlight for discussion in class (e.g. an ambiguous claim; an underlying assumption that the author doesn’t examine; a potential counterargument that the author doesn’t satisfactorily address; etc.). The responses should not be longer than 300 words (not including block quotations) and should be posted by 8:00pm on the Sunday night before the class meets. Each student should post at least one question by the meeting on March 5th, and at least two questions by the meeting on April 16th. The students who post for each week may be asked to elaborate on their interests during class discussion.

There are two major writing assignments in this course. The first is a 5-7 pp. paper on a topic based wholly on readings for the course. A partial draft of this paper is due for distribution to your classmates on Friday, March 1st, and a final draft is due on Friday, March 8th. (A list of questions will be distributed in class, or students can choose to pursue their own line of analysis in consultation with the professor.) The second is an original 12– to 15–page research paper on a topic related to the intellectual history of capitalism since the late nineteenth century. Students will develop their topics in consultation with the professor. A preliminary proposal and bibliography are due on Friday, April 5th, a partial draft is due for distribution to your classmates on Friday, April 26th, and the final paper is due during the exam period.

All papers are due by 4:00pm on the deadline date. After that time, the grades of late papers will be lowered one level for each day they are late (e.g., a grade of B becomes a B- if one day late, a C+ if two days late, etc.).

All students in the course are expected to visit the professor’s office hours (sign-up forms for
specific time slots are available at the above link) at least once during the semester.

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Please report any violations you witness to the instructor. You may consult the associate dean of student conduct (or designee) by calling the Office of the Dean of Students at 410-516-8208 or via email at integrity@jhu.edu. For more information, see the Homewood Student Affairs site on academic ethics: (https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/student-life/student-conduct/academic-ethics-undergraduates)

Texts:

A number of the readings from the course (denoted with an * in the syllabus) will be available online or on electronic reserve. The other readings, listed below, are available at the bookstore:


MEETINGS

Monday, January 28th
- Introduction.

Monday, February 4th

Monday, February 11th
Monday, February 18th


Monday, February 25th

- *John Maynard Keynes, “The End of Laissez-Faire.”

Monday, March 4th

- Peer workshop of partial first paper drafts.

* Friday, March 8th: FIRST PAPERS DUE *

Monday, March 11th

- *Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery (Capricorn, 1944), selections.

Monday, March 25th


Monday, April 1st

* Friday, April 5th: SECOND PAPER PROPOSALS DUE *

Monday, April 8th

- Milton Friedman, selections from *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago, 2002).
- Workshop of second paper proposals.

Monday, April 15th


Monday, April 22nd


Monday, April 29th

- Peer workshop of 5–10pp. selection from final paper.

* Exam Period: FINAL PAPERS DUE *