

SOCIOLOGY 621

**SOCIOLOGICAL
MARXISM**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Basic objectives	iv
A note on the scope of the course	v
Structure of class sessions	vi
Requirements	vi
Other miscellaneous course information	vii
Special end of semester event	ix
Lecture Schedule	x

COURSE TOPICS

PART I. INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE AGENDA	1
1 Marxism as Emancipatory Social Science	1
2 The anchor: Capitalism	3
3 The Critique of Capitalism	3
4 Elements of a Theory of Transformation	4
PART II. CLASS STRUCTURE	5
5 What is Class?	5
6 The Concept of Exploitation	6
7 Rethinking the Class Structure of Capitalism	8
8 Class and Gender	9
9 Class and Race	11
PART III. CLASS FORMATION	13
10 Basic Concepts of class formation	13
11 Rationality, solidarity and class struggle	13
12 Dilemmas of Working Class Collective Action	14
13 Class Compromise	14
PART IV. THE THEORY OF THE STATE AND POLITICS	16
14 What is “Politics”? What is “the state”?	16
15 What, if anything, makes the capitalist state a <i>capitalist</i> state? Is the state a <i>patriarchal</i> state?	17
16 The State and the Working Class: The democratic capitalist state and social Stability	18
17 The State & Accumulation: functionality, contradiction, and crisis of democratic capitalism	19
PART V. IDEOLOGY AND CONSCIOUSNESS	21
18 What is Ideology?	21
19 Mystification: ideology as false consciousness	22
20 Ideological Hegemony and Legitimation	23
21 Explaining Ideology: Micro-foundations for the theory	25
PART VI. THE THEORY OF HISTORY	26
22&23 The Classical Marxist Theory of History	26
24 Critiques and reconstructions	27
25 The Classical Marxist Theory of the History of Capitalism’s Future	29
PART VII. SOCIALISM AND EMANCIPATION	30
26 What is Socialism?	30
27 Strategic Logics of Transformation: ruptural, interstitial, symbiotic	31
28 How to be an anticapitalist for the 21st century	32

SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS

SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS ON THE THEORY OF HISTORY

- | | |
|--|----|
| (1) An Historical Example: The Origins of Capitalism | 33 |
| (2) Non-Marxist Theories of History | 34 |

SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS ON CLASS STRUCTURE

- | | |
|---|----|
| (1) The Death of Class Debate | 35 |
| (2) The Bourgeoisie in Advanced Capitalism I: the Social Constitution of the Ruling Class | 35 |
| (3) The Bourgeoisie in Advanced Capitalism II: Structural Differentiation and Integration | 36 |
| (4) The Bourgeoisie in Advanced Capitalism III: the problem of management | 36 |
| (5) The Traditional Petty Bourgeoisie | 37 |
| (6) Internal Differentiation of the Working Class | 37 |
| (7) Empirical Studies of Class Structure | 38 |
| (8) Race and Class: the underclass debate | 38 |
| (9) Gender and Class: alternative class analyses of gender | 39 |

SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS ON CLASS FORMATION

- | | |
|--|----|
| (1) The labor process and class formation | 41 |
| (2) Class Structure and Class Formation in the Third World | 41 |
| (3) Explaining Variations in Capitalist Class Formation | 41 |
| (4) Explaining Variations in Working Class Formation | 42 |

SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS ON THE STATE

- | | |
|---|----|
| (1) Alternative Marxist perspectives on the State: “structuralist” and “instrumentalist” approaches | 43 |
| (2) Critical Theory approaches to the state: Habermas | 44 |
| (3) The State as a “Condition of Existence” of Capital: “post-Althusserian” British Marxism | 44 |
| (4) Capital Logic and State Derivation Perspectives | 45 |
| (5) Gramsci and the State | 45 |
| (6) The State and the Oppression of Women | 46 |
| (7) The State in the Third World | 47 |
| (8) American Exceptionalism | 47 |
| (9) Explaining variations in Welfare State policies | 48 |
| (10) The logic of electoral politics: voting and voters | 50 |
| (11) Strategies of empirical research on the state and politics | 51 |
| (12) The “state-centered” approach to politics | 51 |

SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS ON IDEOLOGY

- | | |
|---|----|
| (1) Ideology, Science and Knowledge | 53 |
| (2) Rationality and Communication: Critical Theory’s Contribution to Marxist Theories of Ideology | 53 |
| (3) Deconstructing Ideological Practices | 54 |
| (4) Explaining Ideology: Power, Interests and the Production of Ideology | 55 |
| (5) Strategies of Empirical Research on Class Consciousness | 55 |
| (6) Ideology and Exploitation: the problem of consent. | 56 |

SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS ON SOCIALISM

- | | |
|--|----|
| (1) Classes in “Actually Existing Socialisms” | 57 |
| (2) Perspectives on the attempts at Reform in State Socialist Societies in the 1970s and 1980s | 57 |
| (3) The Working Class in State Socialist Societies | 57 |
| (4) Envisioning Real Utopias: new models for emancipatory futures | 58 |

**SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS ON
POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE CAPITALIST MODE OF PRODUCTION**

(1) The Labor Theory of Value I: The Commodity, Commodity Production and Exchange.....	59
(2) The Labor Theory of Value II: Labor, Labor Power and Capitalist Exploitation	60
(3) Critiques of the Labor Theory of Value	61
(4) The Labor Process.....	61
(5) Accumulation and Crisis Theory.....	63
(6) Alternative contemporary theories of crisis.....	64
(7) Internationalization of Capital and Problems of Stagnation	64
(8) The Distinctive Contradictions of Late Capitalism	65
(9) Explaining Technical Change.....	65
(10) Imperialism I: Why Imperialism? Classical Views and Contemporary Reformulations	65
(11) Imperialism II: Dependency Theory	66
(12) Imperialism III: The Impact of Imperialism -- progressive or regressive?.....	66

SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS ON MARXISM AND FEMINISM

(1) Class Marxist Interpretations: Engels on Women.....	67
(2) Contemporary Marxist Approaches to the Oppression of Women.....	67
(3) The “Dual Systems” Approach	68
(4) Towards a Dialectical Theory of class and gender: Class and Sex as Asymmetrically Interdependent	69

**SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS ON
METHODOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL PROBLEMS**

(1) Concept Formation.....	70
(2) Varieties of Explanation: functional, causal, intentional.....	71
(3) Causal Primacy.....	72
(4) Methodological individualism and holism	72
(5) Causation: determination and contradiction.....	72
(6) Determination: The problem of agency and transformative determinations	73
(7) Different Marxist Understandings of What Constitutes “Method”	74
(8) “Economic Determination in the Last Instance”: in what sense is Marxism “materialist”?.....	74
(9) Theory and Practice.....	75

BASIC OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

From the middle of the 19th century until the last decade of the 20th, the Marxist Tradition provided the most systematic body of ideas and social theory for radical critics of capitalism as an economic system and social order. Even those critics of capitalism who did not directly identify with Marxism relied heavily on Marxist ideas about class, exploitation, commodification, the state, ideology and many other themes. And while many anti-capitalists felt that the specific political project that came to be identified with Marxism -- the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism -- was deeply flawed, they nevertheless shared the emancipatory vision of a socialist society within which class inequalities attenuated and the economy was democratically controlled in the interests of everyone. Above all it was this defense of *a vision of an emancipatory alternative to capitalism* which gave Marxism its emotional and ideological power: we might live in a world of great misery, inequality and oppression, but an alternative was both imaginable and achievable. This idea – an emancipatory transcendence of capitalism is desirable and possible – is the hard core of the Marxist tradition.

In recent years, particularly since the end of Communist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Marxism has declined as an intellectual force. TINA – “there is no alternative” – has replaced confidence in the possibility of radical alternatives. Instead of being viewed as a threat to capitalism, talk of socialism now seems more like idle utopian musing. Culture, discourse and identity have replaced class and economic inequality as the central themes in critical social theory. Some critical sociologists have even proclaimed the “Death of Class,” seeing it as a virtually irrelevant dimension of social life in the “postmodern” era. When you add to this dismissal of class as an object of inquiry the equally prevalent postmodernist methodological distaste for social structural arguments in general, Marxist-inspired class analysis may seem to many students to be a retrograde approach to understanding social issues, plagued by a host of metatheoretical sins: determinism, economism, materialism, structuralism, positivism.

Yet, ironically, we also live in a period in which inequality and economic polarization in many developed societies has been deepening; the commodification of labor has reached unparalleled heights with the entry of masses of women into the labor force; capital has become increasingly footloose, deeply constraining the activities of states; the market appears ever-more like a law of nature uncontrollable by human device; and politics is ever-more dominated by money. We live in an era in which social dynamics intimately linked to class are increasingly potent, and yet class analysis is increasingly marginalized.

In this political and intellectual context, many students will be skeptical that it is still worthwhile to devote concentrated attention to the Marxist tradition of social theory and social science. There are three reasons why I feel it is indeed worth the time and effort.

First, and most importantly from my point of view, I believe that the Marxist theoretical tradition continues to offer indispensable theoretical tools for understanding the conditions for the future advance of a radical egalitarian project of social change. Marx is famous for saying in the *eleventh thesis on Feurbach* that philosophers have only tried to interpret the world, but that the real point is to change it. It is equally true, however, that without effectively understanding the world we cannot know how to change it in the ways we desire. Marxism may not provide all of the theoretical tools we need for understanding the world, but it provides some of the fundamental ingredients, and for this reason it is worth studying.

Second, I also believe that the Marxist tradition has a great deal offer to sociology in general even if one does not identify strongly with the vision of human emancipation in that tradition. In particular, I think that class analysis in the Marxist tradition has considerable explanatory power for a wide range of issues of sociological importance. I refer to this as *Sociological Marxism* (rather than Marxist sociology) because it reflects one way of understanding the theoretical core of the scientific analysis in the Marxist tradition.

Third, the Marxist tradition of social thought is intellectually interesting and provocative. It contains some of the most elegant and ambitious theoretical constructions in all of social science and raises all sorts of intriguing puzzles and problems. Even if one rejects the substantive theses of the Marxist tradition, it is worth taking the time to understand them deeply as part of the general process developing ones analytical skills in social theory.

This course will explore a broad range of issues in the Marxist tradition of social theory and social science. I refer deliberately to “the Marxist *tradition*” rather than *Marxism* as such. “Marxism,” like other “isms”, suggests a doctrine, a closed system of thought rather than an open theoretical framework of scientific inquiry. It is for this reason, for example, that “Creationists” (religious opponents to the theory of biological evolution) refer to evolutionary theory as “Darwinism”. They want to juxtapose Creationism and Darwinism as alternative doctrines, each grounded in different

“articles of faith”. It has been a significant liability of the Marxist tradition that it has been named after a particular historical person and generally referred to as an ism. This reinforces a tendency for the theoretical practice of Marxists to often look more like ideology (or even theology when Marxism becomes Marxology and Marxolatry) than social science. This is signalled, sometimes, when people feel that weight is added to a theoretical argument when an appropriate “chapter and verse” from a text written by Marx can be cited as authority. No one cites Darwin in order to strengthen an argument in the science of evolutionary biology. Faithfulness to Marx should not in any way be a criterion for the legitimacy of an argument.

It is for this reason that I prefer the looser expression “the Marxist tradition” to “Marxism” as a way of designating the theoretical enterprise. I feel that the broad Marxist tradition of social thought remains a vital setting for advancing our understanding of the contradictions in existing societies and the possibilities for egalitarian social change, but I do not believe it provides us with a comprehensive doctrine that automatically gives us the right answers to every question.

This is not to say that there is no value in reading Marx. At his best he was a powerful writer and certainly had profound things to say about the workings of capitalism. Some of these texts can be inspiring, and that is important as well. And, in any case, since so much writing and serious thinking in the Marxist tradition takes the form of either commentary on Marx or dialogue with Marx, there is no way to be immersed in the Marxist tradition without also studying Marx to some extent. Nevertheless, in exploring the central ideas and arguments of Sociological Marxism we will study what I feel are the most interesting and analytically rigorous writing on the various themes rather than the historical pedigree of these ideas in the works of Marx and other classical writers in the Marxist tradition.

The overall objective of this course is to provide a rigorous introduction to the core concepts, ideas and theories in the Marxist tradition of critical social science. The course will revolve around six broad topics: class structure; class formation and class struggle; the theory of the state and politics; ideology and consciousness; the theory of history; socialism and emancipation.

A NOTE ON THE SCOPE OF THE COURSE

A number of comments are needed on the scope of this course.

First, as already noted, this is not a course on Marx *per se*, or on the historical development of Marxism as an intellectual tradition, but rather on the logic, concepts and theories of that tradition. The emphasis, therefore, will be on contemporary problems and debates rather than on the history of ideas.

Second, the course will also not attempt to give equal weight to all varieties of Marxisms, but rather will focus especially on what has come to be known as “Analytical Marxism”. Over the years that I have taught versions of this course some students complain that it is not really a course on Marxism but on “Wrightism”: some of the readings come from my own published work, and most of the lectures focus on the core ideas of the variety of Marxism within which I do my own work, “Analytical Marxism”. There is thus very little discussion of Hegelian Marxism, of the Frankfurt school, of various forms of culturalist Marxism, of classical Marxism, or of the rich body of Marxist historical writing. Some of the times I have taught the course I tried to incorporate significant material from these other perspectives, but in the end this was never very satisfactory. Including these kinds of alternative perspectives always meant dropping important topics from the course agenda, and in any case, many students wondered why I included these readings when I was so critical of them (especially for their frequent obscurantism). Given the time constraints, I decided in the end that it is better to organize the course around the ideas and approaches I find most powerful and compelling.

Third, because of time constraints we also cannot give adequate attention to every important topic within contemporary Marxism. The course will focus on six main clusters of problems: class structure; class formation and class struggle; the theory of the state and politics; ideology and consciousness; the theory of history; socialism and emancipation. A range of important issues will get at most cursory treatment: the theory of imperialism and capitalism as a world system; accumulation and crisis theory; the theoretical and historical evaluation of socialist revolutions and communist regimes; the analysis of gender relations and male domination; and the problem of racial domination. Perhaps in the contemporary context the most serious of these gaps is the study of race and gender. We will discuss these in the context of the analysis of class structure, and also at least briefly in the discussion of the state and ideology, but we will not have time to explore carefully the wide range of discussions within the Marxist tradition of either of these. When this was a two-semester course, we spent three weeks specifically on feminism and at least two weeks on race.

In a single semester, this was impossible. As a result, the course is restricted to the core topics within Marxist class analysis -- class, state and ideology.

STRUCTURE OF CLASS SESSIONS

The course is organized as two two-hour sessions a week, which is an hour and a half longer than a typical three credit course. The purpose is to make it possible for the class to have ample time for intensive discussion, not simply lectures by the professor. In general the class sessions will be organized on the following plan:

1. The first 5-15 minutes will be for follow-up questions from the previous session – any issues which need further clarification, new questions on the previous material, etc.
2. Lecture: I will lecture for about an hour. I will assume that students have read the material before class.
3. break: 5-10 minutes
4. Discussion: 30-45 minutes. We will experiment with a variety of formats for the discussions.

GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There are three formal requirements for the course (besides attending classes and participating in class discussion):

1. Participating in weekly graduate/undergraduate co-mentoring
2. Three short papers (~ 3000 words, i.e. around 8-10 double spaced pages);
3. Written comments on two papers of fellow students;

1. Student Co-mentoring.

The ideas and readings in this course are difficult, and it is always a challenge to teach this kind of material when students in the class have such different levels of background and the class includes graduate students as well as undergraduates. Because this is a core course in the graduate sociology program in class analysis, I do not want to water it down by gearing it primarily to students without much prior knowledge of the material. But I also do not want any student to feel lost in the material. To deal with this issue, one of the requirements in the course is a weekly one-hour co-mentoring session. Here is the basic idea:

- Each undergraduate in the class will be paired with a specific graduate student. Depending upon the ratio of undergrads to graduate students, these mentoring groups may have one or two undergraduates in them. In general these mentoring groups will be randomly assigned, but if students have a reason to be paired together, this is fine.
- Each co-mentoring group is required to meet on 10 occasions during the semester for *at least one hour* outside of class to discuss the material in the course, especially the readings. Students should come to these discussions with specific questions about the readings.
- A very brief written statement of what was discussed should be handed to me for each co-mentoring session with the names of each participant.
- I refer to this as “co-mentoring” because the act of explaining something is also an act of learning – my experience is that the graduate students benefit from these interactions as much as the undergraduates.
- It is fine for mentoring groups to combine into larger groups if they like.
- *This is a real requirement of the course.* You are expected to participate in ten co-mentoring discussions during the semester.

2. Short Papers

During the semester students are required to write *three* short papers. These are **NOT** meant to be mini-term papers requiring additional reading and a great deal of time, but instead should be concise reflections and analyses of issues raised in the core readings and lectures. These papers should be around 3,000 words long, and certainly no more than 3500 words (ten double spaced pages with a 12 point font). Longer papers are not better papers.

For each paper, your assignment is to take one or more of the core readings in the syllabus for a section of the course preceding the paper's due date (see below), and write an essay engaging the central idea(s) of the reading. The precise form of this essay is up to you. It can be written as if it were designed to be a published "commentary" in a journal, or a book review, or a substantive essay in its own right dealing with the issues in the reading. The paper can certainly bring in material from outside the readings for the course, but this is not necessary. The important thing, however, is that the essay should not be mainly a summary/exegesis of the readings. It should be "critical," meaning that you should engage the arguments under review. In general, in a paper of this sort no more than 25% should be directly summarizing the reading itself.

The papers (drawing from the readings and discussion for the indicated sessions) are due on the following dates:

Paper #1 (sessions 1-9): February 20
 Paper #2 (sessions 10-17): March 27
 Paper #3 (sessions 18-27): May 3

Be warned: *These are firm deadlines.* The "punishment" for delinquent papers is that I will not write *any* comments on them.

I encourage students to hand in their papers before the due date. I will try to read them quickly and give you comments so you will have time to revise and resubmit the paper if you wish. Students can also revise the first two papers in light of my comments up to the due date for the following paper and resubmit them *so long as the revisions are not merely cosmetic*. If the paper is significantly better, your grade will change accordingly. The second paper can only be revised if it is handed in sufficiently before the due date that I can give comments on it.

3. Comments on Papers

In addition to writing these papers, students are required to prepare written comments on papers by **two** other students in the class for the first two of these papers. It is often easier to recognize problems in reading other people's writing than in one's own, and thus exchanging and criticizing each other's papers is a good way of improving one's writing and analytical skills. **Students should thus hand in three copies of the first and second paper.** I will keep one and distribute two. Comments on other students' papers will be due one week after the papers are distributed. When you give the comments back to the students whose papers you have read, you should give me copies of the comments so that I know that they have been done.

OTHER MISCELLANEOUS COURSE INFORMATION

Optional independent reading credits

This course meets four hours a week and should be a four-credit course. Any undergraduate student who feels that he or she needs to devote more time to this course than can be accommodated in a three-credit course can sign up with me for one or two additional credits under Sociology 699 (Independent reading).

Reading materials

This course requires extensive reading. I would not assign a given piece if I didn't think it worth the effort, but the effort required will be considerable. For the entire semester there are about 2,500 pages of reading, or about 150 pages per week. Ideally, you should try to do most of the reading before the lectures. I recommend that students purchase all of the books under *Core Readings*. Most of these books should also be on reserve in the Social Science Library, Sewell Social Science Building, Room 8432, Phone: (608) 262-6195. All of these books should be available in new and used copies via various internet sources.

Background reading for many of the topics [Note: these books are currently out of print. I have placed relevant chapters on the e-reserve list in the social science library]

Jacques Bidet and Stathis Kouvelakis (eds) *Critical Companion to Contemporary Marxism* (Boston: Brill: 2008), available at: <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/sociology621-2013.htm>. This is a massive collection of essays, most of them quite good, on most topics of relevance to contemporary Marxism. It includes broad discussions of the history of Marxist thought as well as very recent developments.

Tom Mayers, *Analytical Marxism* (Sage, 1994). This book is an excellent exegesis of many of the ideas we will be discussing. It is useful as a reference work and will provide useful background for many students.

Andrew Gamble, David Marsh and Tony Tant (eds), *Marxism and Social Science* (U. of Illinois Press, 1999). This is also an excellent handbook on the ideas and debates in the Marxist tradition on a fairly wide range of topics. It is well written and provides a very useful overview for many themes we will be discussing.

Core readings

For some books, we read nearly the entire book; for others (Elster and my two books) we only read parts. You might still consider buying these books to have them in your permanent library (even if this is no longer standard practice).

Adam Przeworski, *Capitalism and Social Democracy* (Cambridge U. Press, 1985)

Erik Olin Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias* (Verso: 2010)

Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts* (Cambridge University Press, student edition, 2000) [Note: the student edition drops most of the more technical material from the full edition. Students interested in the technical statistical discussions might prefer the full edition. The theoretical discussions are identical.]

G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: a defense, expanded edition* (Princeton, 2001)

Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx* (Cambridge University Press, 1985)

Goran Therborn, *The Power of Ideology and the Ideology of Power* (London, Verso: 1980)

Goran Therborn, *What Does the Ruling Class Do When It Rules?* (London: Verso)

Electronic Reserve: All readings which are not in the Core Readings books, most of the background readings and some of the supplementary readings as well, will be available from the Social Science Library electronic reserve. You can access this through your MyUW account in the Academics section. These readings are marked with an asterisk * in the syllabus.

Readings from my publications: All of my books (except for the most recent) and principal published papers are available as pdf files on my website at <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/selected-published-writings.htm>.

Organization of the syllabus

The readings in each section are grouped under several categories. These should be interpreted as follows:

BACKGROUND READINGS: These readings generally provide a quick and simple overview of a general topic area. They are frequently not as analytically rigorous as the main readings, but may be useful to get a general sense of concepts and issues, especially for people with little or no background in the particular topic.

CORE READINGS: These are the readings which all students are expected to read as part of the normal work in the course. If one of these readings is more essential than others, it will be designated with an asterisk (*). The lectures will presuppose that students have read of these core readings prior to the lecture.

SUGGESTED READINGS: Graduate students taking the course are expected to read at least some of the suggested readings, and undergraduates are encouraged to do so. Students who are using the bibliography to study for the Class Analysis and Historical Change Prelim Examinations should read extensively in the suggested readings..

FURTHER READINGS: In some sessions there is an additional bibliography of “further readings”. These are included strictly for reference purposes, with no expectation that any of this be read for the class.

SUPPLEMENTARY AND ADDITIONAL TOPICS: The syllabus also contains extended reading lists on topics that we will not directly discuss in the course. Some of these are supplementary topics to the six parts of the course; others are additional topics that go beyond the specific agenda of class, the state and ideology. Originally this course was a two-semester sequence, and in transforming it into a one semester course we had to omit a great deal of important material. Most of these omitted sections have been included either as “supplementary” or “additional” topics.

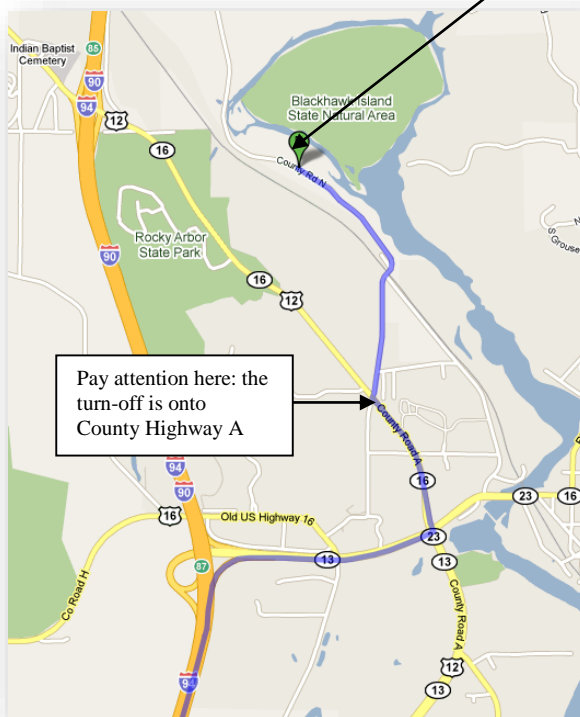
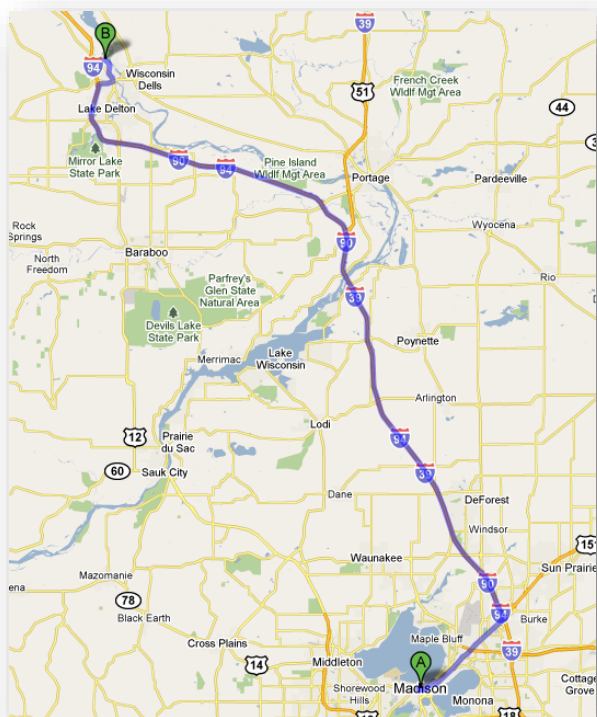


SPECIAL END OF THE SEMESTER EVENT

On the weekend before the last week of classes – Saturday morning, April 28 through Sunday morning, April 29 – the class will have a weekend workshop retreat, meeting jointly with my graduate seminar on Theories of the State. The retreat will have two themes: 1. Presentation of seminar papers by students in the seminar; 2. A discussion of “How to be an Anticapitalist for the 21st Century”. The retreat will be held at Upham Woods, a beautiful University of Wisconsin facility on the Wisconsin River near Wisconsin Dells, about an hour north of Madison.

In addition to the academic sessions, the retreat will also include a gourmet potluck and party Saturday evening – with music, dancing, singing, general carousing.

Spouses/partners, friends and children are also welcome to come for the weekend – there are nice activities in the area for children while the workshop is in session (including indoor water Parks in Wisconsin Dells). I will cover part of the costs of the retreat, so the out-of-pocket expenses should be about \$40/person for room and board. While it is not an absolute requirement for students to participate in this event, I feel it will be a valuable and enjoyable way to wrap up the semester so I strongly urge everyone in the class to come.



