Course Description

This course is an exploration of capitalism’s historical and ideological roots, from the cultural values entrenched in its inception, some of the main theories that emerged throughout its rise, and to its ramifications, in the form of colonization, theft, and slavery. By engaging in not only the theoretical concepts introduced in the past four hundred years of capitalism’s rise, but also their historical consequences, the aim is to have a more thorough knowledge of how ideology, theory, and its aftereffects (be it physical, social, financial) must be viewed together if we are to have a deeper understanding of capitalism and economic policy. Among the central concepts we will cover are the ideological transitions to capitalism in the 17th and 18th centuries, the era of enlightenment, slavery, colonialism, and neoliberalism. We will wrestle with the main economic theories that have emerged from Smith and Ricardo, to Keynes and Friedman, while always considering how those philosophers and their guiding concepts, built upon experiences rooted in Western culture, impacted the “periphery”. Thus, in addition to tracing the history of economic development in Europe and the United States, we will also be questioning its lingering ramifications on previously colonized countries. The aim of this course is thus to grapple not only with important economic theories, but to root these theories in their historical context.

One of the main elements of this class is the reading. Each week you will be required to post a response journal on the readings and a response to one of your classmate’s journals before class. The readings will mostly consist of our two guiding texts for the semester: The Worldly Philosophers by Robert Heilbroner, and The Divide: A Brief Guide to Global Inequality and its Solutions, by Jason Hickel; there will also be essays, articles, and videos that you will be asked to read or watch. The response questions I assign will vary week to week, encouraging you to have an in-depth understanding of the main thoughts and teachings found in the readings, but also hoping that you take those thoughts and ideas into your own life—how does what we are learning in class impact you? Your family? Your community, city, country, lifestyle? The key to succeeding in this class is critically engaging with and taking the subject matter into the real world that you live in.

As this course will be entirely online, I encourage you to take every opportunity given to engage with your classmates and participate in class discussions. We will create our own community and help each other along the way.

Learning Outcomes. Students who successfully complete the class will:

- Gain a sense of the broad outlines of economic history, as well as some idea of important debates within economic history;
• Learn how to question, research, and argue about economic concepts with consideration to their historical and cultural roots;
• Understand how to critically read and participate in critical decolonial discourse; and
• Engage critically with a variety of texts, placing them in relationship to each other and learning how to connect their key arguments and ideas into your own life and the world around you.

**Required Texts & Other Media**


Other readings/media will be listed in the course schedule and available in Blackboard.

**Grading** Grades will be assigned as follows:

Response Journals and Peer Response (12 in total): **25%**
Class Participation: **15%**
Group Presentation (twice per semester): **20%**
Midterm Paper: **20%**
Final Paper: **20%**

This class will be predominantly student-centered. While weekly lectures will accompany assigned readings, the class structure will be almost entirely discussion based. Our synchronous zoom meetings every Tuesday and Thursday will be a safe zone, a place that encourages you to find your voice and express your thoughts and experiences with the subjects we learn about. It is therefore imperative that you come to class prepared to share your thoughts on the readings and contribute to robust discussions. To receive participation for the class, I need to see you actively engaging with your classmates during class, and on the Blackboard discussion boards.

**Response Journals**

Each student will be required to write and submit twelve reading response journals in the course of the semester. While the guidelines for the journal entries will vary from week to week—some weeks you will be asked multiple, specific questions in reference to the readings, other weeks you will more loosely journal about your thoughts on some of the guiding ideas. It is important that each week you come prepared to discuss the main ideas and arguments from the readings. Your journal lengths will vary week to week from 300-500 words. Do not worry about including an intro or conclusion. This is not an essay. Rather, it is an opportunity to ensure that you are ready for class discussions, have performed close readings, and expressed fully and concisely your own voice and insights.

All response journals should be posted in the class discussion board found on Blackboard each **Tuesday at least 1 hour before class** unless otherwise stated in the syllabus. Since these responses will be public, you will also be required to reply to at least one of your classmates’ responses. These replies, which should be at least 150-200 words, should be substantive and provide comments, questions, or new perspectives that further the discussion. These are due **each Thursday at least 1 hour before class**.
All students will be graded out of 6 possible points—4 points for your response journal, and 2 points for your reply to a colleague's paper. Full marks will be given to those who offer critical or original insight to the reading, the opportunity for further discussion, and clear and strongly thought-out writing.

