# Marx and Marxist Feminism (PHIL 453/553)

Instructor: Cintia Martinez Velasco

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Office room: Susan Campbell Hall, 211-D

Office hours: by appointment Tuesday 12:00-2:00 pm

Class: Monday and Wednesday 2:00-3:50 pm/ Condon 203

**Description**

The study of Marx is relevant not only because he influenced Economics, Political Thought, and Philosophy, among others, but also due to his relevance in understanding the present. Many authors believe there is only one way of understanding the current world with a deep comprehension of capitalist exploitation, and this course, in many senses, follows that belief.

In this course, students will get tools to identify how valuable the Marxist political economy can be to understanding social realities. After engaging in some representative ideas and arguments regarding this vast tradition, this class will allow students to agree or disagree with Marx/Marxist/Marxian thought. The course has two parts. The first focuses on the study of important works written by Marx, along with related concepts, which include historical materialism, religion & state, labor, capitalist systems, exploitation, and emancipation; these ideas will be framed in the praxis role he gave to philosophy.

The second part connects Marx with feminism *and* will review some of the most influential works on Marxist feminism, one of the most radical traditions booming in recent years. Here, we will explore how women Marx´s readers criticized, re-interpreted, and upheld his theory so students can understand women’s role in capitalism -in domestic work and the production of value-.

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| **1** | **Part one**  -Introduction  -Marx critique of religion  -Humanist Marx  -Historical Materialism  -The problem of method  -Capital  -Emancipation |
| **2** | **Part two**  -The unhappy marriage of feminism and Marxism  -Eleonor Marx, Marx and private life  -Feminism for 99%, current struggles  *-*Social Reproduction Theory  *-*Marxist methodology in Feminist theorization |

**Learning Goals**

# Students will learn Marx´s ideas developed in his most relevant works.

# Students will recognize how relevant those ideas are today in a field of knowledge where Marxist/Marxian thought has been influential: Feminism.

# Students will understand Marx-Marxist importance in the history of philosophy, economics, religion, and political theory.

# Students will learn the Marxist interpretation of historical materialism, Labor, State, Religion, Capital, Exploitation, Emancipation, etcetera.

# Students will understand why Marx/Marxist is an essential tool for understanding the present and changing it.

# Course Format

Half of the course will be given as a lecture. In those sessions, students will be invited constantly to work in groups to answer questions, discuss ideas, and do close reading. Half of the course will have a seminar format. In the seminar sessions, one student will present the reading and lead the discussion. Opinions, ideas, and comments on readings will be fundamental to the evolution of the class.

**Objectives**

Students will build significant knowledge through the sum of diverse activities. Final course grades will be calculated through a combination of activities such as:

# Attendance – 10%

Students are expected to contribute substantially to the classes, so it will be vital for them to show competence when analyzing the readings.

# Presentation & Leadership in class discussion – 30%

At least once throughout the semester, students should demonstrate their ability to lead discussions. That day, students will present the reading in 20 minutes. They must mention the main arguments, analyze the importance of the reading for the course, and pose interesting questions for an open discussion.

# Papers - 60%

# First midterm paper: 25%

* The first essay should be between 5-6 pages. It should demonstrate your critical analysis ability and reflective engagement with the material reviewed in class. It should be written formally and provide full citations. About the content: a) it can solve a question presented by the instructor, b) it can be an advance of the final paper. Those essays will be returned with comments from Cintia Martínez.

**Final paper: 35%**

* The second midterm paper should extend the research completed for the first midterm paper. It will take into consideration the comments and feedback received in the initial assessment (done in ‘track changes’ format) and deepen the previous work. The essay should be between 9-12 pages.

1. **Grade policies**

**Graduate Grading Standard:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **Numeric Equivalent** | **Explanation** |
| A+ |  | **Exceptional work.** |
| A | 93-100 | **Very Good.** Student demonstrates a quality of work and accomplishment appropriate to preparing for successful research and teaching in the subject area, including very good grasp of the material and originality of thought. |
| A- | 90-92 | Good. Student demonstrates good grasp of the material and some originality of thought. |
| B+ | 87-89 |  |
| B | 83-86 | **Acceptable.**Student demonstrates a sufficient grasp of the material and has completed the work with no significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive. |
| B- | 80-82 |  |
| C+ | 77-79 |  |
| C | 73-76 |  |
| C- | 70-73 | **Lowest Passing Grade.** Work is deficient. Minimum requirements have been met but without distinction. |
| D+ 67-69; D 65-66; F below 65. | | |

* Graduate students must maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) in graduate courses taken in the degree program.
* Grades of D+ or lower for graduate courses are not accepted for graduate credit but are computed in the GPA. A grade of N (no pass) is not accepted for graduate credit.
* A grade of pass (P) must represent work equal to or better than a B-.