Upham Woods

Pay attention here: the turn-off is onto County Highway A

Lecture Schedule

I. INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE AGENDA		
1.	1/18	Marxism and Emancipatory Social Science
2.	1/23	The anchor: Capitalism
3.	1/25	The Critique of Capitalism
4.	1/30	The Theory of Transformation
PART II. CLASS STRUCTURE		
5.	2/1	What is Class?
6.	2/6	The Concept of Exploitation
7.	2/8	Rethinking the Class Structure of Capitalism
8.	2/13	Class and Gender
9.	2/15	Class and Race
PART III. CLASS FORMATION		
10.	2/20	Basic Concepts of class formation
11.	2/22	Rationality, solidarity and class struggle
12.	2/27	Dilemmas of Working Class Collective Action
13.	3/1	Class Compromise
PART IV. THE THEORY OF THE STATE AND POLITICS		
14.	3/6	What is "Politics"? What is "the state"?
15.	3/8	What, if anything, makes the capitalist state a <i>capitalist</i> state? Is the state a <i>patriarchal</i> state?
16.	3/13	The State and the Working Class: The democratic capitalist state and social Stability
17.	3/15	The State & Accumulation: functionality and contradiction
PART V. IDEOLOGY AND CONSCIOUSNESS		
18.	3/27	What is Ideology?
19.	3/29	Mystification: ideology as false consciousness
20.	4/3	Ideological Hegemony and Legitimation
21.	4/5	Explaining Ideology: Micro-foundations for the theory of ideology
Part VI. The Classical Theory of History		
22.	4/10	The Classical Marxist Theory of History
23.	4/12	The Classical Marxist Theory of History, continued
24.	4/17	Critiques and reconstructions
25.	4/19	The Classical Theory of Capitalism's Future
PART VII. SOCIALISM AND EMANCIPATION		
26.	4/24	Socialism and Real Utopias
27.	4/26	Strategic Logics of Transformation: ruptural, interstitial, symbiotic
28.	4/28-9	Weekend workshop on the state and anti-capitalism for the 21st century

PART I: SETTING THE AGENDA

Session 1. Marxism as an Emancipatory Social Science.

This session has three principle objectives: First, to lay out what I feel defines the broad contours of the Marxist tradition; second, to explore the sense in which Marxism is a variety of what can be called *emancipatory social science*; and third, to discuss the moral foundations of a Marxian emancipatory theory.

Marxism as a Tradition of Social Theory

Marxism has always been easier for non-Marxists to define than for Marxists themselves. Non-Marxists generally define Marxism as a doctrine (or worse, dogma) that defends a set of propositions about society based on the work of Karl Marx. Marxism = Marx's-ism. Marxists, on the other hand, have engaged in endless debates over precisely what constitutes the irreducible core of that doctrine, what is essential and what is not, what aspects of Marx's work should be retained and what aspects discarded or revised, whether Marxism is primarily a "method" or a set of substantive propositions, whether Marxism is a general theory of society and history, or just a specific theory of certain properties of societies. Such debates are complex and often opaque. We will encounter them in many different guises throughout the course.

In this session I do not want to delve into the intricacies of these debates. Rather I will lay out what I see as the central properties that define Marxism as a distinctive tradition of critical social science. I will argue that Marxism as an intellectual tradition has three basic theoretical *nodes*, which I will call Marxism as a theory of *Class Emancipation*, Marxism as *Class Analysis* and Marxism as a *Theory of History*. Reconstructing Marxism can then be understood as a project of clarifying the core concepts within each of these nodes and elaborating explanatory theories using these concepts.

Emancipatory Social Science

Emancipatory social science seeks to generate scientific knowledge relevant to the collective project of challenging various forms of human oppression. All three terms are important:

Emancipatory: identifies a central moral purpose in the production of knowledge – the elimination of oppression and the creation of the conditions for human flourishing. There are many reasons why one might seek knowledge about social processes – curiosity, protecting interests of ruling groups, “knowledge-for-knowledge sake”. Seeking knowledge to advance human flourishing is one such purpose.

Science: recognizes the importance of systematic scientific knowledge – not just philosophy and social criticism – about how the world works for this task. This implies understanding what distinguishes scientific knowledge from other ways of “knowing”.

Social: implies that human emancipation depends upon the transformation of the social world, not just the inner self. Individual enlightenment may matter, of course, but unless it is translated into transformations of institutions and social structures it will not be sufficient to create universal conditions for flourishing.

Marxism aspires to be more than a body of emancipatory ideas. It also aspires to be *scientific*. This is both a source of its strength and a deep source of tension within the Marxist tradition, for in functioning as an ideology of revolutionary mobilization Marxism has often become decidedly unscientific. As a revolutionary ideology Marxism inspires commitment and tries to resolve skepticism; as a scientific framework it encourages skepticism and tries to continually question its own received wisdom. The problem of what constitutes “science” and how it differs (if at all!) from “ideology” is a difficult and thorny one, a problem we will touch on from time to time in this class. Here it is sufficient to note that while Marx is famous for noting that “Philosophers have only tried to interpret the world, in various ways; the point is to change it,” it is also fundamental to the Marxist tradition that in order to change the world in the way we want we must understand how it *really* works, and we must do so with a method that enables us to discover the inadequacies in what we think we know. In short, we must aspire to be scientific as well as critical and emancipatory. That is a tough task.

To fulfill the goal of generating critical social scientific knowledge relevant to the task of challenging systems of oppression, any emancipatory social science faces four basic tasks: (1) clarifying the central *moral foundations* of evaluating existing social structures and institutions; (2) elaborating a systematic *diagnosis and critique* of the world

as it exists; (3) envisioning *viable alternatives*; and, (3) developing a *theory of transformation*. The first two of these tell us why we want to leave the world in which we live; the third tells us where we want to go; and the fourth tells us how to get from here to there. In these introductory sessions will be explore the broad contours of this agenda.

Normative foundations

Marxists sometimes reject the relevance of discussions of moral foundations for the critique of capitalism. Discussions of morality and justice, it is sometimes argued, are simply ideological rationalizations for interests. Capitalism should therefore be criticized from the point of view of the interests it harms – especially the interests of the working class, but also other social categories whose interests are harmed by capitalism – rather than on the basis of any standards of justice or morality. Nevertheless, Marxism and other currents of emancipatory social science are rooted in certain values, and specifying those values can help clarify both research agendas and political goals. In these introductory sessions I will focus on four values that are central emancipatory social science: equality, democracy, community, and sustainability.

CORE READINGS: (* = available on e-reserve)

*Erik Olin Wright, *Interrogating Inequality*, Chapter 8, “What is Analytical Marxism?” pp.178-198, and Chapter 11, “Marxism after Communism,” pp.234-248

Erik Olin Wright, [“What is Emancipatory Social Science?”](#) chapter 2 in *Envisioning Real Utopias*, pp. 10-29

*Erik Olin Wright, “Transcending Capitalism through Real Utopias” *American Sociological Review*, February, 2013. Read pp. 1-8 for this session.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

*Erik Olin Wright “Reflections on *Classes*; section 3. Role of the Scientist”, in Erik Olin Wright, et. al. *The Debate on Classes* (London: Verso, 1989) pp.67-77; Michael Burawoy, “The Limits of Wright’s Analytical Marxism and an Alternative”, pp.78-99; Erik Olin Wright, “Reply to Burawoy,” pp. 100-104.

*Raymond Geuss, *The Idea of Critical Theory*, chapter 3. “Critical Theory”, pp .55-95

*Alvin Gouldner, *The Two Marxisms* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980), especially chapter 1, “Introduction” and c. 2, “Marxism as Science and Critique.”

*Goran Therborn, “After Dialectics”, *New Left Review* 43, January 2007

*Michael Burawoy and Erik Olin Wright, “Sociological Marxism,” in Jonathan Turner (ed), *Handbook of Sociological Theory* (Plenum: 2002)), pp. 459-468 (469-484 optional)

Erik Olin Wright, Andrew Levine and Elliott Sober, *Reconstructing Marxism: essays on explanation and the theory of history* (London: Verso, 1992), Chapter 1. [“Marxism: Crisis or Renewal?”](#) and Chapter 8. [“Prospects for the Marxist Agenda”](#)

FURTHER READINGS:

Andrew Levine, *A Future for Marxism?* (London: Pluto Press, 2003), pp.vi-ix, 3-13

David McLellan, *Karl Marx* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), chapter ii, “The Thought”, pp.19-76.

Frederick Engels, “Socialism: Utopian and Scientific”

Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism* (London: NLB, 1976)

Ernest Mandel, *The Formation of the Thought of Karl Marx* (Monthly Review Press, 1971).

V.I. Lenin, “Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism” (in Selected Works [Moscow: Progress Publishes]).

Session 2. The Anchor: Capitalism

At the very core of Marxism is the problem of capitalism. Capitalism as an economic system is the object of Marx's greatest work, *Capital*. The political movements that are most closely associated with Marxism define themselves as anti-capitalist. Historical Materialism – the theory of history developed within Marxism – is, above all, a theory of the emergence of capitalism, its dynamics and contradictions, and its transcendence. Other elements in Marxist theory that are not directly about the capitalist economic system as such – in particular the theory of the state and the theory of ideology – nevertheless are deeply connected to the analysis of capitalism. And the moral core of Marxism is the critique of capitalism as a system of exploitation and domination. It is therefore important that at the very beginning of this course we clarify precisely what is meant by “capitalism” in the Marxist tradition.

CORE READING:

Erik Olin Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias*, pp. 34-36

*Paul Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1947), chapter IV. “Surplus Value and Capitalism.” pp.56-59

*Claus Offe, “Capitalism,” *International Political Science Association Encyclopedia of Political Science* (Sage Publishing, 2011)

*David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital* (Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 40-68

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Wolfgang Streeck, “On Fred Block, ‘Varieties of What? Should we still be using the concept of capitalism?’”, chapter ten in Wolfgang Streeck, *How Will Capitalism End?* (Verso: 2016)

Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, Chapter 3. Economics, esp. 3.3 “Accumulation and technical Change”

G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: a defense*. Chapter VII. The Productive Forces and Capitalism.

Pierre Jalee, *How Capitalism Works* (Monthly Review Press, 1977)

Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital* (Monthly Review Press)

Ernest Mandel, *Late Capitalism* (London: NLB, 1975)

Session 3. The Critique of Capitalism

There are two distinct, but interconnected, ways in which the critique of capitalism can be framed:

- Capitalism generates *harms* of various sorts.
- Capitalism generates *injustices*.

Of course, one would not care so much about an injustice unless it was also associated with a significant harm, but still these are distinct problems for two reasons. First, in some conceptions of social justice it is possible to recognize that a social arrangement generates harms without it also being unjust. Many libertarians, for example, insist that free markets are just, and nevertheless acknowledge that there are people who lose out and suffer in a free market for no fault of their own. Identifying the harms generated by capitalism, therefore, can be done without resolving the difficult philosophical problems of justice. Second, there are some harms that are not easily framed as injustices – or, at least, framing them as an injustice does not add anything to the critique. For example, one of criticisms of capitalism is that it is environmentally destructive. The central thrust of this indictment is not that some people bear the costs of environmental degradation more than others – that is an additional argument discussed under the rubric of *environmental justice* – but simply that capitalism is *irrational* in ways that hurt nearly everyone.

Both of these kinds of critiques of capitalism are important, but historically Marxists have emphasized harms more than injustice. Indeed, Marx himself was generally fairly skeptical of arguments about justice believing that theories of justice were generally ideologically grounded rationalizations for interests. Contemporary Marxist philosophers

have devoted more attention to questions of justice, believing – I think correctly – that beliefs in the justice or injustice of institutions is critical to struggles to transform those institutions.

In this session we will review the full range of harms and forms of injustice associated with capitalism. These critiques can be broadly grouped under three rubrics: exploitation, domination, and irrationality.

CORE READING:

Erik Olin Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias*, chapter 3. [What's So Bad about Capitalism?](#) Pp. 33-85

Session 4. Elements of a Theory of Transformation

Marx famously declared in the 11th thesis on Feuerbach, “Philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.” But of course, without a good theory of transformation, efforts at changing the world are unlikely to succeed, or at least unlikely to succeed in producing the kind of changes we want. As the social psychologist Kurt Lewin said, “There is nothing so practical as a good theory.” For this reason, ultimately the point of Marxist social science is to generate theoretical knowledge relevant to the practical task transforming the world in ways that increase the possibility of human emancipation.

A fully developed theory of social transformation – whether or not it is Marxist in its substantive arguments – involves four interlinked components:

1. a theory of *social reproduction*
2. a theory of the *gaps and contradictions of reproduction*
3. a theory of *the underlying dynamics and trajectory of unintended social change*
4. a theory of *transformative strategies*.

The first of these provides an account of the obstacles to emancipatory transformation. The second shows how, in spite of these obstacles, there are real possibilities of transformation. The third attempts to specify the future prospects of both obstacles and possibilities. And finally, the fourth component attempts to answer the question “what is to be done?” in light of the account of obstacles, possibilities, and future trajectories. In this session we will chart the basic contours of each of these. This will help us have a kind of road map for much of the rest of the course.

CORE READING:

Erik Olin Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias*, chapter 8. [“Elements of a Theory of Transformation.”](#) pp. 273-307.

PART II. CLASS STRUCTURE

This section of the course will revolve around a range of theoretical problems in the analysis of classes. This material constitutes the pivot of the Marxist theoretical tradition, for the analysis of classes -- their structural properties, the conditions of their formation as collective actors, the dynamics of their struggles -- defines the theoretical relevance of many of the other topics we will be considering. When we study the state and ideology our main preoccupation will be on how these institutions affect classes and the potentialities of class struggles. This is not to advocate a radical class reductionism. Indeed, when we examine the specific problem of class and gender one central theme will be the non-reducibility of gender to class. But it is to argue for the centrality of class analysis within the broader project of critically understanding contemporary society and its possibilities of transformation.

Session 5. What is Class?

The term “class” figures in virtually all traditions of sociology. But the term is used in qualitatively different ways in different perspectives, and in order to avoid conceptual confusion it is essential that we properly differentiate Marxist from a range of non-Marxist conceptualizations of class. In particular, since in contemporary discussions Weberian approaches to class analysis are often treated as an explicit alternative and challenge to Marxist treatments, it is important to specify rigorously precisely what it is that distinguishes these two perspectives on class. Because there is such intense debate within the Marxist tradition over the concept of class, it is not a simple task to defend a set of conceptual criteria that unify all “Marxist” class concepts. Nevertheless, I will argue that broadly, the Marxist concept of class structure is defined by four principal elements:

- (1) Class is a *relational* rather than *gradational* concept.
- (2) Those relations are intrinsically *antagonistic* rather than *symmetrical* or reciprocal.
- (3) The objective basis of that antagonism is *exploitation* rather than simply *inequality*.
- (4) The basis of exploitation is to be found in the social organization of *production*.

Weber’s concept of class shares the first two of these criteria, but differs on the third and fourth criteria. Conflicts of interest in Weber’s concept of class are not based on exploitation anchored in production, but rather on conflicts over life chances anchored in exchange.

BACKGROUND READING:

*Jim Johnson and David P. Dolowitz, “Marxism and Social Class”, chapter 7 in Andrew Gamble, David Marsh and Tony Tant (eds), *Marxism and Social Science* (U. of Illinois Press, 1999)

*Tom Mayer, *Analytical Marxism*, chapter 5, “Class” pp.131-171

CORE READING

[Note: there is some overlap across these readings]

*Erik Olin Wright, “If Class is the Answer, what is the Question?” pp. 180-192 in Erik Olin Wright (ed.) *Approaches to Class Analysis*, (Cambridge University Press, 2005)

*Erik Olin Wright, *Understanding Class* (Verso, 2015), chapters 1, 6 and 9.

*Erik Olin Wright, “The Class Analysis of Poverty”, chapter 3 in *Interrogating Inequality*

*Erik Olin Wright, *Classes* (London: Verso, 1985), pp. 24-37

*Erik Olin Wright, *The Debate on Classes* (London: Verso, 1990), pp. 278-301

SUGGESTED READING

Adam Przeworski, “Proletariat into a Class: the process of class formation from Kautsky’s *The Class Struggle* to recent contributions”, Chapter 2, *Capitalism and Social Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 1985) pp.47-97

Annette Lareau and Dalton Conley (editors) *Social Class: how does it work?* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2008)

Rosemary Crompton and Jon Gubbay, *Economy and Class Structure* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1978),

especially chapter 1

Albert Szymanski, *Class Structure: a critical perspective* (New York: Praeger, 1983), chapter 1.

Terry Johnson and Ali Rattansi, "Social Mobility without Class", *Economy & Society*, 10:2, 1981.

The following are a number of non-Marxist discussions of class theory that are useful for clarifying the contrast between Marxist and various nonMarxist approaches:

Erik Olin Wright (editor), *Approaches to Class Analysis* (Cambridge University Press, 2005)

Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (University of California Press, 1978, edited by Gunther Roth), Chapter IV, "Status Groups and Classes", and Chapter IX, part 6, "The Distribution of Power within the Political Community: Class, Status and Power." pp.302-7, 926-39

Gordon Marshall, *Repositioning Class* (Sage, 1997)

Anthony Giddens, *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973)

Frank Parkin, *Marxist Class Theory: a Bourgeois Critique* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), especially part one, "Rethinking Class Analysis," pp. 3-116

Ralph Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Societies* (Stanford University Press, 1959).

Gerhard Lenski, *Power and Privilege* (McGraw Hill, 1966)

Werner S. Landecker, *Class Crystallization* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1981).

John H. Goldthorpe, *Social Mobility & Class Structure in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

A. Stewart, K. Prandy and R.M. Blackburn, *Social Stratification and Occupation* (Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp.1-11, 89-113, 173-207, 277-283

Dennis Gilbert and Joseph Kahl, *The American Class Structure* (Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1982)

Session 6. The Concept of Exploitation

Perhaps the most distinctive property of the Marxist concept of class is the link between "class" and "exploitation". In this session we will try to develop a rigorous definition of exploitation and examine the relationship between exploitation so defined and class structure.

Traditionally, the Marxist concept of exploitation has been closely linked to the labor theory of value. In recent years the labor theory of value has come under considerable attack, and these attacks have called into question the concept of exploitation as well. In this lecture we will first briefly look at the labor theory of value as the original way in which exploitation in capitalist societies was analyzed by Marx. I will then present an alternative, more sociological approach to understanding the idea of exploitation, one that identifies the central properties that define a social relation as exploitative. This alternative approach to the concept of exploitation allows us to extend the concept beyond economic forms of exploitation to such things as sexual exploitation and cultural exploitation. The central idea is that a relation is exploitative when three conditions are met: (1) the wellbeing of the exploiting category *causally depends* on the deprivations of the exploited; (2) this causal link is based on some process of *exclusion*, which results in (3) the *appropriation of effort* of the exploited by the exploited. When the first two of these conditions are met, but not the third, the relationship can be described as nonexploitative oppression; when all three are present the relation is one of exploitation.

This approach to the idea of exploitation is an extension and reformulation of theoretical work done by the Marxist economist, John Roemer in the 1980s. We will not have time in the course to directly review Roemer's work (it is in the suggested readings), but it is worth noting its distinctive contribution. Many Marxists have argued that the concept of exploitation is constitutive of the concept of class: it is one of the central elements which specifies what distinguishes classes from other kinds of relations. John Roemer, however, in an innovative body of work, argued that the concept of class should *not* be *defined* in terms of exploitation; rather, the exploitative nature of class relations should be a deduction from the structural properties of classes. He therefore proposes that classes be defined strictly in terms of *property relations* -- ownership of various kinds of productive assets. It is then a discovery of considerable theoretical importance (rather than an axiom) that the social categories so defined are also

in relations of exploitation to each other. Roemer's work is sometimes highly technical, involving analytical strategies derived from game theory and mathematical economics. If you have a chance to read some of it, it is not important that you understand all of these technical details, and generally his textual exposition is quite accessible.

BACKGROUND READING:

*Tom Mayer, *Analytical Marxism*, chapter 3, "Exploitation: conceptual issues", and Chapter 4, "Exploitation: applications and elaborations" pp.58-130

CORE READINGS:

*Paul Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1947), chapter IV. "Surplus Value and Capitalism", pp.56-71

Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), [pp.3-15](#)

*Erik Olin Wright, *The Debate on Classes*, pp.3-23

*Erik Olin Wright, "The Shadow of Exploitation in Weber's Class Analysis," chapter 2 in *Understanding Class* (Verso, 2015) [originally in *American Sociological Review*, December 2002, pp.832-853]

SUGGESTED READING ON LTV:

*John Roemer, "New Directions in the Marxian Theory of Class and Exploitation", *Politics & Society*, 11:3, 1981 pp.253-287

*Aage Sorenson, "The Foundations of a rent-based concept of Class", pp. 119-151 in Erik Olin Wright (ed.) *Approaches to Class Analysis*, (Cambridge University Press, 2005)

Erik Olin Wright, "Class, Exploitation and Economics Rents: reflections on Sorenson's 'Towards a sounder basis for class analysis'", Chapter 4 in Erik Olin Wright, *Understanding Class*.

Marx, *Capital*, vol. I (pages are to the Vintage edition, 1976)

Chapter 6. The Sale and Purchase of Labor power. pp.270-280

Chapter 7. The Labor Process and the Valorization Process. 283-306

Chapter 8. Constant Capital and Variable Capital. 307-319

Chapter 9. The Rate of Surplus Value. 320-329

Chapter 10. The Working Day. 340-344,375-416.

Chapter 11. The Rate and Mass of Surplus Value. 417-426

Chapter 12. The Concept of Relative Surplus Value. 429-438

Ian Steedman, et. al., *The Value Controversy*, (London: New Left Books, 1981)

Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, pp.167-185

G.A. Cohen, "The Labor Theory of Value and the Concept of Exploitation," in Ian Steedman, et.al., *The Value Controversy* (London: New Left Books, 1977), pp.202-223

SUGGESTED READINGS ON ROEMER'S APPROACH:

John Roemer, *Free to Lose* (Harvard University Press, 1988), chapters 2, 5 and 7.

The following articles are critiques of the essay in the core reading by Roemer:

Erik Olin Wright, "The Status of the Political in the Concept of Class Structure," chapter 3 in *Interrogating Inequality*

Jon Elster, "Roemer vs. Roemer". *Politics & Society*, 11:3, 1981

John Roemer, "Reply", *Politics & Society*, 11:3, 1981

Adam Przeworski, "Exploitation, class conflict and socialism: the Ethical Materialism of John Roemer", Chapter 7 of *Capitalism and Social Democracy*

OTHER READINGS BY ROEMER:

- “Should Marxists be Interested in Exploitation?” *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 14:1 (1985), pp.30-65
- A General Theory of Exploitation and Class* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1982), pp. 1-25, 194-216, 233-289
- “Exploitation, Alternatives and Socialism”, *The Economic Journal*, March, 1982.
- “Methodological Individualism and Deductive Marxism”, *Theory and Society*, 11:4, 1982

Session 7. Rethinking Class Structure: What to do with the “Middle Class”?

The most intense debates among Marxists over the analysis of class structure in recent years have revolved around the problem of specifying the location of the “middle class(es)” in the class structure. This is distinctively a problem posed at the middle level of abstraction of class analysis. At the level of abstraction of mode of production, classes are polarized; at the level of abstraction of conjunctures, the analysis of “empty places” involves an array of intra-class divisions, segments, fractions, nonclass locations, etc. The problem of the middle class, is thus a problem of decoding the class structure at the level of the “social formation” as it is sometimes called.

In this lecture I will very briefly review a range of alternative strategies that have been adopted by Marxists to deal with the problem of the middle classes. Four alternatives have been particularly important:

1. *Simple polarization* views of the class structure: In this view, there is no “middle class” at all, except perhaps for the traditional petty bourgeoisie. All positions are either in the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. In effect, this stance insists that classes can only be defined at the highest level of abstraction, the level of the polarized mode of production.

2. *Segments of Traditional Classes*: There are two versions of this stance. In the first, the middle class is viewed as a segment of the petty bourgeoisie (the New Petty Bourgeoisie); in the second, it is treated as a segment of the working class (the New Working Class). In both of these views the distinction between manual and mental labor looms large as a class criterion. Frequently the distinction between productive and unproductive labor is important as well.

3. *The New Class*: the middle classes of advanced capitalism are viewed, in this perspective, as a distinctively new class in its own right, a class which emerges in the course of capitalist development and which is defined by its distinctive relationship to knowledge or culture. In some versions this new class has the potential of vying for the position of dominant class; in others it is a permanent subsidiary class. But in either case it is a proper class, not a segment of any other class.

4. *Contradictory Class Locations*: This stance rejects the assumption of all of the others that all locations within a class structure must be viewed as falling into a unique class. Class locations -- the “empty places” in the structure of class relations -- may be simultaneously located within two or more classes.

After laying out these alternatives, I will discuss in some detail a fifth strategy, one based on our previous discussion of exploitation, which defines the middle class as locations within the class structure which are simultaneously exploiters and exploited.

If we have time, we will also explore a number of additional complexities in the analysis of class structure:

1. The *temporal* dimension of class locations (class locations embody time horizons)
2. Multiple class locations (many people hold more than one job in different class locations)
3. Mediated class locations (links to the class structure via family and social networks)

BACKGROUND READING:

*Tom Mayer, *Analytical Marxism*, chapter 5. “Class”, pp.131-171

CORE READINGS:

- *Erik Olin Wright, *Classes*, pp.37-42
- *Erik Olin Wright, *The Debate on Classes*, pp.23-31, 313-348 (301-313 optional)
- Erik Olin Wright, [Class Counts](#), pp. 19-27

*John Goldthorpe, "Social Class and the Differentiation of Employment Contracts" in John Goldthorpe, *On Sociology* (Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.206-229

*Philippe van Parijs, "A Revolution in Class Theory", in *The Debate on Classes*, pp. 213-243

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Erik Olin Wright (ed.) *Approaches to Class Analysis*, (Cambridge University Press, 2005)

John Gubbay, "A Marxist Critique of Weberian Class Analysis" *Sociology*, 31:1, February 1997, pp.73-89

Val Burrell, Arthur Stinchcombe, Peter Meiksins, Johanna Brenner and Erik Wright, "Symposium on Erik Olin Wright's Classes", in *The Debate on Classes*, pp.157-211

Peter Whalley and Steven Crawford, "Locating Technical Workers in the Class Structure," *Politics & Society*, v.13:3, 1984, pp. 239-52

Guiglielmo Carchedi, "Two Models of class analysis -- a review of E.O.Wright, *Classes*", *Capital & Class*, #29, Summer 1986, pp.195-215, reprinted in *The Debate on Classes*

Albert Szymanski, *Class Structure: a critical perspective* (New York: Praeger, 1983), Appendix, "Critique of Alternative Conceptualizations of Class," pp.602-645

Richard Hyman, "White Collar Workers and Theories of Class", in *The New Working Class?* edited by Richard Hyman and Robert Price (London: MacMillan, 1983), pp. 3-45

Richard Hyman and Robert Price (eds), "The Search for Theory: Synthesis or Dissonance", in *ibid.*, pp.98-144.

Erik Olin Wright, "Varieties of Marxist Conceptions of Class Structure," *Politics & Society*, 9:3, 1980.

Gavin Mackenzie, "Class Boundaries and the Labor Process", in Anthony Giddens and Gavin Mackenzie (eds), *Social Class and the Division of Labor* (Cambridge University Press, 1982).pp. 63-86.

Nicos Poulantzas, "On Social Classes", *New Left Review*, 78, 1973

Erik Olin Wright, *Class, Crisis and the State*, chapter 2, especially pp.61-97

Pat Walker (ed), *Between Capital and Labor* (Boston: South End Press, 1979).

Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, Chapter 6.1, "Defining Classes", pp.319-331

Nicos Poulantzas, *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* (London: NLB, 1975).

G. Carchedi, *On the Economic Identification of Social Classes*, (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977).

