

Antioch College
PECO 105: American Political Economy
Winter Quarter 2012: Block B

Instructor: Taki Manolakos

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Fridays, 1150-1250 and by appointment.

Class Location & Timing: Tuesdays and Fridays, 0900-1150 in MG 126.

Course Description: This course introduces students to the capitalist mode of production in the United States. We study the American political and economic systems: how they work and how they influence each other, emphasizing private property rights and the price system under capitalism. We weave together two separate themes, that is, a theoretical analysis of the capitalist mode of production and a historical account of capitalism in the United States. Topics include the history of political economy; US economic history with an emphasis on the Second Great Depression, the so-called Golden Age, the Neoliberal Counterrevolution, and the current economic crisis; imperialism; the labor movement; and environmental justice. Note that the international aspects of capitalism as a politico-economic system entails that we cannot restrict our attention to the United States only, even if the U.S. will be the center of our attention. For example, the role of international finance and migration in the determination of domestic politico-economic outcomes suggests that an American Political Economy has a crucial international dimension. Finally, a common element in many theories of political economy is a predisposition for linking theory to praxis. I will adhere as much as possible to the dictum that the point is not only to interpret the world in various ways, but to change it.

Prerequisite: There is no prerequisite for this course.

Course objectives and learning outcomes

- (1) Knowledge and inquiry: Students will gain an understanding of many of the major topics of American Political Economy and develop a critical understanding of political economic concepts, arguments, and empirical regularities in the American context.
- (2) Skills and innovation: Students will learn to read carefully and effectively.
- (3) Critical thinking: Students will develop historical, social, and politico-economic reasoning abilities. Students will also develop elementary quantitative reasoning skills.
- (4) Deliberative action: Students will develop abilities to adapt knowledge, skills, and critical thinking for purposeful action in the course of extensive discussions during class.
- (5) Written and oral communication: Students develop abilities to effectively communicate in writing through the composition of critical essays.

Required books: There are no required textbooks for this course. All readings shall be on reserve at the library. Note that many readings are hyperlinked to the syllabus.

Class Size Policy: Antioch College believes that small classes are important. Class size limits are set at an average of 12-15 students in each Foundation course. Any exceptions to these caps are made at my discretion. Note that the class is full as of February 7th. I will allow enrollment of up to 16 students and the 16th seat will be allocated by first-come-first-serve rationing.

Course Evaluation: You will write three short essays (roughly 1,000 words per essay), consisting of critical reflections on the assigned readings. Your essays will be graded on identification of the main issues in the readings; presentation of perspectives and positions of in the readings; evaluation of assumptions underlying the various perspectives; formulating critiques, acknowledging objections, articulating replies to those objections; readability; and, determining a suitable course of action to solve a given problem (if applicable). I will provide detailed instructions regarding essay composition during our meeting on 21 February 2012.

Grading Policy: Each essay will provide you with an opportunity to earn a maximum of 100 points and determines one third of your final grade for PECO 105. Upon completion of the course, students will receive both a letter grade and a narrative evaluation for their performance in this course. Students are expected to write a self-evaluation. The letter grades will be determined according to the following intervals:

A requires earned points in the interval [270, 300];
B requires earned points in the interval [240, 270);
C requires earned points in the interval [210, 240);
D requires earned points in the interval [180, 210);
F is assigned when earned points are less than 180.

For example, suppose that you were to earn 84 points on your first essay, 88 points on your second essay, and 86 points on your third essay; therefore, you would have earned a total of 258 points out of a maximum of 300. In this case, your final grade would be a B. Please note that (+) and (-) will be used only for your essays and not for your final grade.

On Writing: In the "Elements of Style", William Strunk recalls that the best writers sometimes disregard the rules of writing. In doing so, the reader will find in a sentence some merit realized at the cost of the violation. But unless you are certain that this utilitarian calculation favors the violation, please follow the rules. Twitterized sentences will just not do. Pay careful attention to your writing.

Robin Littell of the Writing Institute is available to assist students with writing assignments. The Institute will give you writing support, including helping you to plan essays, developing your tone and writing strategies, correct documentation of resources, and improving your editing and proof-reading skills. Send Robin an email at writing@antiochcollege.org in order to schedule your consultations. Appointments are preferred, however, Robin is available for tutoring during the following walk-in periods:

Mondays, 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.;
Tuesdays, 12 p.m. - 2 p.m.;
Wednesdays, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.;
Fridays, 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Attendance and Punctuality: Please come to class. This course will cultivate an intellectual community, which requires your attendance and punctuality. I have no desire to be a police department, monitoring your behavior and enforcing compliance with my attendance policy. The enforcement costs are too high and I find the idea distasteful. It is nevertheless true that our class time is extremely limited. We meet a total of 11 times or approximately 31.2 hours. Missing an entire class meeting entails a loss of 9.1% of total class time; missing two class meetings entails a loss of 18.2% of total class time. The latter is too high of an absence rate.

