

CGS 2004F
Critique of Capitalism

Dr. David Thorsen-Cavers
Centre for Global Studies
Huron University College
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Office: A206

Office hours: Thursday 12:30-1:30; Tuesday 1:30-2:30 by appointment only.

e-mail: dthorsen@huron.uwo.ca

Format: Tuesdays 11:30-1:30, Thursdays 11:30-12:30 (3 hours, 0.5 course)

Classroom: HC V210

Prerequisites: 0.5 course from Centre for Global Studies 1000-1999,
or permission of the Centre for Global Studies.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the socio-economic form of 'capitalism', and examines the development and spread of the key features of capitalist social organization – the division of labour, private property, primitive accumulation, commodification – and examines their functioning in a rapidly globalizing world.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course aims to contribute to students' understandings of global issues and the complexities of globalization in general through examining one important aspect of globalization, capitalism, and how it relates to global and local issues. It aims to help students to develop their critical and creative thinking skills by introducing and examining key issues relevant to the study of capitalism, such as commodification and commodity fetishism; primitive accumulation and accumulation by dispossession; the capitalist world system and its limits; the free market, private property and privatization; class and articulation of modes of production; the roles played by 'local' and 'global' actors; and how capitalism shapes and is shaped by globalization.

The course also aims to enhance students' ability to think through their own activities and knowledge of the world(s) they live in as people implicated in the workings of capitalism. The assignments for this course aim to help students to build their critical and creative thinking and research skills and develop effective written and oral communication by working through the ways in which theories, models and metaphors articulate with the exploration of specific concrete contexts in which capitalism operates. The inclusion of group presentations aims to assist students in developing skills in working collaboratively and encouraging participatory education, as well as developing their skills and confidence in presenting material to groups.

COURSE METHODS:

This course will be lecture based, however, I encourage you to contribute to discussion, providing input, bringing up points, musing or asking questions. Toward the end of the

semester, we will have class discussions of topics and issues brought up in presentations and all students will be expected to be prepared to engage in these.

Required Readings

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2007. Consuming Life. Cambridge, UK: Polity.

Gibson-Graham, J. K.. 2006. A Postcapitalist Politics. Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press.

Harvey, David. 2014. Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Perelman, Michael. 2000. The Invention of Capitalism: Classical Political Economy and the Secret History of Primitive Accumulation. Durham & London: Duke University Press.

ONE of the following for your Response Paper:

Ho, Karen. 2009. Liquidated: An Ethnography of Wall Street. Durham & London: Duke University Press.

Rajak, Dinah. 2011. In Good Company: An Anatomy of Corporate Social Responsibility. Stanford University Press.

West, Paige. 2012. From Modern Production to Imagined Primitive: The Social World of Coffee from Papua New Guinea. Durham & London: Duke University Press.

Evaluation

Attendance: 5%

Participation: 5%

Response Paper: 25% Due October 9th.

Research Paper: 30% Due November 13th.

Group presentation: 15%. November 4th – 20th.

Take Home Exam: 20% December 9th

ATTENDANCE: Attendance makes up 5% of your grade. Attendance will be taken, and you will lose 0.5% per absence.

PARTICIPATION:

You will be expected to participate in discussion, demonstrate that you have read material assigned for classes, and engage with other students. You will be expected to be respectful of other students and not disruptive to the class.

RESPONSE PAPER:

For this assignment, you will be required to examine and critically reflect on one of the following ethnographies: Dinah Rajak's In Good Company; Karen Ho's Liquidated; or Paige West's From Modern Production to Imagined Primitive.

In doing so, you should concentrate on what the author is saying about capitalism, its nature, how it fits into and shapes people's lives. You should demonstrate your comprehension of the author's arguments, and discuss how the work contributes to, differs from, and/or contradicts your understandings and experiences of capitalism and its place in the world. In assessing the author's arguments, their strengths and weaknesses, you should engage with them using evidence to support your positions. This assignment should be a maximum of six pages double spaced.

RESEARCH PAPER:

For this assignment you are required to investigate the ways in which the production, distribution, consumption and disposal of a particular type of fetishized commodity (e.g. mobile phones, clothing, chocolate, bottled water, jewellery) or commoditized experience (e.g. resort tourism, the world cup) involves processes that impact on and shape relations among humans and between humans and the ecological systems in which our lives are embedded. How is capitalism involved in these and how are these shaped by capitalism? In other words, I want you to defetishize commodities, to work through the process through which they are connected to people's lives in different parts of the world. In doing this, I expect you to produce a well researched paper, drawing on at least six strong scholarly sources (along with other non-scholarly sources that may be of use) that critically examines the implications of capitalism in relation to this commodity. Your paper should be no more than eight pages double spaced, exclusive of bibliography.