R.W. Connell, "A Critique of the Althusserian Approach to Class," *Theory and Society*, 8:3, 1979

N. Abercrombie and J. Urry, *Capital, Labour and the Middle Classes* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983)

John Gubbay and Rosemary Crompton, *Economy and Class Structure* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978).

Dale L. Johnson (ed.), *Class & Social Development: a new theory of the middle class* (Sage, 1982).

Allin Cottrell, *Social Classes in Marxist Theory* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), especially ch. 2

Session 8. Class and Gender

Perhaps the biggest challenge to class analysis among radical intellectuals in recent decades has revolved around the problem of understanding the relationship between class and other forms of oppression and struggle, particularly gender and race. The characteristic form of this challenge involves the accusation that Marxist class analysis is guilty of one or more of the following sins:

1. The concept of class in Marxism is gender-blind and/or race-blind, whereas class relations are inherently gendered and racialized.
2. Marxist class analysis tends to "reduce" gender and race to class. That is, gender and race oppression are treated as if they can be fully explained by class oppression.
3. Marxist class analysis treats race and gender as "epiphenomena" -- that is, as effects that are not themselves causally important for anything else. They are treated as "surface phenomena", symptoms of something else, but not important in their own right.

Because of time constraints we cannot, in this course, thoroughly explore the theoretical and empirical problem of

the relation of class to gender and to race. Nevertheless, it is important to respond to these objections and define a general perspective on how to think about the structural interconnection between class and other forms of oppression.

We will at least touch on two main themes: (1) The relationship between Marxism and Feminism as traditions of emancipatory theory, and (2) the specific theoretical problem of understanding the interaction of class and gender.

Marxism and Feminism

Feminism, like Marxism, is a complex and diverse theoretical tradition, and it is impossible in a single session of this class to do justice to this diversity. Nevertheless, I think some very general contrasts between Marxism and Feminism as theoretical traditions can be made which will facilitate thinking about the problem of the relationship between class and gender as social phenomena. The central issue we will explore is the following:

Both Marxism and feminism are emancipatory traditions insofar as both are grounded in a normative vision of a world free of particular kinds of those oppression – a classless society for Marxism; a world of radical gender equality (or perhaps even a genderless society) for Feminism. The two traditions differ, however, in the extent to which theorists within each tradition explore the problem of the viability of their core emancipatory project. The idea of a “classless society” for socialists has always been viewed as a difficult and potential problematic idea, whereas the idea of a society free of male domination and gender oppression has generally not been viewed as a problematic idea for feminists. While feminists may believe it will be difficult to *achieve* gender emancipation, feminists do not worry about whether a society without gender oppression is *viable*. No feminist takes seriously the claim that society *needs* male domination to be sustainable, nor do feminists spend a lot of time marshalling theoretical arguments against such claims. Marxists, on the other hand, have always faced the problem of convincing people that communism is a feasible form of society, that it would be workable. The view that a complex society needs hierarchy and class inequality in order to have the necessary incentives to function is one that Marxists continually confront. This difference in the stance of Feminism and Marxism towards its emancipatory destination reflects the different theoretical challenges each tradition faces and has broad implications for the kinds of theories that each tradition has developed. In particular, the idea of a society without class inequality raises problems of the *macro*-structure of society in a much more problematic way than the idea of a society without gender inequality, and this problem has contributed to the more deterministic character of theoretical arguments within the Marxist tradition.

The Interaction of Class & Gender

In order to sort out the theoretical problem of the interconnection between class and gender it will be useful lay out a general conceptual menu five ways in which class and gender are interconnected:

1. gender as a *form* of class relations
2. gender as a *sorting mechanism* into class locations
3. gender relations *causally affecting* class relations and class relations causally affecting gender relations
4. gender as a basis for *mediated* class locations
5. gender and class as *distinct mechanisms* co-determining various outcomes.

I will briefly illustrate a number of these possibilities, but give particular attention to the problem of gender and mediated class locations. This issue has been particularly salient in a recent British debate over how to conceptualize the class location of married women, particularly in two-earner households. Is a secretary married to a factory worker in the same class as a secretary married to a top manager? This problem of defining the class location of married women has been sharply posed in an essay by the British sociologist John Goldthorpe. Goldthorpe argues, quite contentiously, that: (a) families are the units of class analysis; (b) all members of a family share the same class; (c) the class of families is strictly determined by the head of households; (d) in nearly all cases the head of household is father/husband in a nuclear family; (e) therefore, in general, the class of married women is derived from the class of her husband. We will carefully examine Goldthorpe’s position both theoretically and empirically.

BACKGROUND READING

- *Stevi Jackson, “Marxism and Feminism”, chapter 2 in Andrew Gamble, David Marsh and Tony Tant (eds), *Marxism and Social Science* (U. of Illinois Press, 1999).

CORE READING

*Erik Olin Wright, "Explanation and Emancipation in Marxism and Feminism", Chapter 10 in *Interrogating Inequality*, pp. 211-233

Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts*, Chapters 6, 7 & 8. pp. 113-158

*John Goldthorpe, "Women and Class Analysis: In defense of the Conventional View", *Sociology* 17:4, 1983, pp.465-488

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Ellen Meiksens Woods, "Capitalism and Human Emancipation: race, gender, and democracy", *Democracy against Capitalism* (Cambridge University Press: 1995)

Michelle Stanworth, "Women and Class Analysis: a reply to John Goldthorpe," *Sociology* 18:2, May, 84, pp.161-169

A. Heath & N. Britten, "Women's Jobs do make a difference: a reply to Goldthorpe," *Sociology* 18:4, 1984, pp.475-90

Robert Erikson, "Social Class of Men, Women and Families", *Sociology* 18:4, November, 1984, pp.500-514

John Goldthorpe, "Women and Class Analysis: a reply to the replies," *Sociology*, 18:4, Nov. 1984, 491-499

Nicky Hart, "Gender and the Rise and Fall of Class Politics", *New Left Review*, 1989, #175, pp. 19-47

Jane Humphries, "Class Struggle and the persistence of the working class family", *Cambridge J of Econ*, 1:3, 1977, pp.241-258

Gita Sen, "The Sexual Division of Labor and the Working Class Family: towards a conceptual Synthesis of Class Relations and the Subordination of Women", *RRPE*, 12:2, 1980, pp.76-86

Session 9. Class and Race

Frequently radical theorists tend to see race as posing very similar problems for class analysis as gender. I think this is a mistake. These are distinctively different kinds of social relations and practices, and they have distinctively different kinds of articulation to class. Specifically, racial domination has often had a much more direct and powerful articulation to class domination than has been the case for gender. This is strikingly the case for slavery in capitalist societies, where racial domination was a central component of the system of class exploitation. In this session I will explore the general issue of the articulation of race and class by discussing two specific empirical problems:

(1) *Who benefits from racism?* One of the central problems in the interrelationship between race and class is the issue of who benefits from racism. Specifically, it is a contentious political issue whether white workers, white capitalists or both benefit from racism. This is a complex issue and we cannot possibly explore it in detail here, but I will try to clarify the theoretical issues at stake in the debate. Answering this question will require some attention to a difficult counterfactual: which social categories would have their material interests undermined by reductions in racial oppression.

(2) *How should we explain transformations in race relations in the United States?* Here I want to address a specific historical question posed by the sociologist David James: why was the civil rights movement successful in the 1960s whereas it had failed earlier? Why were race relations transformable towards less oppressive forms in the U.S. South then, but not in 1900 or 1930? James proposes an interesting class theory of the conditions for the transformability of racial domination that still gives racial domination real autonomy.

CORE READINGS:

*David James, "The Transformation of the Southern Racial State", *ASR*, 53, 1988, pp.191-208

*Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel, *Marxism and Socialist Theory* (Boston: South End Press), chapter 6, "Community and History" pp.231-268

*Satnam Virdee, "Racism, Class and the Dialectics of Social Transformation", in *The SAGE handbook of Race and Ethnic Studies*, edited by Patricia Hill Collins and John Solomos (Sage: 2009), pp.135-165

SUGGESTED READINGS:

*Edna Bonacich, "Class Approaches to Ethnicity and Race," *Insurgent Sociologist*, X:2, Fall 1980, pp.9-24.

Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1994)

Satnam Virdee. 2008. *Racism*. Cambridge: Polity Press

Satnam Virdee. 2008. "Race, Class and the Dialectics of Social Transformation" in Hill-Collins, P. and Solomos, J. (eds) *Handbook of Race and Ethnic Studies*. London and New York: Sage

Harold Wolpe, "Class concepts, class struggle and racism", in John Rex and David Mason (eds) *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp.110-130

Peter Weinreich, "The Operationalization of identity theory in racial and ethnic relations," in Rex and Mason (eds) *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp.299-320

Larry Bobo, "Group Conflict, Prejudice and the Paradox of Contemporary Racial Attitudes", in P.A. Katz (ed), *Eliminating Racism: profiles in controversy* (New York: Plenum, 1988)

Larry Bobo, "White's Opposition to Busing: Symbolic Racism or Realistic Group Conflict?", *J. of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1983, Vol.45:6, pp.1196-1210.

Tom Nairn, "The Modern Janus," *The Break up of Britain* (New Left Books)

Steve Erie, *Rainbow's End: Irish-Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics, 1840-1985* (University of California Press, 1988). Selections

Robert Miles, *Racism* (London: Routledge, 1989)

Joe R. Feagin *Racist America: roots, current realities, and future reparations* (Routledge: New York, 2000)

Michael Reich, 1973. 'Who benefits from racism? The distribution among whites of gains and losses from racial inequality' *The Journal of Human Resources* 13: 4: 524-544.

Micahel Reich. 1981. *Racial Inequality: a political-economic analysis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Stuart Hall. 1996. 'Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity' in

Morley, D. and Chen, K. *Stuart Hall: critical dialogues in cultural studies*. London: Routledge.

Oliver Cox. 1970. *Caste, Class and Race*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

PART III. CLASS FORMATION

In the next few sessions we will shift our attention from the analysis of class structures to the problem of class formation, i.e. the process by which the people occupying the “empty places” in the class structure are formed into organizations of collective struggle. In particular, we will deal with two related issues: (1) the problem of how solidarity is generated among workers, i.e. the process by which the “free-rider” problem is solved within the working class; (2) the problem of class collaboration or class compromise: the material basis for translating the antagonistic relations of the class structure into a more or less cooperative relationship among class actors.

Session 10. Basic Concepts of Class Formation

Underlying the various issues we will discuss on class formation is a common theoretical problem: how to understand the ways in which *strategic collective practices* are forged within a structure of antagonistic class relations. In this first session we will discuss a number of critical concepts needed to analyze strategic action and its relationship to class structure and class formation. In particular, we will explore two sets of ideas: First, the basic concepts subsumed under what is often called “game theory”: rationality, rational choice, strategic interaction, prisoner’s dilemmas, free riders, etc. Second, we will try to clarify the general problem of the relationship between class structure and class formation.

BACKGROUND READING

Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Harvard, 1965)

CORE READINGS:

Erik Olin Wright, [“A General Framework for Studying Class Consciousness and Class Formation.”](#) *Class Counts*, chapter 10

*Jon Elster, “Marxism, Functionalism and Game Theory”, *Theory and Society*, 11:4, July, 1982, pp. 453-482

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Erik Wright, [Class, Crisis and the State, pp.97-110](#)

Thomas Schelling, “What is Game Theory?”, chapter 10 in *Strategies of Conflict* (Harvard Press, 1980)

Russell Hardin, *Collective Action* (Johns Hopkins Press, 1982), pp. 6-37, 101-124

Jon Elster, *Ulysses and the Sirens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), chapter 1

Session 11. Rationality, Solidarity and Class Struggle

In this session and the next we will focus on the problem of the formation of solidarity in a world of competitive individualism. Whatever else might be the case, for the working class to be able to exert effective class power either within capitalism or against capitalism, workers have to be able to form strong collective organizations, and this requires solving the problem of solidarity. In this first session we will look at the approach of Jon Elster to this problem. Elster sees the formation of solidarity within the working class as an example of the classic problem of collective action as understood within game theory: given that the benefits of class struggle are unlikely to be monopolized by the actual participants in the struggle, what prevents workers from being “free-riders”, from avoiding the obvious costs of participation in struggle while reaping the benefits of successful struggles? This, he argues, is the heart of the problem of “solidarity”. Elster’s task is to explore the ways in which Marx dealt with these issues and to raise a series of problems based on an assessment of Marx’s position. At the core of Elster’s analysis is the claim that the formation of solidarity involves a transformation of the “game” in which workers attempt to build organization from a “prisoners dilemma” to an “assurance game”, that is, from a game characterized by purely selfish preference orderings of individuals to one with “conditional altruist” preference orderings.

CORE READING:

*Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, ch. 6.2, “Class Consciousness”, pp. 344-71 (suggested: 6.3, pp. 371-97)

*Jon Elster, *Ulysses and the Sirens* (Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 18-28

SUGGESTED

Pam Oliver, Gerald Marwell and Ruy Teixeira, "The Theory of the Critical Mass", *American Journal of Sociology*, 1984

Session 12. The Dilemmas Of Working Class Collective Action

Claus Offe, in his essay with Helmut Weisenthal, also operates within a broadly rational actor model of solidarity. He, however, is less concerned with the free rider problem as such than with the problem of the nature of the interests of class actors within struggle. In particular, he attempts to understand the specificity of the problem of class formation of the working class by way of a contrast within the logic of class formation within the bourgeoisie. Offe and Wiesenthal argue that there is a fundamental asymmetry in the logics by which these two classes are organized in capitalist society, and that this asymmetry helps to explain the particular trajectory of class formation/class struggle in such societies. This asymmetry stems from the different kinds of interests of workers and capitalists at stake in class struggles, the different requirements of leadership, hierarchy and organization to realize these interests, the problems of communication inherent in each of their class situations, and certain other issues.

CORE READING:

*Claus Offe and Helmut Wiesenthal, "Two Logics of Collective Action: theoretical notes on social class and organizational form," in Maurice Zeitlin (ed), *Political Power and Social Theory*, vol. 1, 1980 (JAI Press, 1980), pp.67-116.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

John Bowman, "The Politics of the Market: economic competition and the organization of capitalists", *Political Power and Social Theory*, vol. 5, pp.34-88 (JAI Press, 1985)

Session 13. Class Compromise

Classes are not simply formed or unformed, organized or disorganized. They are organized in particular manners, with historically specific inter-relationships with the class formation of other classes. One of the important tasks of a Marxist analysis of class formation is to understand the variability in types of class formation, and the central determinants of this variability. Later in the year we will examine the various ways in which ideology and the state help to shape the specific forms of class struggle. In this session our focus will be more on the "material basis" which underlies different class formations. In particular, we will explore Adam Przeworski's very important contributions to the theory of "class compromise". Przeworski seeks to demonstrate how class compromise emerges out of the concrete material conditions faced by workers and their organizations, thus avoiding explanations of reformism and economism that rely primarily on "misleadership", "corruption" or "false consciousness." Whether this strategy is successful or not is the subject of a debate between Przeworski and Burawoy.

As with capitalists, so with workers. Different levels of organization permit different strategies for advancing interests, and shape those interests themselves. With high levels of organization, reflected in high union density and electoral vehicles of their own, workers are capable of, and commonly interested in, striking accommodations with capitalists through the state. Typically, this takes the form of wage moderation, coupled with the provision of a more generous social wage. Within less highly organized regimes, by contrast, workers' action typically takes the form of more militant "economism" (that is, collective action confined to the economic sphere, centering on particular wage and benefit gains), and is distinctly less solidaristic. David Cameron's essay (suggested readings) explores these dynamics across a range of capitalist democracies. He argues for the economic rationality of wage moderation in highly organized settings, and suggests the ways in which it provides the basis for relatively stable concessions by capitalists, and a virtuous cycle of high economic performance. Michael Wallerstein (suggested readings) returns to the implicit premise of this argument. Recognizing the virtuous consequences of solidarity, he attempts to explain what leads (organized) workers to pursue solidaristic strategies in the first place. Once again, the position of workers within the world economy -- the degree of openness and export dependence of the economy in which they operate -- is found to be a critical determinant. Finally, Rogers (suggested reading) considers other institutional aspects of national systems that determine union strategy, focusing on U.S. labor law.

CORE READINGS:

Adam Przeworski, *Capitalism and Social Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp.133-203.

*Erik Olin Wright, "Working-Class Power, Capitalist-Class Interests and Class Compromise," chapter 11 of *Understanding Class*. (originally in *American Journal of Sociology*, January, 2000, pp.957-1002)

SUGGESTED:

Michael Burawoy, "Marxism without Micro-Foundations," *Socialist Review* 89/2 (1989), pp. 54-85.

Adam Przeworski, "Class, Production and Politics: A Reply to Burawoy," *Socialist Review* 89/2 (1989), pp. 87-111.

David Cameron, "Social Democracy, Corporatism, Labour Quiescence, and the Representation of Economic Interest in Advanced Capitalism," in Goldthorpe, *Order and Conflict in Contemporary Capitalism* (Oxford: 1984),pp.143-178.

Michael Wallerstein, "The Microfoundations of Solidarity: Protectionist Policies, Welfare Policies and Union Centralization" (unpublished mss, 1987)

Joel Rogers, "Don't Worry, Be Happy: Institutional Dynamics of the Postwar Decline of Private Sector U.S. Unionism." *University of Wisconsin Law Review*, 1990.

Ira Katznelson, *City Trenches*

Walter Korpi, *The Working Class in Welfare Capitalism* (RKP, 1981), and *The Democratic Class Struggle* (RKP, 1983)

Francis Castles, *The Social Democratic Image of Society* (RKP, 1978)

Scott Lasch, *The Militant Worker: Class and Radicalism in France and America* (London: Heineman, 1984)

Duncan Gaillie, *Social Inequality and Class Radicalism in France and Britain* (Cambridge, 1983)

PART IV. THE THEORY OF THE STATE AND POLITICS

Marxists have always held that the state plays a pivotal role in sustaining the class domination of ruling classes. Without the intervention of the state, especially its repressive interventions, the contradictions between classes would become so explosive that bourgeois domination could hardly survive for an extended period. The state, nearly all Marxists insist, fulfills an essential function in reproducing the class relations of capitalist society.

What is sometimes less systematically emphasized is that the state is also an object and arena of class struggles, struggles which may impinge on the capacity of the state to fulfill this “essential function.” A complete account of the capitalist state, therefore, must integrate on the one hand an analysis of the state’s functions and the mechanisms which enable the state to fulfill those functions, and, on the other, an analysis of the process of struggle which transforms the state and its mechanisms and which generates contradictions within the state itself. Understanding such “contingent, contradictory functionality” will be the central theme of our exploration of the theory of the state.

Session 14. What is “Politics”? What is “The State”?

Many of the debates over the state and politics, both within Marxism and between Marxist and nonMarxist perspectives, are confused because the labels are being used to designate different phenomena, different concepts, different structures and processes. While it may seem somewhat scholastic to have a discussion centering entirely on what we mean by these terms, a sharp clarification of these issues is important. In particular in this session we will try to develop some basic understandings of four interconnected concepts that will reappear throughout this part of the course: politics, power, domination and the state. Somewhat schematically, I will argue for the following definitions:

Politics: practices through which social relations are reproduced and transformed.

Political Power: the capacities or resources used to reproduce and transform social relations.

Domination: a social relation within which political power is unequally distributed, i.e. where the capacities to reproduce and transform social relations are unequally distributed.

State: the most super-ordinate institutional site in which domination is exercised over a given territory.

BACKGROUND READING:

*Tom Mayer, *Analytical Marxism*, chapter 6 “The State”

CORE READINGS:

*Colin Hay, “Marxism and the State,” chapter 8 in Andrew Gamble, David Marsh and Tony Tant (eds), *Marxism and Social Science* (U. of Illinois Press, 1999).

*Paul Sweezy, “The State”, Ch. XIII in *The Theory of Capitalist Development* (Monthly Review Press, 1947)

*Erik Wright, “Class and Politics”, chapter 5 in *Interrogating Inequality*

*Robert Alford and Roger Friedland, *The Powers of Theory: capitalism, the state and democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp.1-14, 408-426

Göran Therborn, *What Does the Ruling Class Do When It Rules?* (London: Verso 1978) pp.129-138, 145-153

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Michael Mann, “Societies as Organized Power Networks,” Chapter 1 in *The Sources of Social Power* (Cambridge University Press, 1986) pp.1-33

Max Weber, “The Political Community”, *Economy and Society*, chapter 9 in volume II (University of California Press edition, 1978).

Anthony Giddens, *Nation State and Violence* (Polity Press, 1986), pp 7-34

- Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", in Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971)
- Alan Wolfe, "New Directions in the Marxist Theory of Politics", *Politics & Society*, 4:2, 1974
- Erik Olin Wright, "The Status of the Political in the Concept of Class Structure", *Politics & Society*, 11:3, 1982.
- Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, pp.399-408
- Barry Hindess, "Classes and Politics in Marxist Theory," in Littlejohn,(ed), *Power and the State*, (London: Croom Helm, 1978)
- Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel, *Marxism and Socialist Theory* (South End Press, 1981), ch3. "Politics and History."
- Ernesto LaClau, "The Specificity of the Political", in LaClau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (NLB, 1977)
- Michael Burawoy, "Between the Labor Process and the State: The Changing Face of Factory Regimes Under Advanced Capitalism", *The American Sociological Review*, 48:5, October 1983, revised as chapter 3 in Burawoy, *The Politics of Production*.
- Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, especially part IX, "Barbarism and Civilization"
- Steven Lukes, *Power: a Radical View* (London: McMillan, 1974)
- Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory* (University of California Press, 1979), pp.85-94
- Anthony Giddens, "Domination, Power and Exploitation: a analysis", chapter 2 in *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (University of California Press, 1981)
- Nicos Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism* (NLB, 1978), pp35-62, 123-154.
- Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (Vintage, 1979)

Session 15. What, if Anything, Makes the Capitalist State a Capitalist State? Is the State a Patriarchal State?

In this session we will try to accomplish four things: First, we will discuss why the problem of the capitalist character of the state is a "problem". This will involve explaining the distinction between viewing the state as a "state in capitalist society" versus "a capitalist state". Second, we will discuss some of the possible properties of the "capitalist" state that various theorists have argued have a distinctively capitalist character to them. In particular we will discuss Goran Therborn's attempt at constructing a fairly comprehensive typology of the class character of formal aspects of state institutions. Third, we will examine the methodological problems in validating these kinds of arguments. Even if it is legitimate to treat the state as having a distinctive class character, it is a difficult task to empirically establish that a given state intrinsically has a particular class character. It is not sufficient to show that the *policies* of the state are biased in favor of one class, since this could be the result either of instrumental actions of class actors or of the structural properties of the form of the state. Claus Offe argues that in order to establish the class character of the form of the state itself, it is necessary to demonstrate that this form itself produces the class bias, that is, that the form as such excludes anticapitalist policies and effects. This means that the task of proving the class character of the state requires explaining "non-events" -- things which do not happen -- as well as events. Finally, we will examine what it might mean for the state to be a "patriarchal state" rather than simply a "state in patriarchal society".

CORE READINGS:

- Göran Therborn, *What Does the Ruling Class Do When It Rules?* (London: NLB, 1978). pp 23-97, 118-119
- *Claus Offe, "Structural Problems of the Capitalist State: Class rule and the political system. On the selectiveness of political institutions", in Von Beyme (ed). *German Political Studies*, v I (Sage, 1974).pp. 31-54
- *Lisa Brush, "The Gender of Governance," chapter 4 in *Gender and Governance* (AltaMira Press, 2003)

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Catherine A. MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1989), pp.157-170

David Gold, Clarence Lo and Erik Olin Wright, "Recent Developments in Marxist Theories of the State", *Monthly Review*, October and November, 1975.

Martin Carnoy, *The State*, pp. 131-140

Claus Offe and Volker Ronge, "These on the Theory of the State" *New German Critique* #6, Fall, 1975.

Ellen Meiksins Woods, "The Separation of the Economic and the Political in Capitalism," *NLR* #127, 1981

Steven Lukes, *Political Power: a radical View* (London: McMillan, 1974)

John Keane, "The Legacy of Political Economy: Thinking with and against Claus Offe," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, 1978.

Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, pp.411-422

Bob Jessop, "Towards a Theoretical Account of the State", chapter 5 in Jessop, *The Capitalist State*.

Herbert Kitschelt, "Review of Goran Therborn, *What Does....*", *Kapitalistate* #7, 1979

S. Sardei-Biermann, et. al., "Class Domination and the Political System: a critical interpretation of recent contributions by Claus Offe", *Kapitalistate* #1, 1973.

Claus Offe, "Advanced Capitalism and the Welfare State" *Politics & Society*, Summer 1972.

Claus Offe, "Competitive Party Democracy and the Keynesian Welfare State", *Policy Sciences*, 15, 1983, pp.225-246.

Session 16. The State and the Working Class: Democratic Capitalism and Social Stability

In a famous passage from *Class Struggles in France* Marx portrayed the linkage of democracy and capitalism as an intensely contradictory couplet:

The comprehensive contradiction of this constitution, however, consists in the following: the classes whose social slavery the constitution is to perpetuate, proletariat, peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, it puts into the possession of political power through universal suffrage. And from the class whose old social power it sanctions, the bourgeoisie, it withdraws the political guarantees of this power. It forces the political rule of the bourgeoisie into democratic conditions, which at every moment help the hostile classes to victory and jeopardize the very foundations of bourgeois society. (Marx/Engels, *Selected Works in Three Volumes*, vol.I, Moscow, pp.235-6)

Lenin, writing some sixty years later in *The State and Revolution*, claimed that parliamentary democracy was the "best possible shell" for the perpetuation of bourgeois rule. Can these two positions be reconciled? Do they reflect distinct theoretical stances towards the problem of "bourgeois democracy" or do they simply reflect the changing conditions of bourgeois rule from the mid-19th century to the twentieth century?

These issues are hardly simply questions of textual interpretation: the debate over the class character of parliamentary democracy remains at the very heart of both theoretical and political debates over the state on the left today. Can the state be "used" by different classes in the pursuit of their class interests, or does the state have a monolithic class character? Does the parliamentary form of the capitalist state contain within itself contradictory principles? Particularly since the "problem of democracy" has become such a central political concern given the history of "actually existing socialist" states, the answers to such questions are of fundamental importance.

In this session we will look at how capitalist democracies work, how they structure class struggle in such a way that they simultaneously contribute to social reproduction and open opportunities for potentially explosive social changes. Particular attention will be paid to the dynamics of electoral competition and the ways in which this shapes the possibilities of radical objectives.

BACKGROUND READINGS:

Karl Marx, *Class Struggles in France*
 V.I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*

CORE READINGS:

Adam Przeworski, *Capitalism & Social Democracy*, chapter 1 and chapter 3, pp.7-46, 99-132.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, *On Democracy* (Penguin, 1983). especially, Chapter 3, "Structure", pp.47-87

Bob Jessop, "Capitalism and Democracy: the Best Possible Shell?", in Littlejohn, et. al. (eds) *Power and the State* (London: Croom Helm, 1978).

Perry Anderson, "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci", *New Left Review* #100, 1977.

Goran Therborn, "The Rule of Capital and the Rise of Democracy", *New Left Review* #103, May-June 1977.

Bob Jessop, "The Political Indeterminacy of Democracy", in Alan Hunt (ed) *Marxism and Democracy*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1980), pp. 55-80.