Nevertheless, life happens and I accordingly will grant you the right to a single unexcused absence. I strongly recommend that you not call this option unless absolutely required. If I discover that you missed class because you are hungover on account of a drinking session at the Gulch, I won't be pleased. Any absences beyond the first must be discussed with me in person. I reserve the right to penalize your final grade if you are truant or habitually tardy (or both). Finally, I request that all students be seated and ready to begin at 0900 sharp (i.e., your laptops should be plugged in and booted before 0900).

Policy on Incompletes: Grades of INC are not available in this course.

ADA policy: In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Antioch College offers reasonable accommodations to students with eligible and documented disabilities. If you believe you qualify for course adaptations or special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, it is your responsibility to contact the Office of the Registrar and Academic Services (McGregor 213) and provide the required documentation. If you have already documented a disability or other condition through this office, please notify me during the first week of class.

Academic Honesty Policy: Don't cheat. We expect high standards of behavior and academic honesty from all students. Academic dishonesty is harmful to Antioch College and your reputation. You must act responsibly and honestly. For a full discussion and definition of the College's Academic Honesty Policy, please see the curriculum catalog. I invite you to talk with me further about issues of academic honesty.

Your rights under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of (FERPA) 1974: FERPA protects your right to privacy and generally prohibits the improper disclosure of personally identifiable information derived from education records. FERPA grants students the right to inspect and review their education records; the right to seek that their records be amended; the right to some control over the disclosure of their education records; and, the right to confidentiality except where certain special provisions exist. Note that you also have the right to also suppress directory information to outside agencies and third parties. If you have any additional questions, please speak with Office of the Registrar and Academic Services.

Schedule (n.b., any reading denoted by "‡" is optional):

16 February 2012: Block B begins

17 February 2012: Introductions, Private Property

- (1.1) Screening of "Holding Ground: The Rebirth of Dudley Street" (Leah Mahan and Mark Lipman, 1996);
- (1.2) "Hostile and Notorious: The Conditions of Private Property" (Mark Paschal, Viewpoint Magazine: Investigations in Contemporary Politics, 11 January 2012);
- (1.3) "Sanctity of Property in American Economic History" (Gerald Friedman, Political Economy Research Institute Working Paper 14, 2001)‡;
- (1.4) "What is Property?" (Pierre-Joseph Proudhon)‡.

21 February 2012: Economic Measurement

- (2.1) "Macroeconomics, sixth edition" (David C. Colander, McGraw-Hill/Irwin 2006, pp. 140-163 and pp. 167-184);
- (2.2) "Growth and Distribution" (Duncan K. Foley and Thomas R. Michl, Harvard University Press 1999, pp. 1-41);
- (2.3) "Gross Domestic Product" (J. Aslaksen in Peterson and Lewis (eds.), pp. 411-417, "Elgar Companion to Feminist Economics", Edward Elgar 1999);
- (2.4) "Labor Force" (Susan B. Carter, chapter Ba of the "Historical Statistics of the United States: Earliest Times to the Present, Millennial Edition", Cambridge University Press 2006)‡.

24 February 2012: The History of Political Economy

- (3.1) "Adam's Fallacy: Guide to Economic Theology" (Duncan Foley, Harvard University Press 2006, pp. xi-xv and pp. 1-85);
- (3.2) "Wage Labor and Capital" (Karl Marx, pp. 203-217 in the second edition of the "Marx-Engels Reader" edited by Robert C. Tucker);
- (3.3) "Marx's Capital" (Ben Fine and Alfredo Saad-Filho, Pluto Press 2004)‡;
- (3.4) Class Consciousness (Georg Lukacs, Merlin Press 1967)‡.
- (3.5) "Capitalism and Freedom" (Milton Friedman, University of Chicago Press 1962)‡.

28 February 2012: Work and Slavery

- (4.1) "Race, gender, and work: a multi-cultural economic history of women in the United States" (Teresa Amott and Julie Matthaei, South End Press 1991, pp. 31-62);
- (4.2) "Women, Race, Class" (Angela Y. Davis, First Vintage Books 1983, pp. 3-29);
- (4.3) "Black Marxism" (Cedric J. Robinson, University of North Carolina Press 1983, pp. 101-120);
- (4.4) "Labor" (Susan B. Carter, chapter Ba of the "Historical Statistics of the United States: Earliest Times to the Present, Millennial Edition", Cambridge University Press 2006)‡.
- (4.5) "Prostitution, Sex Work and Violence: Discursive and Political Contexts for Five Texts on Paid Sex, 1987-2001" (Svati P. Shah, Gender and History 16(3), November 2004, pp. 794-812)‡.