**Group Presentations**

In addition to class discussions and response journals, all students will be required to give group presentations on the readings twice in the course of the semester. All students will be broken into a group of 2. On your assigned week, you must come prepared to class on Thursday with a 15-minute presentation on the key ideas, arguments, take aways, and perhaps confusions that you worked through together from the readings. After this presentation, you must also lead a guided class discussion on the subject for an additional 15 minutes. You must post an outline of your presentation and discussion plans (either in a word document or PowerPoint) to the Blackboard folder labeled “Group Presentations” before class on your week in order to receive full credit. More details on what the presentation must include will be given during class Week 1.

The aim of this assignment is to ensure you are working through challenging concepts together with your classmates. I encourage you to meet on zoom at least once before your presentation. You will get the opportunity to meet first as a group during class on Week 1. During this initial meeting, you can get to know one another and set up a separate form of communication.

**Midterm/Final Paper**

Besides your weekly response journals and group presentations, you will be required to write two papers in the course of the semester. One will be due before Spring Break, and one will be due by the semester. More information on due dates and requirements will be given closer to the deadline, but generally expect to receive at least 2-3 weeks from the day the paper is assigned and when it is due.

**Plagiarism Policy**

No form of plagiarism will be tolerated in this class. While pasting direct passages from other pieces of work into your papers is obviously prohibited, lack of clear citations can lead even the best student to accidentally plagiarize. Please avoid this by clearly marking all quotes. If you are paraphrasing an argument found in a reading, be sure to finish your sentence with your citation in parenthesis, as even summarizing someone else's work can be considered plagiarism. Any form of plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment and possible failure in the class.

Students should be aware of John Jay's policy on academic honesty. It is available online at [http://www.ijay.cuny.edu/web_images/Policyand_procedures.pdf](http://www.ijay.cuny.edu/web_images/Policyand_procedures.pdf).

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

A student should make an initial request for accommodation to the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities and provide appropriate supporting documentation. The Student Disabilities Services Coordinator may consult with appropriate college officials such as the instructor or Provost to determine the appropriateness of the requested accommodation consistent with the program requirements. Such consultation shall be confidential and limited to those officials whose input is necessary to the decision. I encourage you to set up an appointment to talk to me if you have a disability.
Citation Style
One way to avoid plagiarizing is to cite your work properly, but often in-text citations and reference lists can be a confusing task to navigate and quite time consuming. Once you get used to it, however, it becomes reflexive. It is important, therefore, to practice making your citation style consistent. As Economics is a social science, you will use APA. For information on how to cite in APA, please check out Owl Purdue. It is an excellent resource which will make citations and referencing much easier:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html

Attendance
All class meetings will be conducted on Zoom. Students are expected to attend all class meetings as scheduled. As a large percentage of your grade is based on in-class and discussion board participation, lateness and absence will seriously impact your final grade. If you cannot attend class, please email me in advanced. Students are required to keep their cameras on for the duration of all Zoom classes. If you are unable to do this, please email me.

Office Hours
Due to the nature of this course being very discussion and participation-heavy, I encourage you to reach out to me any time you want to talk—whether its regarding a confusion, a question, or just to bounce ideas off. Because this semester is completely remote, all office hours will be scheduled by appointment. Please email me if you need to speak and I will reply within 24 hours to set up a time that works for both of us.

Email
Any changes to readings, course meeting times, and any other important course information will be relayed by email. Please make sure you check your John Jay email address regularly throughout the semester.

Course Schedule
All students are expected to complete all required readings before each class on Tuesdays. As such, all readings listed in the weekly course schedule must be completed prior to the class it is assigned for. Readings will average 80 pages a week. The readings will be mostly drawn from the two required books, The Divide by Jason Hickel and The Worldly Philosophers by Robert Heilbroner. There will also be articles, book excerpts, and videos/podcasts that you will need to do depending on the week. All readings outside of the two required books will be posted in Blackboard under Course Materials.