Erik Olin Wright, *Class, Crisis and the State*, (London: NLB, 1978), chapter 4. "Bureaucracy and the State"

Barry Hindess, "Marxism and Parliamentary Democracy" in Hunt, op.cit., pp.21-54

Barry Hindess, "Democracy and the Limitations of Parliamentary Democracy in Britain," *Politics & Power*, #1 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980).

Bob Jessop, "Parliamentary Democracy: the limitations of Hindess", *Politics & Power* #2, 1980.

Barrington Moore, Jr. *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).

Andrew Levine, *Liberal Democracy: a critique of its theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981)

Session 17. The State and Accumulation: functionality, contradiction and the crisis of democratic capitalism

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the recent revitalization of Marxist theorizing on the state was in its early stages, the general consensus among Marxists was that the welfare state fundamentally functioned to reproduce and strengthen bourgeois domination. While there was considerable disagreement over what was the most salient function of the welfare state (co-opting the working class, fragmenting subordinate classes, subsidizing the costs of reproducing capital, etc.) and an equal amount of debate over how to conceptualize the mechanisms for accomplishing these functions (instrumental manipulation by capitalists, structural determinations by the mode of production, derivation from the logic of capital, etc.), there was little disagreement over the status of the welfare state as essentially reproductive of capitalist rule.

In the neoliberal era, beginning in the 1980s and deepening in the early 21st century, the welfare state has been under considerable attack throughout the capitalist world, and many of the former critics of those institutions find themselves defending the various apparatuses and programs of the welfare state. This quite dramatic transformation of the political context for theoretical work on the state has helped stimulate new views on the nature of the welfare state, the logic of bourgeois democracy and the relationship of classes to the state. There is now a much greater emphasis on the crisis-ridden character of the state, on its role in generating rather than simply containing contradictions.

In this session we will examine some of the main themes in these discussions of the crisis of the state. In particular, we will examine three general aspects of these crisis tendencies: the first concerns the contradictory character of the functional pressures on the state, especially between the *legitimation* and *accumulation* functions of the state; the second, which emphasizes contradictions between the *form* of the state and tasks which it is called on to perform; and the third concerns the erosion of state capacity in the neoliberal era and the increasing difficulty of reconciling democracy and capitalism.

In legitimation vs accumulation argument, the welfare activities of the state expanded largely out of the need for the capitalist state to create legitimacy (either for itself or for capitalism) among subordinate groups/classes. This expansion was possible so long as such policies did not conflict with the requirements of capital accumulation. Eventually, however, the expansion of welfare spending began to undermine accumulation itself for various reasons -- it was a drain on surplus value because it was unproductive; it reduced the effectiveness of the reserve army of labor and thus resulted in a lowering of the rate of exploitation; it directly raised the value of labor power by transferring income to the working class (raising the “social wage”). The result, then, is a particular kind of economic crisis -- “stagflation” -- combined with a particular kind of political crisis -- initially a fiscal crisis of the state, followed by a concerted assault on welfare state programs. These contradictions set the stage for the neoliberal era.

The second aspect of contradictory functionality concerns the relation between the *form of the state and its functions*. The state needs a certain structural autonomy from the capitalist class in order for it to intervene for the long-term reproduction of capitalism. But this autonomy also opens space for the state to intervene effectively on behalf of interests other than those of capitalists. This “Frankenstein effect” triggers efforts to curtail state capacity, which erodes its capacity to manage crisis.

In the last several decades these general contradictory processes have been intensified in neoliberalism, particularly because of the way neoliberalism has fostered the financialization and globalization of capital. The result has been a deepening political crisis of the state, reflected most dramatically in the significant erosion of the democraticness of capitalist democracies.

BACKGROUND READINGS:

Erik Olin Wright, *Class, Crisis and the State*, [chapter 3, “Historical Transformations of Capitalist Crisis Tendencies”](#)

CORE READINGS:

*Claus Offe, “The Crisis of Crisis Management: elements of a political Crisis Theory”, in Claus Offe, *Contradictions of the Welfare State* (London: Hutchinson, 1984) pp. 35-61

*Wolfgang Streeck, *How Will Capitalism End?* (Verso, 2016), Introduction, pp. 1-46.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

*Claus Offe, “The Capitalist State and the Problem of Policy Formation”, in Leon Lindberg (ed), *Stress and Contradiction in Contemporary Capitalism* (D.C. Heath, 1975) pp. 125-144

Ian Gough, *The Political Economy of the Welfare State*, chapter 6. “The Welfare State and the Capitalist Economy” and chapter 7. “The Welfare State and the Crisis”, pp.102-152

James O’Connor, *The Fiscal Crisis of the State* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1973), pp.5-12, 40-64, 97-178, 221-260

Sam Bowles and Herb Gintis, “The Crisis of Capital and the Crisis of Liberal Democracy: the case of the United States”, *Politics & Society*, vol.11:1,1982, pp. 51-94.

Alan Wolfe, “The Legitimation Crisis of the State”, *The Limits of Legitimacy* (New York: Basic Books, 1977)

Claus Offe, “Competitive Party Democracy and the Keynesian Welfare State”, *Policy Sciences*, 15, 1983, pp.225-246. reprinted in Offe, *Contradictions in the Welfare State*, op.cit.

Sam Bowles, “Have Capitalism and Democracy come to a Parting of the Ways?” in U.R.P.E., *Capitalism in Crisis* (URPE, 1978)

Jurgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston: Beacon, 1975)

Stephen Skorownek, “National Railroad Regulation and the Problem of State Building: interests and institutions in late nineteenth century America”, *Politics & Society*, 10:3, 1981

David Abraham, “State and Classes in Weimar Germany,” *Politics & Society*, 7:3, 1977

PART V IDEOLOGY AND CONSCIOUSNESS

The problem of subjectivity has become an increasingly salient theme in all varieties of critical theory. Within the Marxist tradition such concerns are generally theorized under the rubric “ideology and consciousness”, whereas in other traditions “culture” is the buzzword for the study of subjectivity in social life. The increased attention to such themes within Marxism is partially a reaction to the underdevelopment of the theory of ideology in early Marxist work and partially a result of a growing realization that capitalist societies are reproduced not merely through repressive force but through the pervasive impact of various forms of ideology on the subjectivity of workers. In this section of the course we will try to sort out some of the salient features of ideology as a process of reproduction and struggle and some of the critical debates on the theory of ideology in contemporary Marxist discussion.

One preliminary word of caution: Discussions of ideology are particularly complex (and sometimes opaque) because they so directly impinge on questions of methodology, epistemology and philosophy. Disagreements about what is ideology and how its effects and determinations are to be understood are directly implicated in disagreements over what is knowledge and how scientific understandings are to be constructed. Frequently it happens that discussions of ideology become totally preoccupied with these methodological issues, and the actual elaboration of the real mechanisms and dynamics of ideology never gets analyzed in a sustained way. I will try in this section of the course to keep the lectures and readings as substantive as possible. While we will spend some time reflecting on the methodological questions bound up with the study of ideology, we will reserve a full-dress discussion of these problems for the final section of the course.

Session 18. What is Ideology?

Debates on ideology typically revolve around two interconnected but distinct questions (a) How should we understand the social process by which ideology is determined? (b) How should we understand the social consequences of ideology? The first of these has been at the heart of discussions of the relative autonomy of ideology, of the ways in which ideology does or does not reflect (in inverted fashion or otherwise) “real” relations, sect. The second issue centers on different views of what ideology really is, on how it “functions” within social relations and why it matters. We will focus most of our energies on this second cluster of problems, not because the problem of the determination of ideology is uninteresting, but because the analysis of such determination can be made intelligible only once we understand the logic by which ideology is consequential for human affairs.

There is relatively little consensus among Marxists about precisely what the term “ideology” denotes, and thus, of course, little consensus about why ideology is consequential. We will discuss several different usages of the term “ideology” that are common in Marxist discussions and then turn to the general problem of the relationship between ideology and subjectivity as a way of integrating these different views. Note that in any case these different usages are overlapping and interdependent rather than mutually exclusive.

In these lectures I will defend an overarching conception of ideology that has its roots in the work of Louis Althusser, although I will criticize Althusser’s functionalist tendencies in his analysis of ideology. I will argue that other conceptions of ideology -- conceptions which revolve around the concepts of false consciousness, mystification or normative beliefs -- all make important contributions, but are incomplete. The Althusserian perspective provides a way of integrating these partial accounts under a more general framework. Instead of viewing ideology as primarily a set of ideas whether mystified or normative, Althusser argues that ideology should be regarded as a kind of practice (or perhaps more rigorously, as a specific dimension of social practices), namely *a practice which produces human subjectivity*. (Sometimes this is referred to as practices which produce subjects, or subject-producing practices). Ideology is a social practice, a structure of real activities which have the effect of producing and transforming forms of human subjectivity.

BACKGROUND READINGS:

*Jorge Larrain, *The Concept of Ideology* (The University of Georgia Press, 1979), particularly chapter 1, “Historical origins of the concept of ideology” and chapter 2, “Marx’s theory of ideology” pp.17-67

Raymond Boudon, *The Analysis of Ideology* (London: Polity Press, 1989), c.2, “What is Ideology?”, c. 3 “Is Homo Sociologicus (always) irrational?” and c. 3, “Journey around a Table”, pp.18-68

Richard Lichtman, “Marx’s Theory of Ideology” *Socialist Revolution* #23, 1975

Stuart Hall, “The Hinterland of Science: Ideology and the Sociology of Knowledge” in *On Ideology*, Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (Hutchinson, 1978). pp.9-33

CORE READINGS:

Göran Therborn, *The Power of Ideology and the Ideology of Power* (Verso, 1980), pp. 1–49

Erik Olin Wright, [Class Counts](#), pp. 193-204

SUGGESTED READINGS:

*Terry Eagleton, *Ideology* (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 1-63 (available on e-reserve)

*Raymond Geuss, *The Idea of Critical Theory* (Cambridge University P., 1981), chapter 1, “Ideology”, pp.4-44

*N. Abercrombie, S.Hill and B. Turner, “Determinacy and Indeterminacy in the theory of Ideology,” *New Left Review*, #142, 1983

Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” in *Lenin and Philosophy* (NLB, 1971)

G.McLennan et al., “Althusser’s Theory of Ideology” in *On Ideology* (op.cit.), pp.77-108

Erik Olin Wright, *Classes* (London: Verso, 1985), “What is Class Consciousness?”, pp.242-250

Raymond Williams, “Ideology”, pp.55-74 in *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1977)

Jorge Larraín, *Marxism and Ideology* (Humanities Press, 1983)

Session 19. Mystification: Ideology as False Consciousness

This is perhaps the most common usage of the term ideology. Ideology is a set of distorted ideas about the world. Used in this way, ideology is implicitly contrasted to “science”, cognitively undistorted (or at least less pervasively distorted) knowledge of the world.

Ideology understood as mystification has played a particularly important role in Marxist discussions. (Marx’s concept of “commodity fetishism” and Lukacs’ concept of “reification” are two important examples of this usage.) Ideology is seen as preventing workers from understanding the nature of their oppression and the possibilities of its transformation. The absence of effective struggle for socialism, then, is at least in part explained by the pervasiveness of these cognitive distortions.

- We will analyze ideology as false consciousness in terms of several interconnected issues:
- The distinction between distortions of what exists and distortions of conceptions of alternatives to what exists;
- The problem of the *source* of mystification -- “propaganda” or “common sense” (lived experience). The key issue here is the way social life is experienced as natural and inevitable.
- The problem of *demystification*,
- The relationship between cognitive distortions (mystifications within consciousness) and unconscious aspects subjectivity.
- The problem of functionalism within the theory of mystification: are mystifications always functional for the reproduction of capitalism? Does mystification distort the perceptions of interests of the bourgeoisie as well, perhaps in ways which reduces their ability to manage capitalism?
- The problem of “objective” interests.

This final issue -- the problem of objective interests -- is particularly problematic. The distinction between “objective” and “subjective” interests is deeply implicated in the Marxist theory of ideology since whenever expressions like “false consciousness” and “mystification” are used there is the implication that ideology in one way or another masks the true interests of actors.

The concept of objective class interests has had a troubled career in Marxism. On the one hand, claims that a specific policy or strategy are “in the *objective* interests of the working class” have served as justifications for antidemocratic, elitist forms of politics in which leadership pays little attention to the subjective preferences of workers. Because of this latent elitist implication, many Marxists reject the concept of “objective” interests altogether. On the other hand, in the absence of a theory of objective interests, socialism becomes simply one value-preference among others. It may be morally desirable according to a particular value system, but it has no privileged status as being in the “objective interests” of the working class. The rejection of the objectivity of interests thus has a tendency to lead to a kind of moral and political relativism and accordingly blunts the critical edge of analyses of ideology.

CORE READINGS:

Marx, *Capital*, vol.I (any edition), chapter 1, section 4, “Commodity Fetishism”

G.A.Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), chapter V. “Fetishism”, pp. 115-133

*Raymond Geuss, *The Idea of Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), chapter 2, “Interests”, pp.45-54.

*Michael Rosen, *On Voluntary Servitude: false consciousness and the theory of ideology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp.1-3, 30-37 (37-53 optional)

*Charles Masquelier, excerpts from *Critique and Resistance in a Neoliberal Age: towards a narrative of emancipation* (2016, unpublished manuscript, Palgrave, McMillan, forthcoming). Section to read:

Defining neoliberalism, 9-11; Defetishizing social reality, 12-14; Introduction to Part I, 22-23; On the financialization of culture, 30-33; On the cultural dimension of flexibilization, 45-50; De-fetishizing flexibility, 50-53; Ideology and personal responsabilization, 63-69; Privatization and ideology, 77-81

SUGGESTED READINGS;

Terry Eagleton, *Ideology*, pp.70-91

Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, section 2.3.2., “Fetishism”, pp.95-99

Ted Benton, “Objective Interests and the Sociology of Power”, *Sociology*, 15:2, 1981, pp.161-184.

Issac Balbus, “The Concept of Interest in Pluralist and Marxist Analysis”, *Politics & Society*, February, 1971

William Connolly, “On Interests in Politics,” *Politics & Society*, 2:4, 1972, pp.459-77.

George Lukacs, “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat”, in *History and Class Consciousness*

Gareth Stedman Jones “The Marxism of the Young Lukacs”, in *Western Marxism: a Critical Reader* (NLB, 1977)

Jorge Larrain, *The Concept of Ideology*, c.6, “Science and Ideology”, pp.172-212

Steven Lukes, *Power: a radical view* (London: McMillan, 1976)

Session 20. IDEOLOGICAL HEGEMONY AND LEGITIMATION

In this lecture we will explore two inter-related concepts that often play a central role in discussions of ideology: *legitimation* and *hegemony*.

Ideology as legitimation is undoubtedly the most frequent usage of “ideology” among non Marxists, where ideology is usually understood as an “ism”, but such usage is found often enough in Marxist discussions as well. In this usage ideology consists of a systematic set of normatively integrated beliefs about what is good and bad, desirable and undesirable. Max Weber’s work on forms of legitimacy (legitimate authority) and generalized world views (eg. Puritanism) revolve primarily around this notion of ideology (although he does not use the term in this context). Marxist discussions of legitimation, particularly as it relates to the state, also center on ideology as a normative system.

Ideological Hegemony is perhaps the least familiar usage of the concept of ideology. Many times, in fact, the term is used interchangeably with expressions like “ideological domination”, and the specificity of hegemonic

ideology is lost. Most broadly understood, hegemony constitutes the capacity of a class to systematically tie the interests of other classes to the realization of its own interests. Such a capacity is bound up with the leadership role played by the hegemonic class, a leadership which is at once economic, political, cultural and moral (as Gramsci was fond of saying). Ideological hegemony, then, is the ideological aspect of this capacity, of this linking together of the interests of subordinate classes to those of the dominant class. Hegemony understood in this way, it should be noted, is not simple mystification. The leadership capacity is objectively grounded and the coordination of interests is based on real compromises/sacrifices rather than just propaganda. Hegemony may underwrite mystifications -- such as the belief in the unchangeability of the social order -- but hegemony itself is based on the actual capacity to provide such direction to the society as a whole.

At the ideological level, as Chantal Mouffe argues following Gramsci, such hegemony depends upon the extent to which the ruling class is able to incorporate into its own ideology pivotal elements of popular ideologies which are then reorganized and combined in such a way as to reinforce the position of dominance of the ruling class.

What, then, is the relationship between “hegemony” and “legitimation”? Do the two necessarily go together? Can one have hegemony without legitimation or legitimation without hegemony? These are some of the issues we will engage in this session.

CORE READING:

- *Chantal Mouffe, “Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci”, in *Gramsci & Marxist Theory* (ed. by Mouffe, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 168-204
- *Jurgen Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, pp.183-188
- *Alex Callinicos, “Ideology and Power,” Chapter 4 in *Making History* (Brill: 2004)
- *Nicholas Abercrombie, Stephen Hill and Bryan Turner, *The Dominant Ideology Thesis* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980), pp.7-29, 156-180
- Göran Therborn, *The Power of Ideology and the Ideology of Power*, pp.93-112

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Ellen Meiksins Woods, *The Retreat from Class* (London: Verso, 1986), chapter 4, “The Autonomization of Ideology and Politics”, pp.47-76
- John Rawls, *Theory of Justice* (Harvard University Press, 1971), section 29
- Ernesto LaClau, “Towards a Theory of Populism”, in *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, (London: NLB, 1977), pp.143-199
- Ernesto LaClau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: NLB/Verso, 1984)
- Antonio Gramsci, “The Intellectuals,” “The Modern Prince,” “The State and Civil Society” in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (International Pub., 1971)
- Perry Anderson, “The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci” *New Left Review* #100, 1977
- Walter Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution: Gramsci’s Political and Cultural Theory* (U. of California Press, 1980)
- Max Weber, “The Types of Authority and Imperative Coordination” *Economy and Society*, vol.I. reprinted in Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (ed by T.Parsons, New York: Free Press, 1947). pp.324-362
- Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, Part 1, Chapter 1, section b. “Concerning the production of consciousness”
- Jurgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, Part III. “On the Logic of Legitimation Problems”, pp.95-143
- Jurgen Habermas, “Historical Materialism and the Development of Normative Structures” in Habermas, *Communication and the evolution of society*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979)

Session 21. Explaining Consciousness: Micro-foundations for a Theory of Consciousness

In many analyses of ideology, the actual process by which ideologies are formed in the subjectivity of individuals and become part of their consciousness is left unspecified. The cognitive processes involved are usually treated as a black box, and when some reference to the formation of consciousness is made, rarely do arguments go beyond rather vague and typically unsophisticated notions of inculcation and indoctrination.

Clearly if we are to fully understand the nature of ideology as a social process, and particularly if we wish to combat ideologies which restrict the horizons of radical social change, we must do better than this. In this session we will begin to explore some of the ingredients in the problem of the formation of individual consciousness. In particular, we will examine some of the possible mechanisms involved in the individual-level formation and transformation of preferences and beliefs, since these are of such importance in the general problem of consciousness and ideology.

CORE READINGS:

*Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, chapter 8, "Ideologies", pp. 459-510.

Göran Therborn, *The Power of Ideology and the Ideology of Power* (NLB/Verso, 1980), pp.31-49

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Thomas Piketty, "Social Mobility and Redistributive Politics" *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, August, 1995, pp.551-584

Jon Elster, *Sour Grapes* (Cambridge University Press, 1983)

Raymond Boundon, *The Analysis of Ideology* (London: Polity Press, 1989), chapter 6, "Ideology, social position and dispositions", pp.94-115

PART VI. THE THEORY OF HISTORY

The heart of Marxist social science has traditionally been a theory of history, usually called “historical materialism.” While many Marxists today are highly critical of Marx’s formulations of this theory of history, and some even deny the usefulness of any theory of history, historical materialism nevertheless remains in many ways the central point of reference for much general theoretical debate, both among Marxists and between Marxists and non-Marxists.

In these sessions we will examine the central theses of historical materialism as they have been elaborated and defended by G.A. Cohen. Cohen’s defense of Marx’s theory of history is the most systematic and coherent of any that has been offered. While there is considerable debate over the adequacy of Cohen’s reconstruction of historical materialism, I feel that it is faithful to the underlying logic of Marx’s argument, and that it has the considerable merit of making that logic much more explicit and accessible than in Marx’s own work. Some students will find the idiom of Cohen’s exposition – analytical philosophy – difficult and awkward. Cohen is preoccupied with making rigorous distinctions in the nuances of the theory, making every assumption explicit and laying out all of the steps in the argument. The first time one reads this kind of analysis, it is easy to become overwhelmed with the fine points and to lose track of the overall thrust of the argument. Still, the book provides a much firmer basis for assessing the merits and limitations of historical materialism than any other discussion I know of, and therefore I think it is worth the effort of mastering it.

Sessions 22 & 23. Classical Historical Materialism

We will spend most of our time exploring the strongest version of classical historical materialism – the version that attempts to produce a general theory of the overall trajectory of human history. In the course of discussing this possibility we will entertain the alternatives.

To say that the overall trajectory of historical change is a legitimate theoretical object of explanation implies that history is not simply an empirical outcome of a myriad of entirely contingent processes; some kind of systematic process is operating which shapes the trajectory of historical development. This systematic process need not produce a unique path of historical development -- actual, empirical history is undoubtedly the result of a variety of contingent processes intersecting this more law-like developmental logic -- but there will be some kind of determinate pattern to historical change.

If we provisionally accept the legitimacy of the *project* of building a theory of history, the question then becomes: what are the central driving forces that explain this trajectory? By virtue of what does historical development have a systematic, non-contingent character?

G.A. Cohen has argued in his influential and important book on Marx’s theory of history that the only coherent way to reconstruct Marx’s views on history is to argue that he was fundamentally a technological determinist. Historical materialism is based on the thesis, Cohen argues, that the forces of production explain the form of the social relations of production, and by virtue of this, the development of the forces of production ultimately explains the trajectory of social development. The heart of this argument is what Cohen characterizes as a “functional explanation”, that is, an explanation in which the effects of a structure figure into the explanation of that structure.

We will try to understand the central logic of this claim for the primacy of the forces of production. This means we will spend some time examining the nature of functional explanations in general, and then see how Cohen uses such explanations in his analysis of historical materialism.

BACKGROUND READING:

*Tom Mayer, *Analytical Marxism*. (Sage, 1994), chapter 2. “The Theory of History”, pp. 25-58

CORE READING:

Karl Marx, “Preface” to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, pp. vii-viii in Cohen, *Karl Marx’s Theory of History: a defense*. Expanded edition (Princeton University Press, 2001)

G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History* (Princeton University Press, 2001)

The following sections provide definitions and conceptual background for Cohen's arguments:

Chapter II. "The Constitution of the Productive Forces", pp. 28-37, 40-47, 55-62

Chapter III. "The Economic Structure", pp.63-69, 77-87

Chapter IV. "Material and Social Properties of Society", pp.88-90, 105-108.

The following chapters lay out the central structure of Cohen's argument:

Chapter VI. "The Primacy of the Productive Forces", pp.134-171

Chapter VII. "The Productive Forces and Capitalism", pp. 175-214

Chapter X. "Functional Explanation in Marxism", pp.278-296

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Erik Olin Wright, Andrew Levine and Elliott Sober, *Reconstructing Marxism: essays on explanation and the theory of history* (London: Verso, 1992), Part I. The Theory of History.

G.A. Cohen, *KMTH*, the remaining sections of chapters VI, VII and X, and chapter XI.

John McMurtry, *The Structure of Marx's World View* (Princeton University Press, 1978), chapters 2, 3, 7 and 8. [This is a somewhat less rigorous development of a position rather similar to Cohen's].

Gregor McLennan, *Marxism and the Methodologies of History* (London: Verso, 1981)

G.A. Cohen, "Forces and Relations of Production" in Betty Matthews (ed), *Marx: 100 years on* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1983), pp. 111-134

Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1985), 5.1 "The general theory of modes of production" pp.243-272; 5.3 "Marx's periodization of history", pp.301-317; 7.1 "The nature and explanation of the state", pp.399-428; 8.1 "Ideologies: stating the problem", pp.461-476.

William H. Shaw, *Marx's Theory of History* (Stanford Univ. Press, 1978), chapter 2, "Marx's Technological Determinism", pp.53-82.

Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital* (London: NLB, 1970), Chapter 4. "The Errors of Classical Economics: Outline of a concept of Historical Time," and chapter 5. "Marxism is not a Historicism", pp.91-144

Maurice Godelier, "Structure and Contradiction in Capital", in Robin Blackburn (ed), *Ideology in Social Science* (Vintage, 1972).

Session 24. Critiques and Reconstructions of Historical Materialism

These readings explore a number of criticisms of historical materialism and explore some general possible lines for its reconstruction. This discussion will help to frame many of the issues we will engage throughout the year. In particular, we will look at three major issues: the problem of *functional explanation*, the problem of *class reductionism*, and the problem of *interests and capacities* for social change.

Functional explanation. Cohen's reading of Marx relies very heavily on functional explanations. The forces of production, he argues, "explain" the relations in that only those relations will persist which are functional for the development of the forces of production. John Elster, among others, has criticized such reasoning on the grounds that functional explanations are, with rare exceptions, illegitimate in social explanations. Since in many places in this course -- in the discussions of ideology, of the state, of patriarchy, of accumulation and crisis -- we have encountered functional explanations it will be useful now to explore in at least a preliminary way the structure and problems of such explanations in Marxism.

Class reductionism. One of the most common critiques of historical materialism is that it is reductionist, that it collapses or reduces all of the complex processes of social life to either the economic or the technological. Typically such anti-reductionist critiques are accompanied by pleas for causal pluralism, or a recognition of the multiplicity of autonomous causal processes operating in history. In order to assess this kind of critique, several theoretical issues need to be clarified: (1). What precisely does historical materialism attempt to explain? Does it try to explain all

aspects of historical development or only some? (2). Does assigning primacy of one causal process imply that other causal processes are reducible to the primary process? (3) Is it possible to see various kinds of causal processes as having a “relative” autonomy in their effects, or must causes be either autonomous or nonautonomous? These are all difficult questions, raising a host of methodological and epistemological problems.

Interests and Capacities. Classical historical materialism emphasizes how contradictions between structures -- between the forces and relations of production -- are the driving process of historical transformation, the process which gives it a necessary directionality. Class struggle is important, but “secondary” in the sense that the potential for such struggles to have epochal revolutionizing effects is strictly dependent upon the structural contradictions themselves. This is not a satisfactory way of theorizing the relationship between class struggle and the structural conditions/contradictions within which such struggles occur. One way of dealing with these issues is to argue that with respect to the development of structural contradictions, the *capacities* for struggle by classes have a much more contingent character than assigned them in classical historical materialism. And yet, it can be argued that the *directionality* of the trajectory of social change is to be explained by the possibilities inherent in specific patterns of structural contradiction. This, then, is the basic thrust of one theoretical reconstruction of historical materialism: a materialist approach to history provides us with a map of the *possible* trajectories of social change, but not a satisfactory account of the actual process by which movement along the paths of that map occur. For the latter a theory of the capacities of classes is needed -- a theory of class power and class struggle -- which cannot itself be derived from historical materialism as such.

CORE READINGS:

*Erik Olin Wright, Andrew Levine and Elliott Sober, *Reconstructing Marxism* (London: Verso, 1992), [chapter 2, “Classical Historical Materialism”](#) (pp. 33-46 required; pp. 13-32 recommended), and [chapter 5, “Toward a Reconstructed Historical Materialism”](#) (pp. 89-100).