1. **Materials**

The primary reading will be *The Marx-Engels Reader*, Ed. Robert C. Tucker, 2nd Edition, Princeton University, 1978 (it will be uploaded on Canvas). Extra readings and films are available on Canvas under “files” and organized in weekly folders.

# Readings organized per week for a 10 weeks course

# Part 1

Basic Reading: *The Marx-Engels Reader*, Ed. Robert C. Tucker, 2nd Edition, Princeton University, 1978. (The readings taken from that book will be marked by )

# I Humanist Marx

Week 1-a

-Presentation of the course

Week 1-b

-Marx, “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction”, pp 53- 65

(Optional) Marx, “On the Jewish Question” 26-52 

Week 2-a

-Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach”, pp 143-145 

# II Historical Materialism

# Week 2-b

-Marx, “German Ideology”, Part I, pp 146-176 

# III Method

# Week 3-a

-Marx, “Grundrisse: Foundations of Critique of Political Economy*”* Introduction (pp 222-227 &236-244) 

Week 3-b

-Marx, “Grundrisse: Foundations of Critique of Political Economy*”* Introduction (pp 222-227 &236-244) 

**IV Estranged Labor & Ontology of Labor**

Week 4-a

-Marx “Economic and philosophic manuscripts of 1844” 

Week 4-b

-Marx “Economic and philosophic manuscripts of 1844” 

# V Capital

# Week 5-a

-Marx, “Capital”, Part I, Chapter I: Commodities 

# Week 5-b

-Marx, *Capital*, *A Critique of Political Economy*, Trad. Ben Fowkes, Penguin Books, 1982.

,Part Three, Chapter 7: The Labour Process and the Valorization Process (pp 283-307)

# Part 2

**VI Introduction to Feminist Marxism**

6-a

Rubin, Gayle, “The Traffic in Women Notes on the Political Economy of Sex” in Toward an Anthropology of Women, Ed. by Rayna R Reiter, Monthly Review Press, NY/London, 1975.

6-b

Marx, Eleonor “The Woman Question” in Eleonor Marx Archive, 1886. https://www.marxists.org/archive/eleanor-marx/index.htm

Miss Marx (Movie), Directed by Susanna Nicchiarelli, 2020.

**VII Patriarchy & Capitalism**

7-a

-Hartmann, Heidi, “The Unhappy Marriage **of** Marxism and Feminism: Towards a more Progressive Union”, *SAGE journals*, 1979.

7-b

Angela Davis/Federici Silvia?

# VIII Feminism for the 99%

# Week 8-a

-Arruza, Cinzia, Bhattacharya Tithi, Fraser, *Feminism for the 99%, A manifesto*, Verso 2019

**XIX Social Reproduction Theory**

Week 8-b

-Bhattaharya, Tithi, “Introduction: Mapping Social Reproduction Theory”& “How Not to Skip the Class: Social Reprodution of Labor and the Global Working Class” in *Social Reproduction Theory, Remapping Cass, Recentering Opression*, Pluto Press, 2017.

**X Liberalism against Marxism**

Week 9-a

-Holmstrom Nancy & Cudd, Ann, *Capitalism, For and Against: A Feminist Debate*, Cambridge, 2010. (Part I- 1 For capitalism as a feminist ideal and reality)

Week 9-b

-Holmstrom Nancy & Cudd, Ann, *Capitalism, For and Against: A Feminist Debate*, Cambridge, 2010. (Part II- Against capitalism as theory and as reality)

**XIX Conclusion**

Week 10 a & 10b

Group discussion on the final papers

**Secondary Bilbiography**

1. **Course Policies**

1. Attendance

It is the student’s responsibility to be in class and to make up the class assignments they have missed. Make sure you have at least one person in class who can provide you with notes and assignment information. Once you have worked on the material you missed, if you do not understand it or need clarification make sure you see the instructor during office hours.

2. Computer, Cell Phone, and Electronic Equipment Policy

The use of computers, cell phones, or any other electronic equipment not specifically allowed by the instructor is not permitted during class.

3. Rules of Academic Honesty

In the event of any of the following acts of academic honesty, the instructor reserves the right to assign the student a failing grade, i.e., an ”F”

*Plagiarism:* Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else’s product, words, ideas, or data as one’s own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references, such as footnotes. By placing one’s name on work submitted for credit, one certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. Verbatim statements by others must be enclosed by quotation marks or set off from the regular text as indented extracts.