Readings are subject to change. Any changes or additions to readings will be announced via email at least one week in advance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings &amp; Media</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 2/2-2/4</td>
<td>Unpacking Key Terms Rooted in Capitalism</td>
<td>Please post an introduction of yourself on the Blackboard Discussion forum. After you have posted this intro, please read through other introductions and respond to at least one.</td>
<td>Introduction due 2/3 by midnight. Reply to 1 Intro by Thursday, 2/4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
  • Hickel, Chapter 1 (p.7-32)  
  • Heilbroner, Chapter 1-2 (p.13-41)  
  • Wood Chapter 5 (p.95-121) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reading response due 2/9  
  Reply to 1 classmates’ response by 2/11 |
| Week 3 | 2/16-2/18 | Adam Smith and the Era of Enlightenment | • Heilbroner Chapter 3 (p.42-74)  
  • Heilbroner & Smith Intro (p.1-11)  
  o Theory of Moral Sentiments (p.57-63; p.65-86)  
  o Heilbroner introduction to Wealth of Nations (p.149-156) |
| Reading Response due 2/16  
  Reply to 1 classmates’ response by 2/18 |
  • Robinson, Black Marxism Chap 4 (p.71-82), chap 5 (p.101-120) |
| Reading Response due 2/23  
  Reply to 1 classmates’ response by 2/25 |
  • Hickel Chapter 3 (p.65-103)  
  • Heilbroner Chapter 4 (p.75-104)  
  • Mike Davis *Late Victorian Holocaus ts*, Chapter 10 (p. 311-340) |
| Reading Response due 3/2 by midnight  
  Reply to 1 classmates’ response by 3/4 |
| Week 6 | 3/9-3/11 | Industrial Revolution and the Creation of Poverty in the UK | • Heilbroner Chapter 5 & 6 (p.105-169)  
  • Hobsbaum *The Age of Revolution* Chapter 2 (p.27-52) |
| Reading Response due 3/9  
  Reply to 1 classmates’ response by 3/11 |
| Week 7 | 3/16-3/18 | The East India Trading Company Part 2: Ideological Origins | • Heilbroner Chapter 7 (p. 170-212)  
  • Mignolo *The Darker Side of Western Modernity* Chapter 2 (p. 77- 117)  
  • Escobar, *Planning* (p. 145-159) |
| Reading Response due 3/16  
  Reply to 1 classmates’ response by 3/18 |
  • More readings TBA |
<p>| Mid-term Essay due TBA |
| Spring Break | 3/29-4/4 | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Required Reading</th>
<th>Assignment Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 9    | 4/6-4/8     | Keynes and the Great Depression                        | • Heilbroner Chapter 9 (p.248-287)  
• More readings TBA                                                                  | Reading Response due 4/6  |
|      |             |                                                         | Reply to 1 classmates’ response by 4/8                                            |                         |
| 10   | 4/13-4/15   | Post-World War II and the beginning of the Development Project | • Appelbaum *The Economists Hour* Introduction (p.3-18)  
• More readings TBA  
|      |             |                                                         | Reading Response due 4/13  | Reply to 1 classmates’ response by 4/8 |
| 11   | 4/20-4/22   | Neoliberalism in the United States                     | • Appelbaum chapter 5 & 6 (p.131-184)                                           | Reading Response due 4/20 |
|      |             |                                                         | Reply to 1 classmates’ response by 4/22                                           |                         |
| 12   | 4/27-4/29   | Coups and Neo-Colonialism in the World                 | • Hickel Chapter 4 (p.104-141)  
• Fanon TBA                                                                         | Reading Response due 4/27 |
|      |             |                                                         | Reply to 1 classmates’ response by 4/22                                           |                         |
| 13   | 5/4-5/6     | Debt, Aid and Free Trade in an Era of Globalization    | • Hickel Chapter 5-6 (p.145-219)  
• Buen Vivir (p. 192-208)  
• Amerata Sen                                                                        | Reading Response due 5/4  |
|      |             |                                                         | Reply to 1 classmates’ response by 5/6                                            |                         |
| 14   | 5/11-5/13   | Present Day                                            | • Hickel: Chapters 7-9 (pg. 220-305)  
• Heilbroner Chapter 11 (p.311-321)                                              | Reading Response due 5/11 |
|      |             |                                                         | Reply to 1 classmates’ response by 5/13                                           |                         |
| Final Exam | Assignment TBA |                                                       | Due Date TBA                                                                    |                         |