*Jon Elster, “Marxism, Functionalism and Game Theory”, *Theory & Society*, 11:4, July, 1982, pp. 453-482

G.A. Cohen, *KMTH*, “Reconsidering Historical Materialism” and “Restricted and Inclusive Historical Materialism”, pp. 341-388

SUGGESTED:

Ellen Meiksins Wood, “History or Technological Determinism?” chapter 4 in *Democracy Against Capitalism: renewing historical materialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp.108-145

Joshua Cohen, “Review of G.A. Cohen, *KMTH*” *Journal of Philosophy*, 1982, v.79, 253-73

Erik Olin Wright, *Classes* (NLB/Verso, 1985), “The Theory of History”, pp.114-118

The Critique of Economic Determinism:

Anthony Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (UC California Press, 1981)

Erik Olin Wright, “Giddens’ Critique of Marx”, *New Left Review*, #139, 1983.

G.A. Cohen, “Reconsidering Historical Materialism,” *NOMOS*, 1983, 227-251

Jean L. Cohen, *Class and Civil Society* (Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1982)

Anthony Cutler, Barry Hindess, Paul Hirst and Athar Hussain, *Marx’s Capital and Capitalism Today*, vol. I. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), pp. 135-156, 207-242.

Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production*, (Telos Press, 1975)

The Debate over Functional Explanation in the Theory of History

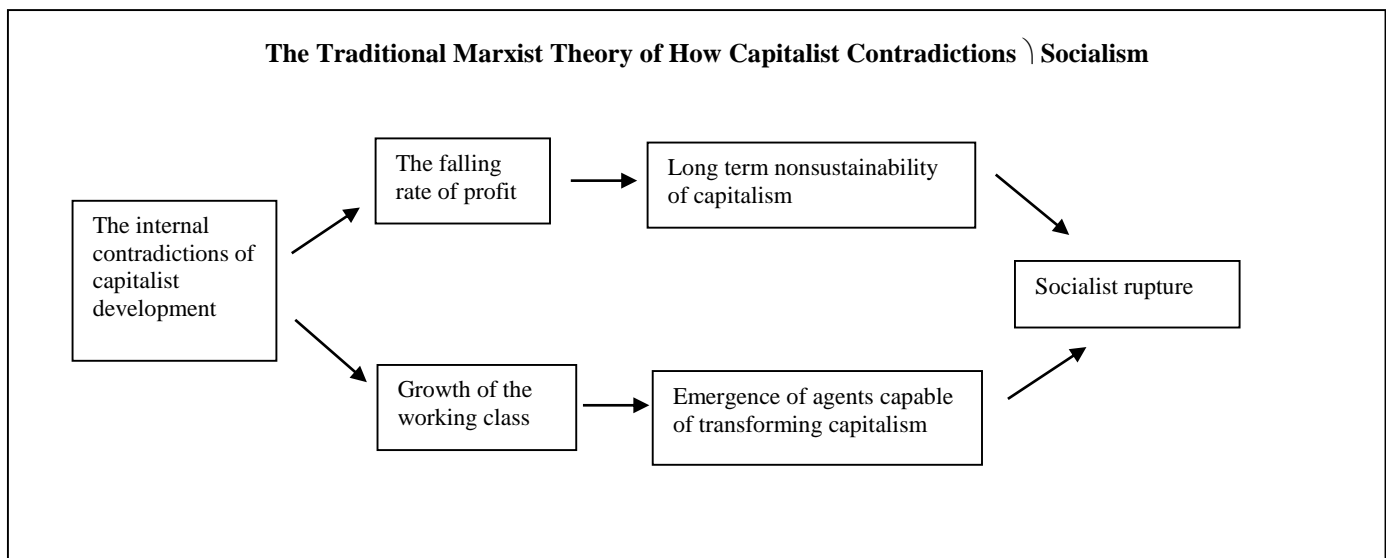
G.A. Cohen, “Reply to Elster on ‘Marxism, Functionalism and Game Theory’”, *Theory & Society*, 11:4, pp.483-496.

Philippe van Parijs, “Functionalist Marxism Rehabilitated: a comment on Elster”, *Theory and Society*, 11:4, pp.497-512

- Johannes Berger and Claus Offe, "Functionalism vs. Rational Choice?: some questions concerning the rationality of choosing one or the other," *Theory & Society*, 11:4, pp.521-526
- Jon Elster, "Cohen on Marx's Theory of History," *Political Studies*, XXVIII:1,(March, 1980), pp.121-128.
- G.A. Cohen, "Functional Explanation: reply to Elster," *Political Studies*, XXVIII:1 (Mar 1980), pp.129-135.
- G.A. Cohen, *KMTH*, chapter IX. "Functional Explanations: in general"
- Philippe Van Parijs, "Marxism's Central Puzzle" in Terrance Ball and James Farr (eds) *After Marx* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 88-104
- James Noble, "Marxian Functionalism", in Ball and Farr, *ibid.*, pp. 105-120
- Richard W. Miller, "Producing Change: work, technology and power in Marx's Theory of History," in Ball and Farr, *ibid.*, pp. 59-87
- Richard W. Miller, *Analyzing Marx: morality, power and history* (Princeton U. Press, 1984), pp.171-270

Session 25. The Classical Marxist Theory of the History of Capitalism's Future

Within Marxism the crucial pay-off of a theory of history is its application to the specific case of understanding the logic of capitalist development. Historical materialism is not just a general theory of all of human history; it is also a specific theory of the trajectory capitalist history. Indeed, one might argue that this is the very heart of classical Marxism: a theory about the historical trajectory of the development of capitalism culminating in a revolutionary rupture which leads to socialism. The theory is based on two causal chains, both rooted in the internal dynamics of capitalism as a mode of production. One causal chain leads from the contradictions between forces and relations of production within capitalist development through the falling rate of profit to the fettering of the forces of production within capitalism and thus the long term nonsustainability of capitalism; the other causal chain leads through the growth of the working class to the increasing capacity to transform capitalism of those historic agents with an interest in such transformation. The coincidence of these two causal chains makes a rupture in capitalism desirable and possible.



CORE READING:

Erik Olin Wright, ["Thinking about Alternatives to Capitalism."](#) Chapter 4 in *Envisioning Real Utopias*

Part VII.

SOCIALISM AND EMANCIPATION

There was a time not so far in the past when Marxists more or less took for granted the possibility of socialism as a radical alternative to capitalism. There were disagreements about how best to define socialism, about whether existing historical experiments that have been forged under the name of socialism were really socialist, and what political strategies offered the greatest possibility of achieving socialism. But the feasibility of socialism itself was not seriously questioned.

This is no longer the case. Recent years have witnessed a profound interrogation of the concept of socialism itself and new and interesting ideas about what a radically egalitarian alternative to capitalism means and how to get there. In this final session of the semester and in the weekend workshop retreat at Upham Woods we will explore this critical problem of what it means to take seriously the problem of emancipatory transformation of capitalism. I will also provide readings for one optional session on strategies of transformation which will be held in the final week of the semester. This session is not required since students will be participating in the intensive weekend workshop.

Session 26. What is Socialism?

Throughout much of the 20th century the vision of “socialism” was very closely tied to the idea of an economic system in which the state owned the means of production and planned the basic allocation of investments for different purposes. Capitalism was an unplanned (market) economy with private ownership; socialism was a planned economy with state ownership.

Beginning in the 1970s and accelerating in the last years of the Soviet Union, this conceptualization of socialism came under considerable attack by democratic socialists, including. Two criticisms were particularly important: first, there was increasing realization that the complexity of modern economies was such that it was simply impossible to effectively plan in a comprehensive way an entire economy. Efforts to do so, therefore, would inevitably generate perverse side effects, unintended consequences that seriously undermined overall economic efficiency and were in a variety of ways socially harmful. Second, there was a growing belief that centralized, command-and-control comprehensive planning was antithetical to democracy. This criticism was somewhat less well-grounded theoretically – it was more a generalization from the observation that economic systems organized in this way were in fact authoritarian. Right wing critics of the USSR argued that this association of authoritarian states with central planning was no accident – the concentration of power in the state needed to execute such planning efforts necessarily entailed, the argument went, a capacity for the state to act unilaterally and an incapacity for any countervailing force to effectively resist this. Left-wing critics were less certain that centralized planning was inherently bureaucratic and authoritarian, but nevertheless were concerned about the tension between central planning and democracy.

So, by the time of the collapse of the centrally planned economies, most democratic socialists had already rejected this as a model for a democratic egalitarian alternative to capitalism. A range of alternatives was discussed – including various proposals for market socialism and a range of forms of participatory decentralized planning – but none of these gained general acceptance as a robust, pragmatic institutional design for a post-capitalist democratic egalitarian form of economy. This remains, then, a difficult and on-going debate.

In this session we will review the basic ideas behind classical socialism and these alternative conceptions. I will then propose a general way of thinking about the problem even if this does not yet constitute a fully elaborated institutional design for socialism. I refer to this as “taking the ‘social’ in socialism seriously”.

BACKGROUND READINGS:

Tom Mayer, *Analytical Marxism*, chapter 9, “Socialism”

V.I. Lenin, *State and Revolution*, especially chapters 1 and 5

Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program*

CORE READINGS:

*G.A. Cohen, “Back to Socialist Basics”, *New Left Review* #207, September-October, 1994, pp.3-16

*Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 82-92, 446-458, 513-531

Erik Olin Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias* (Verso: 2010), [chapter 5. "The Socialist Compass"](#)

Przeworski, *Capitalism and Social Democracy*, Postscript: "Social Democracy and Socialism", pp.239-248

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, *On Democracy*, chapter 6, "Democracy", pp.146-183

Andrew Levine, *The End of the State* (London: Verso: 1987).pp.131-182

Bertell Ollman, *Alienation*, (Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp.104-119

Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Democracy and Capitalism*, chapter 7, "Future: postliberal Democracy"

Etienne Balibar, *Dictatorship of the Proletariat* (Verso: 1977)

Erik Olin Wright, "Emancipation and Explanation in Marxism and Feminism", c.10 in *Interrogating Inequality*

Session 27. Strategic Logics of Transformation: ruptural, interstitial, symbiotic

Classical Marxism, particularly after it was consolidated as the ideology of a political movement following the Russian Revolution, argued that the only way to transform capitalism was through a revolutionary rupture. This thesis rested on two central intuitions, and about the nature of the state, the other about the nature of economic organizations. The argument about the state was that the capitalist state was no thoroughly capitalist in its basic structure that it simply could not be used as an instrument for attacking capitalism and building an alternative economic system; any effort to do so would simply fail. The only hope was to smash this kind of state and replace it with another kind of state, called the "dictatorship of the proletariat". The smash-and-replace logic meant that the political strategy had to have revolution at its center: seize state power, use it to destroy the existing state structures and replace them with a new socialist state. The second intuition was that in order to build a new socialist economic system it would be necessary to actively destroy and repress capitalism. Socialism and capitalism could not coexist; the presence of anything but marginal capitalist elements would have a corrosive effect. Again, this means that a rupture with capitalism, not just the state, would be needed.

Ruptural strategies main a significant current in anticapitalist thinking, but they no longer have the same compelling quality that they had in the middle of the twentieth century. Partially this is because of the historical experience of the actual political economic systems that were built in the aftermath of revolutionary ruptures, and partially it is because of greater theoretical skepticism about the logic of rupture. The question then becomes, of course, whether nonruptural strategies are any more plausible. In this session we will look at the theoretical foundations of two strategic logics in addition to ruptural strategies: interstitial strategies and symbiotic strategies. The first of these sees the central strategy for the transformation of capitalism being the creation of new socialist institutions in the cracks and spaces of the existing society; the second sees transformation coming through using existing institutions of power in ways that enhance social power in order to solve pragmatic problems. All of these strategies have problems

CORE READINGS:

*Erik Olin Wright, "[Socialist Strategies and the State in Advanced Capitalist Societies](#)", chapter 5, *Class, Crisis and the State* (Verso: 1978) pp. 226-252

Erik Olin Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias*: [chapter 9. Ruptural Strategies](#); [chapter 10. Interstitial Strategies](#); [chapter 11. Symbiotic Strategies](#).

SUGGESTED READINGS:

John Stephens, *The Transition from Capitalism to Socialism*, chapters 2,3,6

Martin Carnoy, "The State, Democracy and the Transition to Socialism", chapter VI in *The State*

Norberto Bobbio, "Are there Alternatives to Representative Democracy?", *Telos*, #35, 1978.

Session 28. Weekend Retreat. *How to be an Anticapitalist for the 21st Century*

The weekend retreat brings together students from Sociology 621, Sociological Marxism, with students from Sociology 924, Theories of the State. In both classes, students read Goran Therborn's *What Does the Ruling Class Do when it Rules?* At the retreat, we will revisit this book in the context of a discussion of strategies for socialism in the 21st century.

Here is the basic theme: Since a systemic rupture with capitalism is not a plausible way of achieving a democratic egalitarian alternative, then if socialism is ever to be possible we must figure out ways of building the alternative inside of capitalism and then gradually displacing and subordinating capitalism to socialist relations. I refer to this as a strategy of *eroding* capitalism. But here's the problem: the credibility of a strategy of eroding capitalism depends in significant ways on initiatives by the state. However, the state in capitalist society is not simply a neutral apparatus that can be readily used by social forces opposed to capitalism. It is a particular kind of state – a *capitalist* state -- designed in such a way as to systematically protect capitalism from threats. Eroding capitalism, therefore, is only possible if, in spite of the in-built class biases of the capitalist state, it is nevertheless possible use the state to create new rules of the game that can facilitate the expansion of emancipatory non-capitalist relations that point beyond capitalism. Just as in feudal society, in spite of its feudal character the state enabled new rules of the game that ultimately undermined feudalism, so too in capitalism it may be possible for a capitalist state to enable rules that ultimately undermine capitalism. The fact that the capitalist state is not an instrument ideally suited to the erosion of capitalism does not mean it cannot be used imperfectly for that purpose.

CORE READINGS:

*Erik Olin Wright, "How to be an Anticapitalist for the 21st Century" (unpublished manuscript, 2016)

*Erik Olin Wright, "[The Capitalist State and the Possibility of Socialism](#)", in Gunnar Olofsson and Sven Hort (eds). *Class, Sex and Revolutions: Goran Therborn -- A critical appraisal* (Stockholm, Arkiv forlad: 2016)

SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS

[Note: the readings for many of these sections are quite out of date. This reading list has not been systematically updated for many years, alas. I am including these topics and readings mainly as a starting point for more extensive reading.]

SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS ON THE THEORY OF HISTORY

(1) An Historical Example: The Origins of Capitalism

The emergence of capitalism in Europe has been an object of recurrent debate among historians. What specific social mechanisms explain the transition from feudalism? How can they explain the different pattern and timing of that transition in different countries and regions? In the recent “Brenner debate” (after the lead contribution made by Robert Brenner), these fundamental questions were posed again -- in a way that not only powerfully advanced understanding of this particular issue, but also displayed characteristic differences between Marxist and other approaches to historical questions, and contributed to debates within Marxism over the role of the state in the accumulation process. In the opening salvo of this debate, Brenner took issue with “neo-Malthusian” and “neo-Smithian” explanations of the transition to capitalism, which argued either that demographic changes or the proliferation of markets was the critical independent variable. He argued instead for the causal primacy of the (varying) structure of agrarian class relations and class power, itself seen as the result of “relatively autonomous processes of class conflict,” in explaining the fact and (varying) pattern of capitalism's emergence. The core reading in this section is Brenner's restatement of this thesis, offered in reply to various criticisms of it.

BACKGROUND

R.J. Holton, *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), pp. 29-102

CORE READING:

Bob Brenner, “The Agrarian Roots of European Capitalism,” *The Brenner Debate*, T.H. Aston and C.H.E. Philpon (Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp.213-327

SUGGESTED READINGS

Meghnad Desai, “Capitalism,” in Tom Bottomore (ed) *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), pp.64-67.

Richard Lachman, “Feudal Elite Conflict and the Origins of English Capitalism,” *Politics & Society*, 1985, pp.349-78

Robert Brenner, “The Origins of Capitalist Development: a critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism,” *New Left Review* #104, 1977

Immanuel Wallerstein, *Historical Capitalism* (London: NLB, 1983)

Paul Sweezy, “The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism,” *Science and Society*, 14, 1950

Maurice Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963)

R. Hilton, ed. *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism*, (London: NLB, 1976)

Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: NLB, 1974)

Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System* (New York: Academic Press, 1974)

Paul Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), pp.56-59

G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: a Defense* (Princeton: Princeton, 1978), pp.79-84, 180-193

Charles Bettelheim, *Economic Calculation and Forms of Property* (New York: MR Press, 1975), pp.28-68

Etienne Balibar, “From Periodization to Modes of Production”, in Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital* (London: NLB, 1970), pp.209-224

(2) NonMarxist Theories of History

While the theory of history figures centrally within the Marxist tradition, there are various nonMarxist theories of history which are interesting and worth considering. Michael Mann has over the past fifteen years or so been elaborating a theory of history which emphasizes the relatively contingent interplay of four forms of power. Anthony Giddens, while formally rejecting what he characterizes as “evolutionary theories” of history, as elaborated a two dimensional dynamic for historical change rooted in what he calls space-time distanciation. Gerhard Lenski is well known for elaborating a technological determinist theory of history that see technology as directly determining social forms without the mediation of the “dialectic” of forces and relations of production. Habermas has elaborated what he refers to as a reconstructed historical materialism in which the moral order has an independent evolutionary dynamic alongside the mode of production.

CORE READING:

Ellen Meiksins Wood, “History or Teleology? Marx versus Weber”, chapter 5 in *Democracy Against Capitalism: renewing historical materialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power* (Cambridge University Press), vol.1 and 2
Anthony Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* and *The Nation State and Violence*
Jurgen Habermas, “Historical Materialism and the Development of Normative Structures” in Habermas, *Communication and the evolution of society*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979)
Gerhard Lenski, *Power and Privilege*

SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS ON CLASS STRUCTURE

The following topics and readings are intended to provide some guidance to students who wish to pursue the analysis of class structure and class formation beyond the scope of the sessions in the course. In some cases, the reading lists are somewhat out of date (some are *very* out of date), but they can still serve as a starting point. Some of these topics were regular sessions in earlier versions of this course. In those cases, I have retained the distinction between CORE and SUGGESTED readings.

(1) The Death of Class Debate?

After discussing so intensively the concept of class, it may seem absurd to entertain the idea that class has become an irrelevant category of social analysis and that class analysis obscures rather than clarifies the important structural and dynamic features of contemporary society. Yet this is a view held by an increasing number of sociologists, and it is a view that has a certain real influence even among critical scholars. Jan Pakulski is a Polish-born Australian sociologist who positions himself on the left and is certainly a critic of domination, inequality and oppression, but nevertheless feels that class is dead. Paul Kingston, less clearly identified with critical traditions of thought, goes further and argues we are in what is tantamount to a classless society. David Grusky's analysis of class also comes close to dissolving the concept itself, since he argues that "Big Classes" no longer have much explanatory relevance. Rather than dismiss these views out of hand, we should interrogate them closely.

CORE READING

Jan Pakulski, *Approaches to Class Analysis*, chapter 7. "Foundations of post-class analysis"

Jan Pakulski and Malcom Waters, "The Reshaping and Dissolution of Social Class in Advanced Society" *Theory and Society*; 1996, 25:5, Oct, 667-691.

Erik Olin Wright, "The Continuing Relevance of Class Analysis - Comments," *Theory-and-Society*, 1996, 25:5, Oct, 693-716.

David Gusky and Kim Weeden, "Are there social classes? A framework for testing sociology's favorite concept", pp. 65-89, in Annette Lareau and Dalton Conley (editors) *Social Class: how does it work?* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2008)

SUPPLEMENTARY

Paul Kingston, *The Classless Society* (Stanford, 2000)

Jeff Manza and Clem Brooks "Does Class Analysis Still Have Anything to Contribute to the Study of Politics?-Comments," *Theory and Society*, 1996, 25:5, Oct, 717-724.

Jan Pakulski and Malcom Waters, "Misreading Status as Class: A Reply to Our Critics," *Theory and Society*, 1996, 25:5, Oct, 731-736.

Jan Pakulski and Malcolm Waters, *The Death of Class* (Sage, 1996)

(2). The Bourgeoisie in Advanced Capitalism I: The Social Constitution of the Ruling Class

Most of the emphasis in the syllabus has been on the working class. There has been, however, a considerable amount of scholarly work by Marxists on the capitalist class as well. The recent work has focused on three interconnected problems: (1) the patterns of social recruitment and reproduction of the ruling class; (2) structural differentiation and integration within the bourgeoisie; (3) the relationship between the capitalist class proper and corporate management.

The literature on social recruitment and reproduction of the bourgeoisie is in many ways more "sociological" than "Marxist" in character. The central preoccupation is with the social origins of capitalists and top executives, the

patterns of intermarriage and social networks which link them together, and other things which mark off a specific biographical pattern for the bourgeoisie. Many Marxists have more or less dismissed such discussions as having only marginal interest, since the more “fundamental” problems are seen to be the nature of the powers exercised by capitalists, the organizational forms through which they dominate the working class, etc. In some more recent discussions, however, there is a more explicit realization that the mechanisms of social reproduction of the class are potentially important for understanding the capacity of the bourgeoisie to form a consensus and act collectively, and therefore should be given more serious consideration.

READINGS

- C.W. Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963)
 G. William Domhoff, *Who Rules America?* (Prentice Hall, 1967)
 G. William Domhoff, *The Higher Circles* (Vintage Books, 1971)
 Daniel Bertaux, *Destins Personnels et Structure de Classe* (Paris: P.U.F., 1977), pp.70-114
 Pierre Birnbaum, *La classe dirigeante française* (Paris: P.U.F., 1978)

(3). The Bourgeoisie in Advanced Capitalism II: Structural Differentiation and Integration.

The debates on differentiation of the bourgeoisie have revolved around several interconnected issues:

- (1). Are there real “fractions” within the bourgeoisie with strongly opposing interests? Or has the capitalist class become so inter-connected both institutionally and economically that such fractions have little meaning?
- (2). Is there a real difference between “national” and “multinational” capital in the advanced capitalist societies? Or is this distinction simply equivalent to the distinction between the large bourgeoisie (monopoly capital) and the small bourgeoisie (competitive capital)?
- (3). Is there a “hegemonic fraction” of the bourgeoisie which assumes a decisive leadership role within that class, or is the capitalist class basically fragmented and disorganized?

READINGS

- Robert Fitch and Mary Oppenheimer, “Who Rules the Corporations?”, *Socialist Revolution*, #4, 5 and 6, 1970.
 James O'Connor, “Who Rules the Corporations?” *Socialist Revolution* #7, 1971. (a critique of Fitch and Oppenheimer).
 Nicos Poulantzas, *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* (NLB, 1975), part two, “The Bourgeoisies: their contradictions and their relations to the state”, pp.89-174.
 John Scott, *Corporations, Classes and Capitalism* (London: Hutchinson, 1979), especially. chapters 4-7.
 Geoffrey Ingham, “Divisions within the Dominant Class and British Exceptionalism”, in Giddens and Mackenzie, *Social Class and the Division of Labor*, op.cit., pp.209-227.

(4). The Bourgeoisie in Advanced Capitalism III: the problem of management.

The problem of managerial control has played a particularly salient role in debates between Marxists and nonMarxists, since it is often taken as proof of the inadequacy of Marxism that managers, and not proper capitalists, “control” the corporation. Marxists have generally responded to such claims in one of two ways. Either they have denied the factual claim, arguing that indeed full-fledged capitalists, owners of the means of production, exercise the real control over the central policies of corporations; or they have argued that while managers may have considerable decisionmaking power, they are constrained by the logic of capital accumulation to act as if they were capitalists anyway. In the former case, the separation of ownership and control is denied, in the latter it is argued to be of no substantive importance.

READINGS

- Maurice Zeitlin, “Corporate Ownership and Control: the Large Corporations and the Capitalist Class,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 70:5, 1974.

David James and Michael Soref, "Profits and Constraints on Management Autonomy: the unmaking of the Corporation President," *American Sociological Review*, 46:1, 1981.

Michel DeVroey, "The Separation of Ownership and Control in Large Corporations", *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 7:2, 1975.

James Scott, *Corporations, Classes and Capitalism*, op.cit., pp. 30-74

James Scott, "Property and Control: some remarks on the British Propertied Class", in Giddens and Mackenzie (eds), *Social Class and the Division of Labor* (Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp.228-247.

Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Societies*, op.cit.

(5). The Traditional Petty Bourgeoisie.

One of the clearest predictions made by Marx was that the traditional petty bourgeoisie would gradually disappear with capitalist development. While there is no doubt that the petty bourgeoisie has declined drastically over the past century, there is little indication that it will disappear in any advanced capitalist country. In general it appears to have stabilized at around 7-12% of the labor force, and in fact there are some indications that it has somewhat expanded in the past decade or so. More important than sheer numbers, however, is the social and ideological importance of the petty bourgeoisie as a category. For this reason, understanding the petty bourgeoisie remains important empirical and theoretical problem in spite of the relatively small numbers of individuals in the class.

READINGS

Frank Bechhofer and Brian Elliot, *The Petite Bourgeoisie: Comparative studies of the uneasy stratum* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981).

Christian Baudelot, Roger Establet, Jacques Malemort, *La petite bourgeoisie en France* (Paris: Maspéro, 1974).

Richard Scase, "The Petty Bourgeoisie and Modern Capitalism: a consideration of recent theories," in Giddens and Mackenzie (eds), *Social Class and the Division of Labor* (Cambridge University Press, 1982).

George Steinmetz and Erik Wright, "The Fall and Rise of the Petty Bourgeoisie", *American Journal of Sociology*, March, 1989

(6). Internal Differentiation of the Working Class

Throughout most of the discussions so far, the working class has been treated as a relatively homogeneous entity; the main emphasis has been on its structural relation to the capitalist class and on its collective formation as a class actor. In fact, of course, the working class is internally differentiated on a variety of dimensions. In the history of Marxist thought, the *structural* basis of these divisions have been theorized in a variety of ways:

- (1). Workers linked to precapitalist guild and artisanal relations vs. workers in capitalist factories.
- (2). Workers subjected only to the "formal" subordination to capital vs. "real" subordination.
- (3). skilled workers vs. unskilled.
- (4). the aristocracy of labor vs. the mass of workers.
- (5). workers in the "primary" labor market vs. "secondary" labor market.

Needless to say, these are not completely distinct ways of theorizing divisions within the working class, although there is a certain specificity to each distinction. The readings in this section are designed to explore a variety of these axes of divisions and their consequences.

READINGS

Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. I, Chapter 14, 15, 25

David Gordon, Richard Edwards and Michael Reich, *Segmented Work, Divided Workers*, 1983.

R. Edwards, M. Reich and D. Gordon (eds). *Labor Market Segmentation* (Lexington: D.C.Heath, 1975).

Michael J. Piore, *Birds of Passage: migrant labor and Industrial Societies* (Cambridge University Press, 1979).

H. Moorehouse, "The Marxist Theory of the Labour Aristocracy", *Social History*, 3: 1978, pp. 61-82.

Jill Rubery, "Structured Labour Markets, Worker Organization and Low Pay," *Cambridge J of Economics*, 2:1, 1978.