Students will avoid being charged with plagiarism if there is acknowledgement of indebtedness. Indebtedness must be acknowledged whenever: 1) one quotes another person’s actual words or replicates all or part of another’s product; 2) one uses another person’s ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories, even if they are completely paraphrased in one’s own words; 3) one borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative material—unless the information is common knowledge.

Unauthorized collaboration with others on papers or projects can inadvertently lead to a charge of plagiarism. If in doubt, consult the instructor or seek assistance from the staff of Academic Learning Services. In addition, it is plagiarism to submit as your own any academic exercise prepared totally or in part by another person, even if that person is acting as a tutor or editor (and ends up substantially producing part of the work).

*Fabrication:* Fabrication is the intentional use of information that the author has invented when he or she states or implies otherwise, or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive. Examples include, but are not limited to: 1) citing information not taken from the source indicated; 2) listing sources in a reference not used in the academic exercise; 3) inventing data or source information for research or other academic exercises.

*Cheating:* Cheating is an act of deception by which a student misrepresents or misleadingly demonstrates that he or she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he or she has not mastered, including the giving or receiving of unauthorized help in an academic exercise.

Examples include but are not limited to: 1) copying from another student’s work; 2) collaborating without authority or allowing another student to copy one’s work in a test situation; 3) using the course textbook or other material not authorized for use during a test; 4) using unauthorized material during a test; for example, notes, formula lists, cues on a computer, photographs, symbolic representations, and notes written on clothing; 5) resubmitting substantially the same work that was produced for another assignment without the knowledge and permission of the instructor; 6) taking a test for someone else or permitting someone else to take a test for you.

4. Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

*I am an assisting employee. For information about my reporting obligations as an employee, please see*[*Employee Reporting Obligations*](https://investigations.uoregon.edu/employee-responsibilities)*on the Office of Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance (OICRC) website. Students experiencing sex or gender-based discrimination, harassment or violence should call the 24-7 hotline 541-346-SAFE [7244] or visit* [*safe.uoregon.edu*](http://safe.uoregon.edu) *for help. Students experiencing all forms of prohibited discrimination or harassment may contact the Dean of Students Office at 5411-346-3216 or the non-confidential Title IX Coordinator/OICRC at 541-346-3123. Additional resources are available at* [*investigations.uoregon.edu/how-get-support*](http://investigations.uoregon.edu/how-get-support)*. I am also a mandatory reporter of child abuse. Please find more information at*[*Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect*](https://hr.uoregon.edu/policies-leaves/general-information/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect)*.*

Resources for people experiencing hate and discrimination can be found also on the following website: [RESPECT.uoregon.edu](http://respect.uoregon.edu/) and by calling 541-346-5555.

5. Assistance/Resources:

If you need a special learning assistance, (for example, use of electronic devices, extended time in exams) please notify me right away and contact the *Accessible Education Center*.

*Accessible Education Center (AEC):* coordinates services, provides advocacy and support to students with documented physical, learning, and psychological disabilities and provides assistance to the general campus community in responding appropriately to requests for accommodations based on disability.

Location: 155 Oregon Hall

Web page: http://aec.uoregon.edu/

Phone: 541-346-1155

Email: uoaec@uoregon.edu

*Teaching & Learning Center (TLC)*: TLC provides numerous resources (including courses, workshops, and tutoring) to help UO students succeed. They work with a diverse student body with a wide range of needs. If you are unsure which resources would work best, they are happy to answer questions and share suggestions.

Location: 68 PLC. Web page: http://tlcuoregon.edu/ Phone: 541-346-3226.

*Counseling Center*: The CC provides comprehensive mental health care and testing services to the University of Oregon campus. The primary mission of the UCTC is to provide quality clinical/therapeutic services, psychological testing and assessment, psychoeducational workshops and outreach as well as emergency services.

Location: University Health, Counseling, and Testing Center Building

Web site: http://counseling.uoregon.edu

24-Hour Crisis Hotline: 541-346-3227

6. Inclement weather policy

*“It is generally expected that class will meet unless the University is officially closed for inclement weather. If it becomes necessary to cancel class while the University remains open, this will be announced on Canvas and by email. Updates on inclement weather and closure are also communicated in other ways described here:* [*https://hr.uoregon.edu/about-hr/campus-notifications/inclement-weather/inclement-weather-immediate-updates*](https://hr.uoregon.edu/about-hr/campus-notifications/inclement-weather/inclement-weather-immediate-updates)*”*