GROUP PRESENTATIONS:

You will be expected to work with a group (size will be determined by enrolment, but will likely include four people) to develop and complete a group presentation, dealing with a specific aspect of capitalism or issue related to capitalism. I will provide examples of topics you may choose, but your group will be expected to come up with a topic, and submit it to me. If your topic has already been chosen by another group, you will have to change it. Therefore, it is in your best interest to submit your topic to me as soon as possible.

The presentation itself should aim to take up **forty five minutes**. You may determine how to structure these presentations on your own as a group; however, it may be useful to think about the following suggestions in organizing your presentations. You may structure your presentations such that they begin with a general introduction presented by one member, and include particular contrasting or complementary case studies/examples that illustrate particular issues, presented by different group members, with a final member of the group providing a concluding discussion and raising issues.

Alternatively, you may structure the presentations as a debate, discussing different perspectives/theories concerning particular issues.

You should divide your labour in an egalitarian and democratic manner. You will be collectively responsible for each other's participation and for making sure that members of the group do not take too much time such that people don't get left out, or that you do not exceed the time for your group as a whole.

Grading of the presentations will be based on individual and collective contributions to the project and presentation in addition to the quality of the presentation itself. In order to facilitate this, each member of the group will be required to submit a brief (and responsible) assessment of the quality and quantity of the contributions of yourself and the other members of the group. This should be submitted to me by the following class. Failure to submit an assessment will be factored into your grade.

At present it looks like we will be able to have presentations on Tuesdays, and class discussion of the presentations on Thursdays. Non-presenting as well as presenting students will be expected to reflect on the topics of the presentations in order to contribute to the discussions.

Policy on late assignments:

Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day. Unless you have a **valid** excuse, assignments will not be accepted more than **one week** past the due date.

NEVER EVER EVER SLIDE ASSIGNMENTS UNDER MY OFFICE DOOR!

Policy on absences:

Attendance makes up 5% of your grade. Attendance will be taken, and you will lose 0.5% per absence.

Instructor absences:

If I have to cancel a lecture for any reason, I will use OWL and email to notify students as soon as I know that the class must be cancelled. With this in mind, if you have a long way to come to campus for this class, make sure to check your email before departing. To facilitate this, I will ask students to provide me with their email addresses on the first day of lectures. If you are reading this during the first lecture and I have not yet done this, please remind me to do so.

Provisional schedule of topics and readings:

(Key: ZB is Zygmunt Bauman; DH is David Harvey; MP is Michael Perelman; GG is Gibson-Graham.

DATE	SUBJECT	READINGS	DATES
Sept 4.	Introduction	DH Introduction	
Sept 9,11	What is it? What isn't it?	DH #1, 2; MP Introduction-Ch.3	
Sept 16, 18	Bases, Origin myths and Histories	DH # 3,4 MP Ch. 4-6	
Sept. 23, 25	Global expansion	DH #5,6 MP Ch. 7&8	
Sept. 30, Oct. 2	Articulations/subsumptions	DH # 7,8 MP Ch. 9&10	
Oct 7. 9	Classes and capitalisms	DH # 9, 10 MP Ch. 11&12	Response Paper Due Oct 9
Oct 14, 16	Consumer society and commodification	DH # 11, 12 MP Ch. 13- Conclusion	
Oct 21, 23	Communities and Individuals	DH # 13, 14 ZB Ch. 1 & 2	
Oct. 28	Non-capitalisms	DH # 15 ZB Ch. 3 & 4	
Nov 4, 6	Presentations and discussion	DH # 16, 17 GG Introduction & Ch. 1	
Nov 11, 13	Presentations and discussion	DH Conclusion and Epilogue GG Ch 2&3	Research Essay Due Nov 13
Nov 18, 20	Presentations and discussion	GG Ch. 4&5	
Nov. 25, 27	Open discussion, Review	GG Ch. 6&7	
Dec. 2			Take Home Exam Distributed
Dec. 9			Take Home Exam Due

Appendix to Course Outlines

Prerequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Conduct of Students in Classes, Lectures, and Seminars

Membership in the community of Huron University College and the University of Western Ontario implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. The academic and social privileges granted to each student are conditional upon the fulfillment of these responsibilities. In the classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Students can avoid any unnecessary disruption of the class by arriving in sufficient time to be seated and ready for the start of the class, by remaining silent while the professor is speaking or another student has the floor, and by taking care of personal needs prior to the start of class. If a student is late, or knows that he/she will have to leave class early, be courteous: sit in an aisle seat and enter and leave quietly.