- Katherine Stone, "The Origins of Job Structures in the Steel Industry", in Edwards, et. al. op.cit., 1975.
 R.M. Blackburn and Michael Mann, *The Working Class in the Labour Market* (London: MacMillan, 1979).
 Graeme Salaman, *Class and the Corporation* (Fontana, 1981)
 K. Roberts et. al. *The Fragmentary Class Structure* (London: Heineman, 1977).
 Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capitalism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974).

(7). Empirical Studies of Class Structure

The point of all of the debates which we have been reviewing is, of course, to further our understanding of the world, not just to endlessly quibble about the nuances of conceptual distinctions. The reading list below contains examples of empirical studies of class structure which have come out of the Comparative Project on Class Structure and Class Consciousness, as well as empirical research on class structure from outside of the Marxist tradition.

RESEARCH FROM THE COMPARATIVE PROJECT:

- Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts*, Part I
 Goran Ahrne and Erik Olin Wright, "A Comparison of the Swedish and American Class Structures," *Acta Sociologica*, 26: 3/4, 1983

EXAMPLES OF NONMARXIST EMPIRICAL STUDIES OF CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Ronald L. Breiger, "A Structural Analysis of Occupational Mobility," in Marsden and Lin (eds), *Social Structure and Network Analysis* (Sage, 1982), pp.17-32.
 Ronald Breiger, "The Social Class Structure of Occupational Mobility," *American Sociological Review*, 87:3, 1981.
 Reeve Vanneman, "The Occupational Composition of American Classes: Results from Cluster Analysis." *American Journal of Sociology*, 82: pp.783-807, 1977.

(8). Race and class: the underclass debate

In recent years, the discussion of the linkage between race and class in the United States has revolved around the concept of the "underclass". This concept has figured especially prominently in the important and controversial work of William Julius Wilson. Wilson has argued that race as such is declining as the central mechanism of oppression of blacks in the United States and is being replaced by increasingly class mechanisms. In Wilson's view, the most powerful determinant of life conditions for many blacks is their class location within an urban "underclass" rather than their race. In this session we will examine the theoretical status of the concept "underclass" and Wilson's specific historical analysis.

CORE READINGS:

- William J. Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race* (U. of Chicago Press, 1978), c. 1, 6, 7 (pp.1-23, 122-154)
 Christopher Jencks, *Is the American Underclass Growing?* in Christopher Jencks and Paul E. Peterson (eds). *The Urban Underclass* (Brookings, 1991), pp.28-100
 William Julius Wilson, "Public Policy Research and *The Truly Disadvantaged*", in Christopher Jencks and Paul E. Peterson (eds). *The Urban Underclass* (Brookings, 1991), pp.460-481

SUGGESTED READINGS

- Michael Reich, *Racial Inequality* (Princeton University Press, 1981)
 John Roemer, "Divide and Conquer: microfoundations of a Marxian Theory of wage discrimination," *Bell Journal of Economics*, 10:2, 1979, pp. 695-705.
 John Solomos, "Varieties of Marxist conceptions of 'race', class and the state: a critical analysis", in J. Rex and D. Mason (eds) *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 84-109
 Mario Barrera, *Race and Class in the Southwest: a theory of racial inequality* (Nortre Dame, University of Nortre Dame Press, 1979), chapter 7, "A Theory of Racial Inequality"
The Insurgent Sociologist, special issue on "Race and Class in 20th Century Capitalist Development," 10:2,

Fall, 1980.

Robert Blauner, *Racial Oppression in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973).

Oliver Cox, *Caste, Class and Race* (New York: Modern Reader, 1948)

James Geschwender, *Racial Stratification in America* (Dubuque: William C. Brown, 1978).

Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

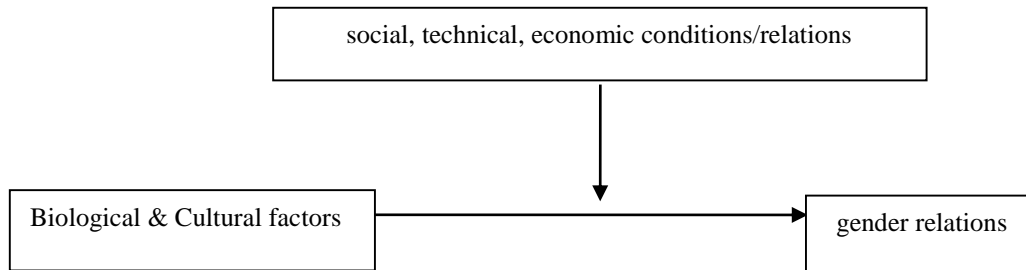
Erik Olin Wright, *Class Structure and Income Determination* (New York: Academic Press, 1979), c 8. "Race and Class"

Al Szymanski, "Racial Discrimination and White Gain," *American Sociological Review*, 41, 1976, pp.403-414.

(9). Class and Gender: alternative class analyses of gender

Virtually no Marxist today would argue that gender oppression is a simple reflection of class domination. While class may shape gender inequality in a variety of ways, gender relations are generally seen as having a great deal of autonomy, as having their own mechanisms of reproduction and perhaps even of transformation. As a result, most Marxists have abandoned the attempt at constructing a general class theory of gender. Nevertheless, the class analysis of gender remains an important theoretical enterprise.

These readings examine the distinction between what might be termed a *class theory* of gender relations and a *class analysis* of gender relations. The former is typified by the classical Marxist functionalist account of gender inequality in Frederick Engels account of male domination. This should be contrasted with the quite different, nonfunctionalist account found in the recent work of Johanna Brenner. Engels argues that male domination arose once it was functionally "necessary" by virtue of the nature of the system of material exploitation (classes). In contrast, Brenner argues that gender relations must be explained by the intersection of certain biological factors, class processes and cultural conditions. In her analysis, "culture" is not an autonomous causal process, but systematically interacts with material conditions in shaping actual gender relations. Similarly, the specific effects of biology depend upon the material conditions and class contexts within which these biological causes play themselves out. The argument thus looks something like this:



This conceptual issue becomes particularly salient in debates around the historical development of gender relations in the 19th century. In particular, Brenner argues that the family wage should be viewed as a rational, adaptive demand of both male and female workers, given the constraints of biological reproduction under the conditions of capitalist oppression and exploitation in early industrial capitalism. While they also argue that the family wage, once in place, tends to reinforce and perpetuate female dependency and male domination, it should not be primarily viewed as a strategy by men to ensure their domination. In this perspective, both class and gender have "autonomous" effects, but the dynamics of class relations and the transformations of material conditions play a larger role in explaining the transformations of constraints on social practices.

CORE:

Johanna Brenner and Maria Ramas, "Rethinking Women's Oppression," NLR #144, 1984, pp. 33-71

F. Engels, "The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State", especially the sections on the family.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Michele Barret, *Women's Oppression Today: problems in Marxist feminist analysis*, (revised edition) (Verso: 1989) pp.v-xxxiv, 8-41, 187-226 (skim 187-201)

Michele Barrett, "Rethinking Women's Oppression: a Reply to Brenner and Ramas", NLR #146, July-August, 1984

- Sylvia Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), c.5, "Culture", pp.90-109
- Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, "Beyond Sexless Class and Classless Sex: Towards Feminist Marxism," *Studies in Political Economy* #10 (Winter, 1983)
- Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel, *Marxism and Socialist Theory* (Boston: South End Press, 1981), chapter 5, "Kinship and History", pp.197-230
- Jane Lewis, "The Debate on Sex and Class," *NLR* #150, 1985
- Alison M. Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (Rowman & Allenheld, 1983)

SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS ON CLASS FORMATION

(1) The labor process and class formation

Marx argued that the development of capitalism would lead to the progressive concentration, homogenization, “immiserization,” and deskilling of the workforce, the effect of which would be to make workers' shared interests as members of a class more apparent, and more susceptible to being acted on. This was the centerpiece of his account of revolutionary agency. In seeking to explain the general failure of workers to take revolutionary action, as just seen in the reading from Przeworski, recent work has focused on the macro political arrangements under which workers would choose not to be revolutionary. But a complementary literature, of longer standing, has focused on the ways in which the organization of work and the social relations of production themselves have blocked or deflected this process of revolutionary class formation. Two different approaches to this question are highlighted in the core readings in this section. Michael Burawoy focuses on shop floor politics, and seeks to explain how consent to exploitation is elicited within the production process itself. Gordon, Edwards, and Reich, offering a mature statement of the “labor market segmentation” hypothesis, emphasize the importance of differences across labor markets in dividing workers from one another, and thus incapacitating as members of a class.

READINGS:

Michael Burawoy *The Politics of Production*, chapter three, pp.122-155
 David Gordon, Richard Edwards, Michael Reich, *Segmented Work, divided workers* (Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp.1-17, 165-143
 Michael Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent* (University of Chicago Press, 1978)
 Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain* (Basic Books: 1979)

(2). Class Structure and Class Formation in the Third World

Our discussion so far has revolved almost entirely around class analysis in the developed capitalist world. While in one session it is impossible for us to deal with all of the complexities and variations in class analysis of third world countries, we will try to outline at least some of the important issues in defining the specificity of classes in such societies. In particular, our discussion will revolve around the problem of decoding the class structure of societies within which capitalist and noncapitalist forms of production (especially “precapitalist” forms, but also some postcapitalist forms as well) are deeply interconnected. This has come to be known as the problem of “articulation of modes of production.” Understanding the articulation of modes of production will help us to specify the location in the class structure of a variety of social categories, such as: the “marginalized relative surplus population”; different kinds of peasants; large landowners; different types of capitalists.

READINGS:

Aidan Foster-Carter, “The Modes of Production Controversy,” *New Left Review*, #107, 1978, pp.47-77
 Harold Wolpe, *The Articulation of Modes of Production* (London: Rutledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), especially “Introduction”, pp.1-43
 Ernesto LaClau, “Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America,” in *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (Verso, 1988)
 J. Banaji, “Modes of Production in a Materialist Conception of History”, *Capital and Class* #3, 1977
 Barbara Bradby, “The Destruction of natural economy,” in Wolpe (ed). *Articulation of Modes of Production*, op.cit.

(3). Explaining Variations in Capitalist Class Formation

Capitalists, like workers, have their collective action problems. Moreover, the demands different capitalists make on the state, and the alliances with each other and with other classes or fractions of classes that they forge to enforce those demands, vary markedly across different countries. In exploring these problems, and the different substantive demands and coalitional strategies pursued for their solution, a natural place to begin is with an assessment of

capitalists' economic location -- that is, an assessment of the economic sources of their internal divisions, always with a view to the position they occupy in the world economy. For example, everything else being equal, one can expect that firms engaged in capital intensive production processes will be better able to "afford" a coalition with labor (since labor costs are relatively marginal to their operation), while labor intensive firms will be much more sensitive to the costs of such a coalition. Similarly, firms capable of competing successfully in the world economy, along with firms heavily dependent on a flow of foreign goods, form a natural coalition against the protectionist impulses of declining national industry. Some of these dynamics are analyzed in the readings from Gourevitch and Kurth. Everything else, however, is very seldom equal. In addition to having to be responsive to the current demands and organizational strategies of workers, capitalists are constrained in various ways by the institutionalization (in state structures, or their own self-governing arrangements) by past coalitional practices, conflicts, and bargains. U.S. capitalists, for example, are exceptionally disorganized (albeit exceptionally dominant as well), with consequences explored by Brand and Schmitter.

READINGS:

- Peter Gourevitch, "International Trade, Domestic Coalitions and Liberty: comparative responses to the crisis of 1873-96" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol.8:2, 1977, pp.281-313
- James Kurth, "The Political Consequences of the Product Cycle: Industrial History and Political Outcomes," *International Organization*, 33 (winter, 1979)
- Philippe C. Schmitter and Donald Brand, "Organizing Capitalists in the United States: the advantages and disadvantages of exceptionalism" (unpublished manuscript, 1979)
- Berger, Suzanne, (ed). *Organizing Interests in Western Europe* (Cambridge U. Press, 1981), Introduction, pp.1-23

(4). Explaining Variations in Working Class Formation

As with capitalists, so with workers. Different levels of organization permit different strategies for advancing interests, and shape those interests themselves. With high levels of organization, reflected in high union density and electoral vehicles of their own, workers are capable of, and commonly interested in, striking accommodations with capitalists through the state. Typically, this takes the form of wage moderation, coupled with the provision of a more generous social wage. Within less highly organized regimes, by contrast, workers' action typically takes the form of more militant "economism" (that is, collective action confined to the economic sphere, centering on particular wage and benefit gains), and is distinctly less solidaristic. David Cameron's essay explores these dynamics across a range of capitalist democracies. He argues for the economic rationality of wage moderation in highly organized settings, and suggests the ways in which it provides the basis for relatively stable concessions by capitalists, and a virtuous cycle of high economic performance. Michael Wallerstein returns to the implicit premise of this argument. Recognizing the virtuous consequences of solidarity, he attempts to explain what leads (organized) workers to pursue solidaristic strategies in the first place. Once again, the position of workers within the world economy -- the degree of openness and export dependence of the economy in which they operate -- is found to be a critical determinant. Finally, at a considerably higher level of abstraction, Howe and Wright examine the general relation of working class structure and formation. Operationalized in a comparative analysis of this relation in Sweden and the U.S., their analysis indicates the ways in which class structure at least probabilistically determines the pattern of class formation, while highlighting the degree of working class-middle class coalition as the critical difference between the two cases.

READINGS:

- David Cameron, "Social Democracy, Corporatism, Labour Quiescence, and the Representation of Economic Interest in Advanced Capitalism," in Goldthorpe, *Order and Conflict in Contemporary Capitalism* (Oxford: 1984), pp.143-178
- Michael Wallerstein, "The Microfoundations of Corporatism" (unpublished mss, 1987)
- Ira Katznelson, *City Trenches*
- Walter Korpi, *The Working Class in Welfare Capitalism* (RKP, 1981); *The Democratic Class Struggle* (RKP, 1983)
- Francis Castles, *Social Democratic Image of Society* (RKP, 1978)
- Scott Lasch, *The Militant Worker: Class and Radicalism in France and America* (London: Heineman, 1984)
- Duncan Gaillie, *Social Inequality and Class Radicalism in France and Britain* (Cambridge, 1983)

SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS ON THE STATE

(1). Alternative Marxist perspectives: “structuralist” and “instrumentalist” approaches

All Marxists theories of the state share a common insight: that the capitalist state in some sense or other generally tends to serve the interests of the capitalist class. This is, of course, a rather vague proposition, but it does express a general perspective on the state in Marxist theory: that states in capitalist societies are *class* states and that we must understand the state in class terms.

But while Marxists do agree on this vague thesis, they have developed their theories around this thesis in quite distinct ways. In this session we will contrast two approaches which were particularly influential in the revival of Marxist discussions of the state in the 1960s: a broadly *instrumentalist* approach to the study of the state which concentrates on the ways class actors consciously intervene in state activities, and a broadly *structuralist* approach which emphasizes the ways in which the state is structurally determined to function in particular ways independently of the conscious interventions of the bourgeoisie. While in some respects the debate between these two perspectives has been transcended, it is still important to closely examine their respective logics since this debate has constituted the point of departure for much of the recent discussions on the state.

CORE READINGS:

- David Gold, Clarence Lo and Erik Olin Wright, “Recent Developments on Marxist Theories of the State”, *Monthly Review*, October and November, 1975.
 Nicos Poulantzas, “The Problem of the Capitalist State,” *New Left Review* #58, 1969
 Martin Carnoy, *The State* (Princeton University Press, 1984), pp.89-127,208-214

SUGGESTED READINGS:

A. General Reviews and Exegeses

- Bob Jessop, “Recent Theories of the Capitalist State”, *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 1:4, 1977, pp.353-73.
 Bob Jessop, *The Capitalist State* (NYU Press, 1982)

B. Work by Poulantzas

- Political Power and Social Classes* (NLB/Verso, 1973). especially pp. 25-33, 44-50, 73-77, 104-114, 130-137, 147-153, 187-189, 190-194, 229-234, 275-279, 279-289, 296-303, 317-321.
Fascism and Dictatorship (London: NLB, 1974)
Classes in Contemporary Capitalism (NLB, 1975)
State, Power, Socialism (NLB, 1978)

C. Work on the State which explicitly adopts and extends Poulantzas' Framework.

- Goran Therborn, *What Does the Ruling Class Do When It Rules?*
 David Abraham, *The Collapse of the Weimar Republic* (Princeton University Press, 1981)

D. Critiques of Poulantzas

- Ralph Miliband, “Poulantzas and the Capitalist State”, *New Left Review* #82, 1973
 E. LaClau, “The Specificity of the Political”, in LaClau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (NLB, 1977)
 Simon Clarke, “Marxism, Sociology and Poulantzas' Theory of the State” *Capital and Class* #2, 1977.
 Simon Clark, “Capital, Fractions of Capital and the State: Neo-Marxist Analysis of the South African State,” *Capital and Class* #5, 1978.
 Amy Bridges, “Nicos Poulantzas and the Marxist Theory of the State”, *Politics & Society* 4:2, 1977.
 John Solomos, “The Marxist Theory of the State and the problem of Fractions: some theoretical and methodological remarks”, *Capital and Class* #7, 1979.
 Bob Jessop, “Hegemony, Force and State Power”, c. 4 in *The Capitalist State* (New York: NYU Press, 1982).

E. Non-Althusserian Structuralist Approaches to the State: Capital Logic and State Derivation schools.

- John Holloway and Sol Picciotto, “Towards a Materialist Theory of the State”, chapter 1 of *State and Capital* (University of Texas Press, 1978).
 Bob Jessop, “Form and Functions of the State”, chapter 3 in *The Capitalist State*, op.cit.

Martin Carnoy, *The State*, p.140-147

F. Work that adopts a relatively “instrumentalist” approach.

Ralph Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society* (Harper & Row, 1973, paperback edition)

G. William Domhoff, *Who Rules America?* (Prentice Hall, 1967)

(2). Critical Theory approaches to the state: Habermas

Discussions of the state in the tradition of critical theory have been marked by two interconnected concerns: (1) the problem of state *rationality*; and (2) the problem of *legitimation*. Claus Offe's work (which we have discussed in several sessions) is particularly preoccupied with the first of these. He asks: given the formal, institutional separation of the state and economy in capitalist society, what (if anything) guarantees that the state will pursue policies that are rational from the point of view of the interests of the capitalist class? Habermas has also been concerned with analyzing rationality and the state, but his central focus has been on the question of legitimation, more specifically, on the tendencies for the contradictions of the capitalist economy to become displaced onto the political arena as the role of the state expands with capitalist development. The core of his work on the state thus concerns the dynamics of what he calls “crises of legitimacy.” Although the idiom of his analysis often seems closer to sociological systems theory than to Marxism, nevertheless the underlying theoretical problems are closely linked to traditional Marxist concerns with contradictions, capitalist development and revolutionary transformation.

CORE READINGS:

Jurgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Beacon Press, 1975), especially Part II and Part III.

Alan Wolfe, “New Directions in the Marxist Theory of Politics”, *Politics & Society*, 4:2, 1974.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Tony Woodiwiss, “Critical Theory and the Capitalist State”, *Economy and Society*, 7:2, 1978.

Bertell Ollman, “The State as a Value Relation”, in *Alienation* (Cambridge University Press, 1976, second edition, pp.212-220).

Jurgen Habermas, “The Public Sphere,” *Telos*, 1:3, 1974

Paul Connerton (ed) *Critical Sociology* (Penguin, 1976), essay on “Legitimation” by Habermas

Goran Therborn, “A Critique of the Frankfurt School”, *New Left Review*, #63, 1970.

(3). The State as a “Condition of Existence” of Capital: Barry Hindess, Paul Hirst and “post-Althusserian” British Marxism.

The work of Poulantzas and Althusser had a particularly important impact on certain tendencies within British Marxism in the 1970s. In particular, a group of Marxists sometimes referred to as “post-Althusserians” (because of the way in which they have extended Althusser's framework and carried it to a logical extreme which resulted in a wholesale rejection of Althusser) have had a major influence among academic Marxists in sociology and related disciplines.

Within this group, the work of Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst have been the most widely read and discussed. Their basic point in the analysis of the state is that attempts to derive any kind of “essence” of the state from the analysis of class relations must be rejected. The state, they argue, cannot be understood in terms of the fulfillment of necessary functions dictated by the class structure of capitalism or as the ideal expression of those class relations. Rather, the state must be understood in terms of the historically specific ways in which certain “conditions of existence” of capitalist production relations are secured. The securing of these conditions of existence, they argue, can never be taken for granted and is never guaranteed by the simple fact of capitalist class relations; rather, such conditions are only created through concrete struggle.

CORE READINGS:

Barry Hindess, “Classes and Politics in Marxist Theory”, in Littlejohn (ed), *Power and the State* (Croom Helm, 1978)

Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hurst, "Primitive Communism, Politics and the State", in *Precapitalist Modes of Production* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975).
 Anthony Cutler, Barry Hindess, Paul Hirst and Athar Hussain, "Mode of Production, Social Formation, Classes", chapter 6 in *Marx's Capital and Capitalism Today* vol I. (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977).

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Barry Hindess, "Marxism and Parliamentary Democracy", in Hunt (ed) *Marxism and Democracy* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1980).
 Barry Hindess, "Democracy and the Limitations of Parliamentary Democracy in Britain," *Politics & Power* #1, 1980

(4). Capital Logic and State Derivation Perspectives.

Perhaps the least familiar tradition in the Marxist theory of the state in North America is the tradition which attempts to derive the central features of the capitalist state from the "logic" or "form" of the capital relation. This tradition has been extremely influential in West Germany and Scandinavia, and has begun to have a certain influence in Britain as well among more "orthodox" Marxists. The essential thrust of the approach is to attempt to derive logically various characteristics of the state from the analysis of capital accumulation in *Capital*. Holloway and Picciotto provide a good overview of the approach in the introduction to their book, *State and Capital*, and the chapter by Hirsch is an example of the approach by one of the leading German proponents.

CORE READINGS:

John Holloway and Sol Picciotto, "Towards a Materialist Theory of the State", chapter 1 of *State and Capital* (University of Texas Press, 1978).
 Joachim Hirsch, "The State Apparatus and Social Reproduction: elements of a theory of the Bourgeois state", in *State and Capital* ed by Holloway and Picciotto.
 Bob Jessop, "Form and Functions of the State", chapter 3 in *The Capitalist State*

SUGGESTED READINGS:

John Holloway and Sol Picciotto, "Capital, Crisis and the State", *Capital and Class* #2, 1977.
 Margaret Fay, "Review of *State and Capital*", *Kapitalistate* #7, 1979
 John Holloway and Sol Picciotto (eds), *The State and Capital* (University of Texas Press, 1978): an anthology of capital logic essays.

(5). Gramsci and the State

Gramsci's fragmented work on the state has probably been more influential in shaping the thinking of recent Continental discussions of the state than any other writer of the first half of the twentieth century other than Lenin. Because of the conditions under which he wrote (in a Fascist prison in the 1920s and 1930s) his work is often very difficult to decode, and the theoretical arguments are often elliptic and ambiguous. Nevertheless, his discussions of hegemony, war of position/war of manoeuvre, civil society and the state, intellectuals, passive revolution and various other topics have helped to define the terrain of much contemporary work.

CORE READINGS:

Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (International Publishers, 1971), especially:
 "Problems of Marxism: Economy and Ideology" (pp.407-409)
 "The formation of Intellectuals" (pp.5-14)
 "The Modern Prince" (123-202)
 "State and The Civil Society" (206-275)
 Martin Carnoy, *The State*, chapter three, "Gramsci", pp.65-88

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Perry Anderson, "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci", *New Left Review* #100, 1977.

- Carl Boggs, *Gramsci's Marxism* (Pluto Press, 1976)
 Christine Buci-Glukzman, *Gramsci and the State* (Humanities Press, 1981; paperback: London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1981)
 Biagio de Giovanni, "Lenin and Gramsci: state, politics and party", in Mouffe, *ibid.*
 Walter Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution: Antonio Gramsci's Political and Cultural Theory*, especially chapter 7, "The Autonomy of Politics", pp. 202-228, (University of California Press, 1980)
 Anne Showstack-Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics* (Croom Helm, 1980)
 H. Kaye, "Antonio Gramsci: an annotated bibliography of studies in English", *Politics & Society*, 10:3, 1981.

(6). The State and the Oppression of Women

The development of feminist theory in recent years has posed a significant challenge to Marxism. Is it possible to understand the *specificity* of the oppression of women within a theory that revolves around the concept of class? Does Marxism ultimately entail some kind of reduction of gender oppression to class relations? These and related questions have underwritten a wide ranging and lively debate which has, I think, enriched both Marxism and feminism.

Relatively little of the dialogue between Marxists and feminists, however, has centered on the state. The site of the debate has been much more on the family and work. Yet, in many ways the analysis of the state should be an especially fertile terrain for trying to understand the relationship between class and gender. The challenge to feminists in terms of the theory of the state would be: Can the state be understood as a form of patriarchal domination/relations? Can the state become a theoretical object within the conceptual framework of feminist theory as it now stands? In answering these questions it is not enough to simply document the effects of the state in reproducing male domination (any more than in a class theory of the state is a catalogue of the class-effects of the state sufficient). What is needed is a theory of the mechanisms which generate and reproduce such effects. To use a familiar expression: is the state just a state in patriarchal society, or is it in some theoretically coherent sense a patriarchal state?

The challenge of these issues for Marxists, on the other hand, would be: Can a theory of the state which understands the structures, mechanisms and effects of the state in terms of class struggle provide an account of the state's role in the reproduction of gender relations? Does such an attempt inevitably lead to a class functionalism within which sexual domination can be understood only in terms of the ways in which it contributes to class domination?

CORE READINGS:

- Lena Bruselid, "Women, Class and State: evaluating social policy and political demands", in *Work and Inequality*, ed by Paul Boreham and Geoff Dow (Melbourne: McMillan of Australia, 1980).
 Mary McIntosh, "The State and the Oppression of Women," in *Feminism and Materialism*, ed. by A. Kuhn and A. Wolpe (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Jalna Hanmer, "Violence and the Social Control of Women," in Littlejohn (ed). *Power and the State* (Croom Helm, 1978)
 Altina Grossman, "Abortion and the Economic Crisis, *New German Critique* #14.
 Rayna Reiter, "Men and Women in the South of France: public and private domains," in *Towards and Anthropology of Women*, ed. by Reiter, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975).
 Lesley Caldwell, "Church, State and Family: the women's movement in Italy," in *Feminism and Materialism*
 Ann Corine Hill, "The Protection of Women Workers and the Courts gal case history," *Feminist Studies*, 5:2, pp.247-274
 J. Humphries, "Protective Legislation, the Capitalist State, and Working class men," *Feminist Review*, #7, 1981.
 Diana L. Barker, "The Regulation of Marriage: repressive benevolence" in Littlejohn, (ed), op.cit.
 Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right*, esp. pp.313-402

(7). The State in the Third World

Most of the systematic theorizing on the capitalist state has focussed on the state in advanced capitalist societies. Relatively little of a general character has been written on the state in the third world. The analysis of the state in such societies is particularly complex because of the complexity of their class structures (particularly the continuing existence of precapitalist relations of production and large, differentiated peasantries) and because of the dependent character of state activities which result from the subordination to international capital. In one session we cannot possibly hope to sort out the full range of problems concerning the state in the periphery, but we may be able to identify some of the salient issues which give these states their distinctive character.