2 March 2012: A Great Depression (FIRST ESSAY DUE)

- (5.1) "Age of Extremes" (Eric Hobsbawm, Abacus 1995, pp. 1-17, pp. 85-141);
- (5.2) "Lessons from the Great Depression" (Peter Temin, MIT Press 1989, pp. 1-40);
- (5.3) "The Nation in Depression" (Christina Romer, Journal of Economic Perspectives 7(2), 1993, pp. 19-39)‡;
- (5.4) "What ended the Great Depression?" (Christina Romer, Journal of Economic History 52(4), 1992, pp. 757-784)‡;
- (5.5) "Theories of the Great Depression: Why Did Profitability Matter?" (Gérard Duménil, Mark Glick and Jose Rangel; Review of Radical Political Economics 19(2), Summer 1987, pp. 16-42)‡;

6 March 2012: After WWII – Cold War, Golden Years, and Crises

- (6.1) "Age of Extremes" (Eric Hobsbawm, Abacus 1995, pp. 225-286);
- (6.2) "The Economic Crisis Reader, second edition" (Gerald Friedman, Fred Mosley, Chris Sturr, and the Dollars and Sense Collective (eds.), Economic Affairs Bureau 2010, pp. 9-77);
- (6.3) "The Rise and Fall of the Golden Age" (Andrew Glyn, Alan Hughes, Alain Lipietz and Ajit Singh in "The Golden Age of Capitalism: Reinterpreting the Postwar Experience", Stephen A. Marglin and Juliet B. Schor (eds.), Oxford University Press 1992, pp. 39-125)‡;
- (6.4) "The Financial and Economic Crisis of 2008: A Systemic Crisis of Neoliberal Capitalism" (David Kotz, Review of Radical Political Economics 41(3), September 2009, pp. 305-317)‡;
- (6.5) "Technology, Distribution and the Rate of Profit in the US Economy: Understanding the Current Crisis" (Deepankar Basu and Ramaa Vasudevan, UMASS Amherst Department of Economics Working Paper 2011-32)‡.

9 March 2012: Imperialism, Colonialism, and War

- (7.1) "Imperialism and Peace" (D.D. Kosambi, Monthly Review 3, 1951, pp. 45-49);
- (7.2) "The Political Economy of War: Situating the Debate" (Cynthia J. Arnson in "Rethinking the Economics of War: The Intersection of Need, Creed, and Greed", Cynthia J. Arnson and I. William Zartman (eds.), Johns Hopkins University Press 2005, pp. 1-22);
- (7.3) "Global Insecurity in the Early Twenty-First Century: Neoliberalization and the Rise of New Imperialism" (Heikki Patomäki in "Political Economy of Global Security: War, Future Crises and Changes in Global Governance", Routledge 2008, pp. 124-55);
- (7.4) "The New Imperialism" (David Harvey, Oxford University Press 2005, pp. 1-25);
- (7.5) "Empire, Public Goods, and the Roosevelt Correlary" (Kris James Mitchener and Marc Weidenmier, Journal of Economic History 65(3), September 2005, pp. 658-692)‡.

13 March 2012: Political Ecology and Environmental Justice (SECOND ESSAY DUE)

- (8.1) "Building Social Capital to Protect Natural Capital: The Quest for Environmental Justice" (Manuel Pastor in "Natural assets: democratizing environmental ownership", James K. Boyce and Barry G. Shelley (eds.), Island Press 2003);
- (8.2) "Environmental Inequalities: Class, Race, and Industrial Pollution in Gary, Indiana, 1945-1980" (Andrew Hurley, University of North Carolina Press 1995, pp. 77-135);
- (8.3) "Mountains of Injustice: Social and Environmental Justice in Appalachia", Donald Edward Davis and Jedediah Purdy (eds.), Ohio University Press 2011)‡;
- (8.4) "Violent Environments" (Nancy Lee Peluso and Michael Watts, Cornell University Press 2001, pp. 3-38)‡.

16 March 2012: The Labor Movement

- (9.1) "I've Been to the Mountaintop" (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered this speech in support of the striking sanitation workers at Mason Temple in Memphis on 3 April 1968, the day before he was assassinated.);
- (9.2) Screening of "Finally Got the News" (Stewart Bird, Rene Lichtman, and Peter Gessner in association with the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, Icarus Films 1970);
- (9.3) "A Short History of the U.S. Working Class: From Colonial Times to the Twenty-First Century" (Paul LeBlanc, Humanity Books 1999, pp. 61-126);
- (9.4) "Guns Thugs, Rednecks, Radicals: A Documentary History of the West Virginia Mine Wars" (David Allen Corbin (ed.), PM Press 2011, pp. 8-41, pp. 45-50, pp. 75-81, 95-111, pp. 138-152, and pp. 175-183);
- (9.5) "Wisconsin Uprising: Labor Fights Back" (Michael D. Yates (ed.), Monthly Review Press 2012)‡.

20 March 2012: We are an Image from the Future

- (10.1) "Preliminary Notes Towards an Account of the Movement of the Popular Assemblies" (Children of the Gallery, 11 July 2011);
- (10.2) "Declaration of the Occupation of New York City (General Assembly of New York City, 29 September 2011);
- (10.3) "Santa Rita, I Hate Every Inch of You" (Jeb Purucker, Viewpoint Magazine: Investigations in Contemporary Politics, 6 February 2012);
- (10.4) Tidal (issue one, December 2011);
- (10.5) "Economic Justice and Democracy: From Competition to Cooperation" (Robin Hahnel, Routledge 2005)‡.

22 March 2012: B Block ends (FINAL ESSAY DUE)