Please see the *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* at:

<http://www.huronuc.ca/CurrentStudents/StudentLifeandSupportServices/StudentDiscipline>

Technology

It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited to, laptops, PDAs, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

Academic Accommodation for Medical/Non-Medical Grounds

For UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and a downloadable SMC see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

[downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm> under the Medical Documentation heading]

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and

provide documentation. Academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the instructor.

For non-medical grounds or for medical grounds when work represents less than 10% of the overall grade for the course, students seeking academic accommodation must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the instructor.

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Statement on Academic Integrity

The International Centre for Academic Integrity defines academic integrity as "a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. From these values flow principles of behaviour that enable academic communities to translate ideals to action." (CAI Fundamental Values Project, 1999).

A lack of academic integrity is indicated by such behaviours as the following:

- Cheating on tests;
- Fraudulent submissions online;
- Plagiarism in papers submitted (including failure to cite and piecing together unattributed sources);
- Unauthorized resubmission of course work to a different course;
- Helping someone else cheat;
- Unauthorized collaboration;
- Fabrication of results or sources;
- Purchasing work and representing it as one's own.

Academic Integrity: Importance and Impact

Being at university means engaging with a variety of communities in the pursuit and sharing of knowledge and understanding in ways that are clear, respectful, efficient, and productive. University communities have established norms of academic integrity to ensure responsible, honest, and ethical behavior in the academic work of the university, which is best done when sources of ideas are properly and fully acknowledged and when responsibility for ideas is fully and accurately represented.

In the academic sphere, unacknowledged use of another's work or ideas is not only an offence against the community of scholars and an obstacle to academic productivity. It may also be understood as fraud and may constitute an infringement of legal copyright.

A university is a place for fulfilling one's potential and challenging oneself, and this means rising to challenges rather than finding ways around them. The achievements in an individual's university studies can only be fairly evaluated quantitatively through true and honest representation of the actual learning done by the student. Equity in assessment for all students is ensured through fair representation of the efforts by each.

Acting with integrity at university constitutes a good set of practices for maintaining integrity in later life. Offences against academic integrity are therefore taken very seriously as part of the university's work in preparing students to serve, lead, and innovate in the world at large.

A university degree is a significant investment of an individual's, and the public's, time, energies, and resources in the future, and habits of academic integrity protect that investment by preserving the university's reputation and ensuring public confidence in higher education.

Students found guilty of plagiarism will suffer consequences ranging from a grade reduction to failure in the course to expulsion from the university. In addition, a formal letter documenting the offence will be filed in the Dean's Office, and this record of the offence will be retained in the Dean's Office for the duration of the student's academic career at Huron University College.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Personal Response Systems ("clickers") may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence,
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

Policy on Special Needs

Students who require special accommodation for tests and/or other course components must make the appropriate arrangements with the Student Development Centre (SDC). Further details concerning policies and procedures may

be found at:

http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/?requesting_acc

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
- 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Class Cancellations

In the event of a cancellation of class, every effort will be made to post that information on the Huron website, <http://www.huronuc.ca/AccessibilityInfo> (“Class Cancellations”).

Accessibility

Huron University College strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place as, and in a similar way to, other customers. We welcome your feedback about accessibility at Huron. Information about how to provide feedback is available at: <http://www.huronuc.ca/AccessibilityInfo>

Mental Health @ Western

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health @ Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Program and Academic Counselling

Centre for Global Studies students registered at Huron who require advice about modules and courses in Global Studies should contact Dr. Mark Franke, Director of the Centre for Global Studies, mfranke@huron.uwo.ca, 519-438-7224 ext. 242. Students should contact Academic Counselling on other academic matters. See the Academic Counselling website for information on services offered. <http://huronuc.ca/CurrentStudents/StudentLifeandSupportServices/CounselorsCounsellingServices>