CORE READINGS:

- W. Ziemann and M. Lanzendorfer, "The State in Peripheral Societies", *Socialist Registry*, 1977.
 H. Alavi, "The State in Post-Colonial Societies -- Pakistan and Bangladesh", *New Left Review* #74, 1972.
 William Canak, "The Peripheral State Debate: bureaucratic authoritarianism and state capitalism." (unpublished manuscript, 1981).
 Nora Hamilton, "State Autonomy and Dependent Capitalism in Latin America," *The British Journal of Sociology*, XXXII:3, 1981, pp.305-329

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- B. Harrison, "The Chilean State After the Coup," *The Socialist Register*, 1977.
 G. Therborn, "The Travail of Latin American Democracy," *New Left Review*, #113-114, 1979.
 C. Leys, "The Overdeveloped Post-Colonial State: a re-evaluation", *Review of African Political Economy*, #5.
 B.J. Berman and J.M. Lonsdale, "Crises of Accumulation, Coercion and the Colonial State: the development of the labor control system in Kenya, 1919-1929", unpublished manuscript, 1979.
 G. O'Donnel, "Corporatism and the Question of the State," in *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America* (Malloy, ed.), 1976.
 N. Hamilton, *The Limits of State Autonomy* (Princeton University Press, 1982)
 M. Mamdani, *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda* (MR Press)

(8). American Exceptionalism

No working class has transited from capitalist democracy to socialism, and across capitalist democracies the level of working class organization and political power obviously varies widely. In comparison to their counterparts in Western Europe, however, the U.S. working class is unique, or "exceptional," in never having even formed durable electoral vehicles of its own to wage policy struggles in the state. There is no labor party in the U.S., and the competition that remains between two (very old, very weak) business dominated parties is marked by a general absence of class-based partisan cleavages. As a result, working class participation in electoral politics is exceptionally low. By far the largest political "party" is the "party" of non-voters. Composed largely of poorer and less educated workers, its ranks rather closely resemble the constituency elsewhere serviced by a labor or social democratic party. Given this failure of political organization, and the correlate failure to form strong encompassing organizations in the economic arena, the U.S. working class exerts relatively little influence on the shape of public policy. The consequences for the shape and content of that policy are enormous, predictable, and by this point, as we have seen from the various comparative studies read thus far, widely explored.

There are almost an innumerable range of explanations for this exceptional political weakness of U.S. workers. Some center on critical events in early nation building -- the absence of a feudal past, the widespread availability of land, and/or very high land/labor ratios. Others look to the defeats of labor at peak moments of struggle with capital, or the role that the uneven course of economic development in the U.S., or waves of immigration, or racial tensions, or state repression (or, of course, all of the above) played at different points in wrecking working class solidarity. No full inventory can be provided here.

This said, one partial explanation of American exceptionalism that must almost surely figure in any full account centers on differences in the timing and object of electoral mobilization in the U.S. and Europe. In Europe, universal male suffrage came late, well after the formation of a substantial urban working class, and followed on massive working class struggles in which it was the unifying goal. Having fought for the vote as a class, European workers rather naturally sought to use the vote as a class, and immediately formed their own parties. In the U.S., by contrast, universal white male suffrage was extended very early, before the onset of industrialization. Those who

would eventually compose the U.S. (white male) working class were voting citizens well before they were in fact workers in any “modern” sense, and the U.S. party system forged during this period was, accordingly, defined in non-class terms. The reading from Martin Shefter explores some of the consequences of this for party organization, strategies for mobilization, and the relationship between parties and the state. With a similar analysis as backdrop, Walter Dean Burnham focuses on the transformation of American electoral politics in the late 19th century, when class issues did explicitly emerge. In addition to crushing the Populist revolt, business elites, which had presided over a highly mobilized electoral system during the middle and late 19th century, shut that system down, thereby securing the “disappearance” of the American electorate that remains characteristic of U.S. politics today. Stephen Skowronek, also focusing on this period of transition, examines one instance of “state building” -- the constructive of executive state capacities suitable to the management of a “modern” economy -- within it, a process of “modernization” whose effective sine qua non was the suppression of working class participation in the polity.

CORE READINGS:

Werner Sombart, *Why is there no Socialism in the United States?* (M.E.Sharpe, 1978), pp.15-24,105-106,115-119
 Martin Shefter, “Party Bureaucracy and Political Change in the United States,” in L. Meisel and J. Cooper (eds), *Political Parties: development and decay* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1978),pp.211-65
 Walter Dean Burnham, “The Appearance and Disappearance of the American Electorate,” in Burnham, *The Current Crisis in American Politics* (Oxford University Press, 1982),pp.121-165
 Stephen Skowronek, “National Railroad Regulation and the Problem of State Building: interests and institutions in late nineteenth century America,” *Politics & Society*, 10:3, 1981.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

S.M.Lipset, “Why No Socialism in the United States?”, in S. Bialer and S. Sluzar (eds) *Sources of Contemporary Radicalism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1977)
 J.H.M. Laslett and S.M.Lipset (eds), *Failure of a Dream*. (University of California Press, 1984)
 Theda Skocpol and John Ikenberry, “The Political Formation of the American Welfare State in Historical and Comparative Perspective”, *Comparative Social Research*, vol. 6 (1983).
 David Potter, *People of Plenty* (University of Chicago Press, 1958)
 Walter Dean Burnham, “The Politics of Heterogeneity,” in Richard Rose (ed), *Electoral Participation: a comparative handbook* (Free Press, 1978)
 Mike Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream*, “The Barren Marriage of Labor and the Democratic Party” (Verso, 1986)
 Andrew Martin, *The Politics of Economic Policy in the United States: a tentative view from a comparative perspective* (Sage, 1973)

(9). Explaining variations in Welfare State policies

In this section we want to explore the theoretical arguments and empirical research that attempt to explain two kinds of variations across contemporary capitalist states: 1) the extent of state provision of various critical aspects of welfare state policies, and 2) the extent to which corporatist and quasi-corporatist institutions of bargaining are institutionalized in the state.

Provision of welfare state interventions

Why do some capitalist democracies provide a higher social wage than others, and what explains the differences in how that wage is paid? Why do some countries have aggressive labor market policies directed at securing (close to) full employment, while others do not? These fundamental questions of comparative welfare state behavior have been at the core of much of the most interesting comparative research of the past twenty years. One answer to them -- often identified with the “Scandinavian” school of social democratic theorists, but enjoying much wider support -- has looked to differences in working class organization, as expressed in union density and the presence of trade union supported social democratic parties, as the key independent variable. The selections from Therborn and Esping-Anderson are representative recent efforts, building on previous research in this vein. As seen in the last session, however, this social democratic model has recently been challenged by “state-centered” theorists, who have argued that differences in state structure and capacity, themselves irreducible to differences in class organization, are the critical determinants of comparative welfare state policies. The Orloff and Skocpol article on differences between U.S. and English social spending initiatives is exemplary of this approach.

Corporatist intermediation

Reflecting liberal premises of a separation between economy and polity, we are used to thinking of social organization chiefly in terms of the sovereign commands and market exchange. In fact, of course, all capitalist states (democratic or otherwise) feature public restrictions on private exchange, and the outcomes of private bargaining are commonly not only ratified by, but constitutive of, state policy. The formality, extent, and importance of such quasi-public private bargaining vary across different regimes, with important consequences for the sorts of bargains that can be struck among different interests, and, again, the characteristic pattern of interest formation itself. The literature on corporatism, which has burgeoned in the last decade, arises from the recognition of the pervasiveness of such non-state, non-market (and, for that matter, non-community) forms of interest organization and management. In addition to specifying the distinctiveness and characteristic features of these forms, and assessing their relative importance and extent across regimes, work in the area has been preoccupied with two related, but distinguishable, questions -- What are the initial causes, sources of stability, and sources of tensions and instability in corporatist arrangements? Who benefits from them, under what conditions?

BACKGROUND:

- Phillippe Schmitter, "Still the Century of Corporatism?" *Review of Politics*, 1974, 36, pp.7-38
 Wyn Grant (ed), *The Political Economy of Corporatism* (New York: St. Martin's, 1985): Wyn Grant, "Introduction", pp.1-31

CORE READINGS:*Welfare state policies:*

- Gosta Esping Anderson, "Power and Distributional Regimes," *Politics & Society*, 1985, 14:2
 Ann Orloff and Theda Skocpol, "Why Not Equal Protection? Explaining the Politics of Public Social Spending in Britain, 1900-1911, and the United States, 1880s-1920" *American Sociological Review*, vol.49:6, 1984, pp.726-750

Corporatism

- Wyn Grant (ed), *The Political Economy of Corporatism* (New York: St. Martin's, 1985): Philippe Schmitter, "Neocorporatism and the State", pp.32-62
 Leo Panitch, "Theories of Corporatism: reflections on a growth industry," in Leo Panitch, *Working Class Politics in Crisis* (London: Verso, 1986), pp.160-186

SUGGESTED READINGS:*Welfare state policies:*

- Goran Therborn, *Why Some Peoples are more Unemployed than Others* (Verso, 1986), pp.14-36, 91-163
 Michael Shalev, "The Social Democratic Model and Beyond: Two generations of comparative research on the welfare state" *Comparative Social Research*, vol. 6
 Alexander Hicks and Duane Swank, "On the Political Economy of Welfare Expansion: A Comparative Analysis of 18 Advanced Capitalist Democracies, 1960-71", *Comparative Political Studies*, 1984, 8:153-75
 David Cameron, "The Expansion of the Public Economy: a comparative analysis", *APSR*, 72:4, 1978
 Wolfgang Streeck and Philippe Schmitter, "Community, Market, State -- and Associations?", in Streeck and Schmitter (eds), *Private Interest Government* (Sage, 1985)
 Walter Korpi, *The Working Class in Welfare Capitalism*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978)
 Ian Gough, *The Political Economy of the Welfare State* (London: McMillan, 1979)
 James O'Connor, *The Fiscal Crisis of the State* (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1973)
 John Stephens, *The Transition from Capitalism to Socialism*
 Goran Therborn, et. al."Sweden Before and After Social Democracy: a first overview", *Acta Sociologica* 21 (supplement), 1978
 Harold Wilensky, *The Welfare State and Equality* (University of California Press, 1975)
 Peter Flora and A.J. Heidenheimer (eds). *The Development of Welfare States in Europe and America* (New Brunswick: Transaction books, 1981).
 J.A. Fry, *The Limits of the Welfare State: critical views on post-war Sweden*, (Farnborough, England: Saxon

House, 1979)

Corporatism

Philippe Schmitter and Gerhard Lehbruch (eds), *Trends Towards Corporatist Intermediation* (Beverly Hills: SAGE, 1979), Especially the following essays:

P. Schmitter, "Modes of Interest Intermediation and Models of Social Change in Western Europe", pp.63-95

Leo Panitch, "The Development of Corporatism in Liberal Democracies", pp.119-146

Bob Jessop, "Corporatism, Parliamentarism and Social Democracy", pp. 185-212

Leo Panitch, "Trade Unions and the Capitalist State," *New Left Review* #125, pp.21-43, January-February, 1981.

Ian Gough, *The Political Economy of the Welfare State*, pp.146-152.

Nicos Poulantzas, "The Decline of Democracy: authoritarian statism" in *State, Power and Socialism* by Nicos Poulantzas (London: NLB, 1978).pp. 203-247

J. Westergaard, "Class, Inequality and 'Corporatism'" in A. Hunt,(ed) *Class and Class Structure* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1977)

(10). The logic of electoral politics: voting and voters

The hallmark of most conventional sociological studies of politics is that the individual constitutes the nodal point of the analysis. The central questions asked typically revolve around explaining why individuals behave in the ways they do politically. The behavior of aggregates of individuals -- groups, classes, institutions, organizations, etc. -- are basically conceived as derived from a set of dynamics located at the individual level. Thus the core of the analysis centers on mapping a variety of individual characteristics -- age, occupation, income, education, ethnicity, etc. -- which can plausibly be understood as determinants of individual political practice.

In contrast, Marxist accounts of politics typically begin with accounts of the structures of relations within which political practices occur. The attempt is to map out the range of possible practices, the constraints on choices embedded in macro-individual dynamics. The class structure, the organization of state structures, the nature of party apparatuses and strategies, etc., are all seen as determinants of political practice rather than simply outcomes of atomistic individual behaviors. Individual rationality, choice and strategy can still matter. Indeed, the central reason for analyzing structural constraints is because they constrain action. The difference is that in much conventional sociological work on politics, the attributes of individuals as such have explanatory primacy, whereas in Marxist approaches those individual attributes only have the effects that they have because of the social structural context in which they exist.

In this section we will systematically compare these two kinds of approaches through a contrast of Adam Przeworski's work on social democratic electoral politics with the more conventional sociological studies of electoral behavior represented in the work of S.M. Lipset. Our objectives will be two-fold: first, to illustrate the different logics of analyzing electoral politics primarily in terms as a theory of *voters* (Lipset) or as a theory of *voting* (Przeworski), and second, to closely examine Przeworski's analysis of the deep structural dilemmas facing political parties attempting to further the interests of the working class.

CORE READINGS:

Adam Przeworski, *Capitalism & Social Democracy*, chapter 1 and chapter 3, pp.7-46, 99-132.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

S.M. Lipset. *Political Man* (John Hopkins University Press, 1981, second edition), pp. 230-77.

Michal Kalecki, "Political Aspects of Full Employment," in Kalecki, *The Last Phase in the Development of Capitalism* (New York: MR Press, 1972 [1943]), pp. 75-85.

Anthony Downs, "An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy", *Journal of Political Economy*, vol.65, 1957, pp. 135-50

Gosta Esping-Anderson, *Politics Against Markets* (Princeton University Press, 1982)

Francis Castles (ed), *The Impact of Parties* (London: Sage, 1982)

Douglas A. Hibbs, "Political Parties and Macro-Economic Policy", *APSR*, vol.71, 1977, pp.1467-87

(11). Strategies of Empirical Research on the State and Politics

In the past decade there has been a flowering not only of Marxist debates on the theory of the state, but also of systematic Marxist research on the historical development, the functioning and the effects of the state. In this session we will briefly examine a number of these recent studies, paying particular attention to the ways in which they translate the general theoretical preoccupations of the abstract debates into concrete research agendas.

CORE READINGS:

- Roger Friedland, "Class Power and Social Control: the War on Poverty," *Politics and Society*, 6:4, 1976.
 David Abraham, "State and Classes in Weimar Germany," *Politics & Society*, 7:3, 1977
 David James, "The Transformation of the Southern Racial State: class and race determinants of local-state structures", *ASR*, 53, 1988, pp.191-208

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- David Abraham, *The Collapse of the Weimar Republic* (second edition), (Holmes & Meier, 1986) "Introduction to the Second Edition", pp.xv-xli
 Gosta Esping-Anderson, "Social Class, Social Democracy and the State: Housing Policy in Denmark and Sweden," *Comparative Politics*, Fall, 1978.
 Richard Emerson, "State Formation in Baltistan: strategic rationality and charismatic authority", forthcoming in *Politics and Society*, 1984.
 Michael Hechter and William Brustein, "Regional Modes of Production and Patterns of State Formation in Western Europe," *American Journal of Sociology*, 85:5, 1980.
 Alexander Hicks, et. al., "Class Power and State Policy", *The American Sociological Review*, vol. 43, 1978.
 Michael Mann, "State and Society, 1130-1815: an analysis of English State Financies", in Zeitlin (ed.) *Political Power and Social Theory*, vol. I, 1980, pp.165-208.

(12). The State-centered Approach: state managers, state capacities, state interests

In the American discussions on the state there have been two principal ways out of the impasse between the structuralist and instrumentalist approaches. One of these, associated particularly with the work of Theda Skocpol has adopted an essentially structural concept of the state, but has rejected the attempt at reducing the logic and dynamics of the state to class relations. What emerges, then, is a state-centered structuralism, in which the state itself has a specifically political logic rooted in its structures, capacities, interests. A second approach has tried to sustain the centrality of class in the analysis of the state, but has viewed the functionality of the state with respect to the class struggle as contingent rather than guaranteed. The state therefore becomes a contested terrain of class conflict rather than simply a regulator of class domination. This approach has sometimes been referred to as the "political class struggle" approach.

Are these two approaches contradictory or complimentary? At this point, no sustained synthesis has been produced. And it is certainly the case that the *rhetoric* of some of the writing in the state-centered approach explicitly rejects arguments for the state having any institutionalized, systematic class character of even a contested nature. Classes are treated as basically external constraints on the state, rather than having their interests institutionally embodied in the form of the state itself. Nevertheless, I do think that the fundamental insights from the state-centered approach can and should be incorporated into the class analysis of the state. The attempt should be made to construct a approach to the state which identifies the contested class character of its institutions while also theorizing the autonomous capacities and interests of actors within the state itself.

CORE READINGS:

- Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back in: False Leads and Promising Starts in Current Theories and Research", in Evans, Skocpol and Reuschmeyer, (eds) *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge University Press, 1985). 3-37
 Fred Block, "Beyond Relative Autonomy: state managers as historical subjects", *The Socialist Register*, 1980., pp.227-242.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Theda Skocpol, "Political Response to Capitalist Crisis: Neo-Marxist Theories of the State and the Case of the New Deal," *Politics & Society*, 10:2, 1980
- Gosta Esping-Anderson, Roger Friedland and Erik Olin Wright, "Modes of class struggle and the capitalist state", *Kapitalistate* #5, 1976.
- Kenneth Finegold and Theda Skocpol, "State, Party and Industry: From Business Recovery to the Wagner Act in America's New Deal," in Charles C. Bright and Susan F. Harding (eds) *Statemaking and Social Movements* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press).
- Fred Block, "The Ruling Class Does Not Rule", *Socialist Review*, May-June, 1977
- Martin Carnoy, *The State*, pp.217-223, 235-245
- Margaret Weir, Ann Orloff and Theda Skocpol (eds), *The Political Formation of the U.S. Welfare State* (Princeton University Press, 1988),
- Ralph Miliband, "State Power and Class Interests" *New Left Review* #138, March-April, 1983.
- Theda Skocpol and Ken Finegold, "Economic Intervention and the Early New Deal", *Political Science Quarterly*, 97:2, 1982, pp.255-278.
- Margaret Weir and Theda Skocpol, "State Structures and Social Keynesianism: responses to the Great Depression in Sweden and the United States", *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, December, 1983.
- Erik Olin Wright, "Bureaucracy and the State", chapter 4 in *Class, Crisis and the State*

SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS ON IDEOLOGY

(1) Science, Ideology and Knowledge

Discussions of ideology almost invariably touch on the distinction between “ideology” and “science”. Science, after all, can be characterized as sets of beliefs, these beliefs are constructed within “discourses” which are often highly contested, and like all beliefs held by human beings there are patterns of “sanctions” and “affirmations” which reinforce and/or undermine those beliefs. Does this mean that science is simply one *form* of ideology? Does a materialist theory of the formation of subjectivity imply that all subjectivities are epistemologically equivalent, and thus science has no special cognitive status?

These are very complex issues, and many of the discussions of them quickly become obscurantist. In one session we cannot possibly delve deeply into the philosophy of science and develop a rigorous understanding of the alternative views of the relationship between science and ideology. But we will try in this session to at least open the Pandora's box and try to clarify what the nature of the question. To do so it will be helpful to briefly contrast two different conceptions of science -- empiricist and realist -- and how they each understand the nature of the *practices* in which scientists engage. I will argue, then, that within a realist approach to science it is possible to define the distinctive practices through which scientific knowledge is produced, knowledge which is not reducible to the ideological forms in which it is subjectively held by individuals.

CORE READINGS:

Russel Keat and John Urry, *Social Theory as Science* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975) Part One: Conceptions of Science, pp. 3-65

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Roy Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, (Harvester, 1975), pp.12-62
 Raymond Geuss, *The Idea of Critical Theory*, chapter 3. "Critical Theory", pp.55-95
 Alvin Gouldner, *The Two Marxisms*, "Marxism as Science and Critique"
 Alan Garfinkle, *Forms of Explanation* (Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 1-48
 Roy Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism* (Harvester Press, 1979), pp. 1-30
 Bob Jessop, *The Capitalist State* (New York: NYU Press, 1982), p.211-220
 Alan Chalmers and Wal Suchting, "Empiricism" in *Paper Tigers* ed. by Rod O'Donnell, et. al., (Department of General Phil., University of Sydney)
 G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory...*, Appendix I, "Karl Marx and the Withering Away of Social Science"
 Maurice Godelier, *Rationality and Irrationality in Economics* (MR Press, 1972), "Forward: Functionalism, Structuralism and Marxism" pp. vii-xli

(2). Rationality and Communication: Critical Theory's Contribution to Marxist Theories of Ideology

Critical Theory has born an uneasy relationship to Marxism. On the one hand many critical theorists simply take for granted Marxist political economics and see their work as constituting an elaboration and specification of the “critical moment” within the broader radical intellectual tradition which also contains Marxism. On the other hand, critical theory has always constituted in part a critique of Marxism as well as a complement to it, a critique of Marxist claims of scientificity and often of the materialist thesis of historical development itself. These kinds of criticisms have lead many Marxists to reject critical theory altogether. This, I believe is a mistake. Even if one rejects the critique of historical materialism represented by critical theory, nevertheless much of the work in that tradition has a great deal to offer in understanding problems of ideology, culture, consciousness and related topics. The readings in this section focus on the work of one theorist, Jurgen Habermas, who has been particularly influential in the United States and whose ideas are potentially of considerable importance for Marxist social science. The central starting point of Habermas' analysis is the claim that the problem of intersubjectivity, of communicative action between human beings, is as fundamental a determinant of social life as is the problem of the relationship of human beings to nature. The historical development of forms of inter subjectivity and communication

thus has at least an equal status with the development of the forces of production (human-nature relationship) in the evolution of social forms. It is in this context that Habermas poses the problem of rationality and human action. Social emancipation, in this perspective, cannot be understood simply (or perhaps even mainly) as the emancipation of the forces of production from the fetters of the relations of production, but must also include emancipation from the distorted intersubjective communications.

BACKGROUND READINGS:

David Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, Part Two, "Critical Theory: Habermas", pp.249-350

CORE READINGS:

Jurgen Habermas, "Historical Materialism and the Development of Normative Structures" and "Toward a Reconstruction of Historical Materialism" in *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), pp.95-177

SUGGESTED READINGS::

Julius Sensat, *Habermas and Marxism: an appraisal* (Sage, 1979)

J.Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol.One (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), C.III, pp.273-339

Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination* (Little Brown, 1973)

John Thompson and David Held (eds). *Habermas: Critical Debates* (McMillan, 1983)

(3). Deconstructing Ideological Practices

The empirical study of ideology and ideological practices can be broken down into three broad, interconnected domains:

- 1) the analysis of the salient properties of the practices themselves.
- 2) the process of production of ideological practices/products, whether those practices be advertisements, news broadcasts, texts, or other ideological products.
- 3) the problem of the effects of ideological practices/products on human subjects

To be sure, most empirical work on ideology and ideological practices touches on all three of these; but it is generally the case that one or another is given the most concentrated attention. The first of these domains involves analyzing *what* is "produced" when people produce "ideology"; the second involves understanding *how* ideology is produced, and the third, assessing the *consequences* of ideology once it is produced. In this section we will discuss the first of these tasks

A wide array of ideological practices and products have been subject to systemic empirical analysis by radical theorists. Much of this work has been done in literary criticism and communications arts, where the text is treated seriously as an object of investigation. Frequently in such analyses the central objective is not to explain the social process through which the text was made, nor to assess its impact on readers -- although scholars in critical cultural studies also do both of these -- but rather to understand the immanent meanings, symbols, structure of the ideological product itself.

In this section we will examine in some detail two examples of analyses of the symbolic structure of particular ideological practices: Murray Edelman's analysis of the "political spectacle" and John Fiske's analysis of television news broadcasts. Political practices have crucial ideological dimensions; they are not simply oriented to "seizing power" or "transforming relations", but also to transforming subjects. Indeed, some theorists have argued that the most important aspect of politics is symbolic, not instrumental. While Murray Edelman's work on symbolic politics also engages issues of the effects of the symbolic content of politics and the social processes which generate particular constellations of symbols, his work stands out especially as an example of how to study the symbolic content of politics itself.

CORE READINGS

Murray Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle* (U Chicago 1988), c2. the construction and uses of social problems.

John Fiske, *Television Culture* (Methuen: 1987), c 15, “Newsreadings, Newsreaders” and c 16. “Conclusion: the popular economy”

(4). Explaining Ideology: Power, Interests and the Production of Ideology

In this section we will explore the problem of how to explain the production of particular ideological products. We will focus on one particularly strong theory of the production of ideology, namely that tradition which emphasizes the importance of the control over the “means of ideological production” as the decisive factor in explaining what kinds of ideology get produced. This is the sort of theory elaborated in Marx and Engels' early work, *The German Ideology*, and which is embodied in a great deal of contemporary radical analysis.

As an empirical example we will focus on Noam Chomsky's analysis of news in *Necessary Illusions*. When you read this book and reflect on its arguments, you should ask yourself the following questions:

- 1) What aspects of ideology are most likely to be directly manipulated in the way suggested by Chomsky?
- 2) How compelling is the actual empirical evidence for direct manipulation? What is the evidence for *who* actually does the manipulation? for *why* do they do it? To what extent are answers to these questions inferred from the analysis of the content of the news itself?
- 3) Are there credible alternative hypotheses concerning the mechanisms at work which produce the ideological products studied by Chomsky?

CORE READING

Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: the political economy of the mass media* (New York: Pantheon, 1988)

(5). Strategies of Empirical Research on Class Consciousness

Human motivation is notoriously complex, and this complexity can never be fully captured by general models of behavior. Traditional class-centered models are repeatedly baffled by the fact that workers do not behave as they “should,” in part because the relation between objective class position and subjective attitudes and beliefs is, at best, uncertain. Rational choice models, perhaps even more obviously, are incapable making sense of a broad range of human motivations that are operative in daily life. This said, and recognizing that no purely economic argument can ever be wholly convincing, it is useful, both in understanding the investigated phenomenon, and seeing the limits of the method of investigation, to explore the connections that do seem to exist between class positions and belief systems. In this session we will compare two quite distinct empirical strategies for exploring the determinants of class consciousness, one involving survey research and one revolving around ethnographic research strategies.

CORE READINGS

Erik Wright, *Class Counts* (full version, 1997), chapters 14-16.

Michael Burawoy, “Reflections on the Class Consciousness of Hungarian Steelworkers,” *Politics & Society* 17:1 (March), 1989, pp.1-34

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Erik Olin Wright, *Classes*, chapter 7

Richard Scase, *Social Democracy in Capitalist Society*, (London: Croom Helm.98-161

Walter Korpi, *The Working Class in Welfare Capitalism*, (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), chapter 10, “Working Class Politics and the Union.”

Paul Stevenson, “Class and Left-Wing Radicalism”, *Canadian Rev. Sociology and Anthropology*, 14:4, 1977.

John S. Saloma,III, *Ominous Politics* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1984)

Ted Goertzel, “Class in America: Qualitative Distinctions and Quantitative Data,” *Qualitative Sociology*, 1:3,

1979, pp.53-76.

Melvin Kohn and Carmi Schooler, *Work and Personality: an inquiry into the impact of social stratification* (Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1983), pp.1-33

Mary Jackman and Robert Jackman, *Class Awareness in the United States* (University of California Press, 1983), pp.1-121, 166-220.

David Lockwood, "Sources of Variation in Working-Class Images of Society", *Sociological Review*, 14(2), 1966, pp.249-67.

M. Bulmer, ed. *Working Class Images of Society* (London: Routledge, 1975).

Richard Hamilton, *Class and Politics in the United States* (New York, 1972).

Duncan Gaillie, *In search of the New Working Class* (Cambridge University Press, 1978).

Howard Newby, *The Deferential Worker* (Penguin, 1979).

(6) Ideology and Exploitation: The Problem of Consent

If the distinction between labor power and labor provided the conceptual breakthrough which enabled Marx to develop the theory of surplus value and exploitation, the analysis of the labor process provided him with the concrete empirical focus analyzing the distinctive dynamics of exploitation in capitalism. Workers sell their labor power on the labor market to the capitalist; they perform actual labor within the labor process. The possibility of surplus value -- the process of exploitation -- depends upon the capacity of capitalists to force workers to work sufficiently long and hard within the labor process. This, then, is the focus of Marx's analysis of the labor process: how technological change and reorganizations of the process of work enable the capitalist to increase the amount of surplus labor (value) created by workers within the labor process.

In the last two decades, beginning with the seminal contribution of Harry Braverman, a great deal of empirical and theoretical work has been done on the labor process, with particular attention to the ways in which capitalists contend with the problem of actually getting workers to perform surplus labor. In this session we will focus on one particular issue within these discussions: how important is the *active consent* of workers to their own exploitation? Is exploitation fundamentally a coercive practice in which workers are continually forced to exert effort, or is there a set of ideological processes involved which elicit the active collusion of workers in their own exploitation?

These questions have been posed recently in a particularly useful way in a debate sparked by Sam Bowles and Herbert Gintis's work on what they call "contested exchange". Their arguments were initially addressed primarily to neoclassical economists with the objective of demonstrating how the surveillance and social control costs of capitalism were a deep inefficiency built into capitalist property relations, but the issues they raise have critical implications for the role of ideology within the process of exploitation as well.

BACKGROUND READING:

Harry Braverman. *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York: MR Press, 1973). Part I. "Labor and Management", pp. 3-139.

CORE READINGS:

Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, "Contested Exchange: New Microfoundations for the Political Economy of Capitalism," *Politics & Society*, June 1990, 165-222

Michael Burawoy and Erik Olin Wright, "Coercion and Consent in Contested Exchange", chapter 6 in *Interrogating Inequality*

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Sam Bowles, "The Production Process in a Competitive Economy: Walrasian, Neo-Hobbesian and Marxian Models", *American Economic Review* (75:1, March 1985), pp.16-36.

Michael Burawoy, *The Politics of Production* (London: NLB/Verso, 1985)

Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1: Ch 7, part 1. The Labor Process; Ch 13. Cooperation;. Ch 14. The Division of Labor in Manufacture. Ch 15. Machinery and Large Scale Industry. Ch 16. Absolute and Relative Surplus Value.

SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS ON SOCIALISM

(1). Classes in “Actually Existing Socialisms” of the USSR, China, etc.

These readings examine a number of alternative views on the problem of classes with state socialist societies. Some Marxists continue to argue that there are no real classes in these societies, that at most there exists a “stratum” of privileged state bureaucrats. But more frequently it is argued that these societies do have classes. The problem is how they should be conceptualized: are state socialist societies really a peculiar form of capitalism with a “state bourgeoisie”? Are intellectuals in these societies a “new class” based on their control of cultural capital? Are bureaucrats or party officials a class based on their control of the state?

CORE:

Erik Olin Wright, “Capitalism's Futures”, chapter 6 in *Interrogating Inequality*

Erik Olin Wright, *Classes*, 73-86, 114-117

George Konrad and Ivan Szelenyi, *Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power* (New York: HBJ, 1978), pp.39-67

Alec Nove, “The Class Nature of the Soviet Union Revisited,” *Soviet Studies*, XXXV:3, pp.298-312

SUGGESTED

Ivan Szelenyi “Relative autonomy of the state or state mode of production”

David Laibman, “The state capitalist and bureaucratic exploitative interpretations of the Soviet Formation: a critique”, *Review of Radical Political Economics* 10:4, 1978

Ernest Mandel, “Ten Theses on the Social and Economic Laws Governing the Society Transitional between Capitalism and Socialism,” *Critique* #3, Autumn 1974

Tony Cliffe, *State Capitalism in the USSR* (Pluto Press)

(2) Alternative perspectives on the attempts at Reform in State Socialist Societies in the 1970s and 1980s

During the period before the collapse of the state socialist (“communist”) regimes, there was an extended period in which there were various attempts at market reforms to deal with what was seen as a deepening crisis. Market mechanisms were strengthened, greater autonomy to enterprises were granted, greater scope for private economic initiatives were allowed. These readings examine the economic contradictions and dilemmas which lead to these reforms and discuss the overall prospects for transformation, with particular attention to the problem of the potential political constituencies for different reform projects in state socialist societies. (These readings all come from the period before the collapse of these regimes)

CORE

Alec Nove, *The Economics of Feasible Socialism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), Part 2 and Part 5, pp.68-117, 197-130

Ivan Szelenyi, “The Prospects and Limits of the East European New Class Project: An Auto-critical Reflection on *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power*”, *Politics & Society* 15:2, 1986-87, 103-144.

Rudolph Bahro, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe* (London: NLB)

(3). The Working Class in State Socialist Societies

Michael Burawoy, *The Radiant Past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992)

Michael Burawoy, , *The Politics of Production* (Verso: 1985), chapter 4, “Workers in Worker's States”, pp.156-208

Michael Burawoy and Janos Lukacs, “Mythologies of Work: a comparison of work in State Socialism and Advanced Capitalism”, *American Sociological Review*, vol.50:6,1985, pp.723-737

Charles Sabel and David Stark, “Planning, Politics and Shop-Floor Power: hidden forms of bargaining in Soviet-Imposed State-Socialist Societies,” *Politics & Society*, 11:4 (1982), pp.439-475

David Stark, “Rethinking Internal Labor Markets”, *American Sociological Review*

(4) Envisioning Real Utopias: New Models of Emancipatory Futures

The idea of envisioning real utopias is to explore the designs of alternative institutions that simultaneously embody our deepest utopian aspirations for a humane and just world than enhances human flourishing and takes seriously the problem of institutional design, sustainability, unintended consequences. This kind of analysis is especially important in an historical context in which there is no credible grand design for the complete overhaul of economic and political structures, nor a credible theory that capitalism itself will self-destruct in ways that make a comprehensive alternative inevitable.

In this session we will explore two specific proposals that are particularly interesting – unconditional basic income and a specific design for market socialism. Neither of these constitute a comprehensive blueprint for an alternative economic structure beyond capitalism, but they do suggest specific transformations that might move us in the direction of a post-capitalist future.

Basic income Grants (BIG). In their provocative essay, “The Capitalist Road to Communism”, Robert Van der Veen and Philippe Van Parijs argue that some of the essential features of communist society can be constructed within advanced capitalist societies through the creation of universal, unconditional citizen rights to part of the social surplus, without the necessity of either a political rupture or a rupture in capitalist property relations. Universal Basic income is a particularly interesting reform proposal for feminists since, in guaranteeing everyone basic income it potentially would have significant effects on gender relations.

Market socialism. While one can certainly argue that the USSR was not “truly” socialist, nevertheless the manifest failure of the Soviet economy to function efficiently poses serious issues for traditional socialist ideas about a planned economy. Many people now argue that central planning, even if democratically controlled, cannot work because of the massive information problems of a complex society. This has led to new thinking about the possibility of combining socialism with markets. In this session we will examine one such proposal, the model of coupon-socialism developed by John Roemer. Roemer’s basic idea is quite simple: imagine an economy with two kinds of money, “dollars” and “coupons”. Dollars are used to buy commodities just like in our society. Coupons are used to buy property rights in firms. Dollars and coupons are nonconvertible: you cannot trade coupons for dollars and vice versa. Coupons are then distributed equally to all adults in the society and they use these coupons to buy shares in firms. Thus ownership of firms is more or less equally distributed. Share ownership gives people claims to dividends (i.e. a share in profits) from firms, which are paid in dollars. This system of property rights and markets Roemer argues is a viable form of market socialism. Even if one rejects this model as insufficiently egalitarian, nevertheless, a provocative and helps to clarify a range of problems in the institutional design of socialism.

BACKGROUND READING

Tom Mayer, *Analytical Marxism*, pp.278-288

CORE READINGS

Erik Olin Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias* (Verso: 2010), chapter 7. “Social Empowerment and the Economy” and chapter 8 “Social Empowerment and the State”.

Universal Basic Income

*Van der Veen & van Parijs, “A Capitalist Road to Communism”, *Theory & Society* v.15:5, 1986 ,pp.635-655

Market socialism

*John Roemer, “A Future for Socialism,” *Politics & Society*, December 1994.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Erik Olin Wright, “Why Something like Socialism is Necessary for the Transition to Something like Communism”, chapter 7 in *Interrogating Inequality*.

Bruce Ackerman, Ann Alstott and Philippe van Parijs *Redesigning Distribution: basic income and stakeholder grants as cornerstones for an egalitarian capitalism* vol 5 in the Real Utopias Project (Verso 2006).

David Purdy, “Citizenship, Basic Income and the State”, *New Left Review* #208, Nov-Dec 1994, pp.30-48

Jon Elster, “Comment on Van der Veen and Van Parijs”, *Theory & Society* v.15:5, 1986, pp.709-721

Philippe Van Parijs, *Arguing for Basic Income* (London: Verso, 1993).

John Roemer, *A Future for Socialism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994)

John Roemer, *Equal Shares*, vol.2 in the *Real Utopias Project* (London: Verso: 1996)

SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS ON THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE CAPITALIST MODE OF PRODUCTION

In this section of the course we will examine the basic Marxist account of the logic, dynamics and development of the capitalist mode of production. This aspect of Marxist social science has a curious status within Marxism as a whole. On the one hand, it is in many ways the most technically complex and developed aspect of Marxism, involving sophisticated mathematics, highly specialized vocabulary and, to outsiders at least, esoteric debates. Of all of the “branches” of Marxism, political economics has the appearances of being a real “science”. On the other hand, in recent years there is probably no aspect of the Marxist tradition that has come under more sustained critical fire *from within* that tradition than “orthodox” political economy. As a result, there is probably less consensus among Marxist economists over the basic concepts and propositions of the analysis of capitalism as an economic system than among any other category of Marxist theorists.

Because of the technical complexity of some of this material, we will not be able to delve extensively into the debates and critiques of traditional Marxist political economics that have emerged in the past decade. While I will discuss some of the issues involved in the critique of the labor theory of value, our basic objective will be to understand the traditional concepts and arguments. Perhaps more than in the rest of the course, these lectures are similar to a language class, where the task is to learn the vocabulary and the rules for linking the terms together. If we can accomplish this goal of basic “literacy” then it should be possible for interested students to read more deeply into the topics on their own and in study groups.

In this section we will rely fairly heavily on readings from *Capital*. While it is possible to get most of this material from other sources, *Capital* remains the basic point of reference for discussions of political economics. Since so many of the debates are structured around battles over the text of *Capital* itself, it is best to go to the original source if one wants to become literate in the debates.

One final note. It is important to stress throughout these discussions that in spite of the technical complexity of some of the issues we will discuss, the investigation of the logic of the capitalist mode of production is *not* exclusively a topic in “economics”, understood as an autonomous science of purely economic phenomena. The account is labeled political economics, and by rights it should be called political social ideological economics, suggesting that the analysis of economic processes is inextricably bound up with all aspects of social relations, social structure and social practices.

(1) The Labor Theory of Value I: The Commodity, Commodity Production and Exchange.

Almost from its inception, the labor theory of value (LTV) has been an object of considerable contention within Marxism. Much of the bourgeois critique of Marxism has rested on arguments that the LTV is invalid and thus Marxist claims about class relations and exploitation grounded in the LTV can be dismissed out of hand. Many Marxists, for their part, have insisted that the LTV is the cornerstone of Marxism and that the general social and political theory of capitalism developed by Marx and later Marxists depends upon its validity. More recently a growing number of Marxists have argued that the LTV is not such a vital component of Marxism in general or even Marxist political economics in particular and that, as a result, it can be dispensed with little theoretical cost.

These readings we will touch on some of these debates. Our main concern, however, will be to understand the logic of the labor theory of value, since it continues to be such an important element in the idiom of Marxist discourse. Marx certainly believed it was indispensable and thus he used it as a vehicle for the elaboration of a wide range of theoretical claims.

In this first session we will discuss one of the pivotal concepts in Marx’s analysis of capitalism: the concept of the “commodity”. Marx described the commodity as the “cell” of capitalist society, the most basic concept for decoding the overall logic and dynamics of capitalism. In this session we will examine in detail this concept under rather simplified assumptions, namely under conditions where all workers own their own means of production and thus do not have to sell their labor power on a labor market. Such a structure, usually referred to as “simple commodity production”, helps to reveal the essential logic of commodity production. In later lectures we will examine the properties of capitalist commodity production per se.

Note on Readings: The Readings from *Capital* are all listed under CORE READINGS. In order to minimize the number of pages that everyone has to read, I have divided them into required (**) and recommended (*). Students who have never read parts of *Capital* before should probably only try to get through the required readings; students with some exposure should read at least some of the recommended passages as well.

BACKGROUND READING:

Paul Sweezy, *Theory of Capitalist Development* (Monthly Review Press, 1947), pp.23-71.
 Pierre Jalee, *How Capitalism Works* (Monthly Review Press, 1977), pp.7-64.
 **Erik Olin Wright, "The Meaning of Accumulation," in *Class, Crisis and the State*, pp. 113-124.
 Ernest Mandel, "Introduction" to the vintage edition of Vol. I of *Capital*, **pp.38-65, *11-38, 66-86.

CORE READING:

Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. I (New York: Vintage, 1976):
 Chapter 1. The Commodity. **125-137, 163-177; *137-163.
 Chapter 2. The Process of Exchange. *178-187.
 Chapter 3. Money or the Circulation of Commodities. **198-210;*188-198.
 Chapter 4. The General Formula of Capital. **247-257
 Chapter 5. Contradictions in the General Formula. **258-269

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Jesse Swartz (ed), *The Subtle Analysis of Capitalism* (Santa Monica: Goodyear Publishers, 1977), especially Part II, "The Hidden Meaning of Things: Profit, Rent and Wages" and the essay, "There is nothing Simple about a Commodity".
 Maurice Dobb, *Theories of Value and Distribution since Adam Smith* (Cambridge University Press, 1923).
 R. Meek, *Studies in the Labor Theory of Value* (Monthly Review Press)

(2) The Labor Theory of Value II: Labor, Labor Power and Capitalist Exploitation

Marx considered his most profound contribution to political economics to be the elaboration of the distinction between labor power and labor. The distinction between these two made possible the discovery of "surplus value" as the source of profits in capitalism, and thus the precise specification of the mechanisms of capitalist exploitation. *Labor power* is, according to Marx, a commodity sold by workers to capitalists -- their capacity to perform labor. *Labor*, on the other hand, is the actual activity of laboring. The decisive feature of capitalist exploitation, Marx argued, is that capitalists are able to force workers to labor more hours than is the equivalent value of their labor power, i.e. they create more value than is embodied in the commodities they buy with their wage.

CORE READINGS:

Marx, *Capital*, vol. I,
 Chapter 6. The Sale and Purchase of Labor power. **270-280.
 Chapter 7. The Labor Process and the Valorization Process. **283-306
 Chapter 8. Constant Capital and Variable Capital. *307-319
 Chapter 9. The Rate of Surplus Value. *320-329
 Chapter 10. The Working Day. *340-344,375-416.
 Chapter 11. The Rate and Mass of Surplus Value. *417-426
 Chapter 12. The Concept of Relative Surplus Value. **429-438

SUGGESTED READING:

Marx, "Wages, Prices and Profits", section XIV. (in *Selected Works*).
 Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, "Structure and Practice in the Labor Theory of Value", *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 12:4, 1983, pp.1-26.

(3) Critiques of the Labor Theory of Value

Probably the most concerted challenge to the labor theory of value in recent years has come from economists working in the tradition associated with the name of Piero Sraffa (although Sraffa himself did not actually launch the critique of the LTV as such). Many of the participants in the attack consider themselves to be Marxists, but feel that the conceptual edifice of the LTV is unnecessary and misleading, and above all, substantively incorrect. The most focussed statement of this position is by Ian Steedman in *Marx After Sraffa*. He defends two principle theses: (1) that the LTV is redundant in that prices and profits are directly determined by the physical coefficients of production and the real wage as are “value magnitudes” (the amounts of socially necessary labor in commodities). The calculation of value magnitudes is thus a redundant step in the analysis of prices and profits. (2). Any attempt to derive prices and profits from value magnitudes yields incoherent results (such as negative values with positive prices) under certain conditions.

In this session I will explain in a nontechnical manner the basic logic of the arguments behind these critiques, and assess their implications for Marxist class analysis in general. In particular, we will look at G.A. Cohen’s argument that the theory of exploitation is in no way dependent upon the labor theory of value for either its moral or sociological importance.

CORE READINGS:

- Ian Steedman, *Marx after Sraffa* (London: NLB, 1977), pp. 13-29
 Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, section 3.2, “The Labor Theory of Value”, pp.127-141

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Ben Fine and Laurence Harris, *Rereading Capital* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), c.2. “Value, Price and the Transformation Problem”, pp. 21-48. [This is an able restatement of the traditional position in light of the Sraffan critique].
- Ian Steedman, et. al. *The Value Controversy* (London: NLB/Verso, 1981). Especially the following essays:
 Erik Olin Wright, “The Value Controversy and Social Research”, pp.36-74.
 Geoff Hodgson, “Critique of Wright: 1. Labour and Profits” pp.75-99
 Pradeep Bandyopadhyay, “Critique of Wright: 2. In Defense of a Post-Sraffan Approach”, pp. 100-129
 Erik Olin Wright, “Reconsiderations”, pp.130-162
 G.A. Cohen, “The Labour Theory of Value and the Concept of Exploitation”, pp.202-223.
 Bob Rowthorn, “Neo-Classicism, Neo-Ricardianism and Marxism”, *New Left Review* #86, 1974.
 Anwar Shaikh, “Marx’s Theory of Value and the Transformation Problem”, in Swartz (ed), *The Subtle Analysis of Capitalism*, op.cit. pp.106-139.
 G.C. Harcourt, “The Theoretical and Social Significance of the Cambridge Controversies in the Theory of Capital”, *ibid.* pp.285-303.
Review of Radical Political Economics, vol.14:2, Summer 1982, special issue on “Modern Approaches to the Theory of Value”.
- Richard D. Wolff, Antonio Callari and Bruce Roberts, “A Marxian Alternative to the Tradition ‘Transformation Problem’”, *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 16:2-3, 1984, pp.115-136

(4) The Labor Process

If the distinction between labor power and labor provided the conceptual breakthrough which enabled Marx to develop the theory of surplus value and exploitation, the analysis of the labor process provided him with the concrete empirical focus analyzing the distinctive dynamics of exploitation in capitalism. Workers sell their labor power on the labor market to the capitalist; they perform actual labor within the labor process. The possibility of surplus value -- the process of exploitation -- depends upon the capacity of capitalists to force workers to work sufficiently long and hard within the labor process. This, then, is the focus of Marx’s analysis of the labor process: how technological change and reorganizations of the process of work enable the capitalist to increase the amount of surplus labor (value) created by workers within the labor process.

While most Marxists continue to view the labor process and its dynamics in essentially the same way as Marx,

there have increasingly been challenges to this traditional account. Much of this new work has developed as a response to the work of Harry Braverman, whose study *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, published in 1973, elaborated in a clear and systematic way the classic Marxist position on the degradation of labor, the destruction of skills, the ever-increasing control of capital over the labor process, etc. Several critiques have been raised against this analysis:

- (1). The labor process and its transformations should be understood much more as an arena of struggle and contestation between workers and capitalists than simply as an arena of capitalist domination.
- (2). The labor process cannot be understood simply in terms of the economic logic of capitalism; it is also regulated by political apparatuses and transformed through political struggles.
- (3). At even the economic level, there is no simple tendency for degradation and ever-increasing deskilling; technical change also involves reskilling and upgrading of jobs, and the net effect is largely indeterminate in terms of overall tendency.

In this session we will critically examine Marx's and Braverman's central arguments, in particular, focussing on Michael Burawoy's analysis of the problem of control and resistance in the labor process and what he terms "the politics of production." This analysis makes it possible to begin to explain in a much more subtle manner variations in the labor process within capitalism.

BACKGROUND READING:

Harry Braverman. *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973). Part I. "Labor and Management", pp. 3-139.

CORE READINGS:

Marx, *Capital*, vol. I:

- Chapter 13. Cooperation. **448-451; *439-447, 451-454
- Chapter 14. The Division of Labor in Manufacture. **474-77,480-91 *470-474
- Chapter 15. Machinery and Large Scale Industry. **544-553,
- Chapter 16. Absolute and Relative Surplus Value. *643-654

Michael Burawoy, *The Politics of Production* (London: NLB/Verso, 1985), Introduction, "Bringing Workers Back In"; Chapter One, "The Labour Process in Capitalist Society"; Conclusion, "Toward a Global Perspective," Chapter three, "The Changing Face of Factor Regimes under Advanced Capitalism" pp.2-84, 122-155, 253-269

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Michael Burawoy, *The Politics of Production and the Production of Politics*, op.cit., Chapter Two, "Karl Marx and the Satanic Mills", , Chapter Four, "Worker's in Workers' States", and Chapter Five, "The Hidden Abode of Underdevelopment.", pp. 85-121, 156-252
- Craig R. Littler, *The Development of the Labour Process in Capitalist Societies* (London: Heineman Educational Books, 1982). pp.1-63, 186-195.
- David Noble, "Social Choice in Machine Design," *Politics & Society*, 8:3-4, 1978.
- David Noble, *The Forces of Production* (Knopf, 1985)
- Larry Hirschhorn, *The Limits of Mechanization* (MIT Press, 1984)
- Stephen Marglin, "What Do Bosses Do?," *Review of Radical Political Economics* 6:2, 1974, pp. 60-112.
- Andrew Zimbalist, *Case Studies on the Labor Process* (NY: Monthly Review Press, 1979).
- David Montgomery, *Worker's Control in America* (Cambridge University Press, 1979).
- Katherine Stone, "The Origins of Job Structures in the Steel Industry", *Radical America*, 1974.
- E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work Discipline and Industrial Capitalism," *Past and Present*, 38:56-97, Dec 1967.
- Robert J. Thomas, "Citizenship and Gender in Work Organization: some considerations for Theories of the

- Labor Process”, *American Journal of Sociology*, supplement to Vol. 88, 1982.
 Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain* (New York: Basic Books, 1979)
 Andrew Friedman, *Industry and Labour: class struggle at work and monopoly capitalism*, (London: McMillan, 1977).
 David Gordon, Richard Edwards and Michael Reich, *Segmented Work, Divided Workers* (Cambridge, 1982)

(5) Accumulation and Crisis Theory

The heart of the Marxist account of the accumulation of capital has always been to demonstrate how that process was inherently contradictory, i.e. how the logic of the expansion of capital simultaneously and necessarily produced obstacles to the expansion itself. One of the key ways in which the social relations of production become “fetters” on the development of the forces of production in capitalism revolves around these obstacles, since it is only through capital accumulation that the forces of production in capitalism can develop. A stagnation of accumulation, therefore, generally implies a stagnation of technological development as well.

While all Marxists share this general, abstract stance towards accumulation, they differ strongly on how best to conceptualize the contradictions or obstacles to accumulation. Marx was quite clear as to why he felt mature capitalism had intrinsic contradictions of accumulation. He argued that because of both competition and class struggle, there was a systematic tendency in capitalism for technological change to take the form of substituting machines for labor. This has the effect of undermining the rate of profit: profits are generated only by living labor (according to the labor theory of value), but because of technological change, living labor becomes an increasingly small part of total costs of production. Thus the *rate* of profit declines. This is the basis for Marx’s famous “law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall”.

In the debates over crisis theory in recent years, the theory of the falling rate of profit has come under considerable criticism. As a result, in the current discussions a variety of different mechanisms which might generate crises have been entertained: (1) The rising organic composition of capital and the accompanying tendency for the rate of profit to fall (i.e. Marx’s classical argument); (2) The tendency for overproduction and underconsumption inherent in the anarchy of capitalist production and the need for each capitalist to minimize wages; (3) the tendency for profits to be “squeezed” by successful wage struggles; (4) the tendency for the relative overexpansion of unproductive uses of surplus value, particularly through the state. We will briefly examine each of these mechanisms, beginning with Marx’s account of the falling rate of profit, and see how the historical evolution of capitalism can be characterized in terms of shifts in the core impediments/contradictions in accumulation.

BACKGROUND READINGS:

- Paul Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development* pp. 75-108, 133-139, 214-236.
 Pierre Jalee, *How Capitalism Works*, pp. 72-80

CORE READINGS:

- Marx, *Capital*, vol. I.
 Chapter 23. Simple Reproduction. **709-724
 Chapter 24. The Transformation of Surplus Value into Capital. **725-734; *734-57
 Chapter 25. The General Law of Accumulation. **762-802
 Erik Olin Wright, “Historical Transformations of Capitalist Crisis Tendencies,” c.3 of *Class, Crisis and the State*, pp.111-180.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, section 3.3 and 3.4, pp.142-165
 Marx, *Capital*, vol. III. (International Publishers Edition, 1967). Part III. “The Law of the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Fall”, *pp.211-266.
 Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, chapter 3.4. “Theories of Capitalist Crisis”, pp.154-165
 Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital* (Monthly Review Press)
 Ernest Mandel, *Late Capitalism* (London: NLB, 1975)
 James O’Connor, *The Fiscal Crisis of the State* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1973).
 David Yaffe, “The Marxist Theory of Crisis, Capital and the State,” *Economy & Society*, 1973, pp. 186-232.

- U.R.P.E. *U.S. Capitalism in Crisis* (U.R.P.E., 1977), especially parts 1 and 2
 Manuel Castells, *The Economics Crisis and American Society* (Princeton University Press, 1980)
 R. Boddy and J. Crotty, "Class Conflict and Macro-Policy: the political business cycle," *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 7:1, 1975.
 Paul Mattick, *Marx and Keynes* (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1969).
 Joseph Steindl, *Maturity and Stagnation in Advanced Capitalism* (MR Press,

(6) Alternative contemporary accounts of Capitalist Dynamics: a sketch of a Theory of Capitalist trajectory

Even if we give up the grand ambition of constructing a full-blown theory of history, there remain elements of historical materialism that can serve as the basis for developing a theory – or at least a framework for thinking about – of the trajectory of capitalist development. The centerpiece of this framework is the idea of sequences of social change emerging out of contradictions in the reproduction of capitalist relations. The basic idea is this: capitalist class relations generate contradictory conditions for their own reproduction. This makes a stable, static reproduction of capitalism impossible. Institutional solutions to the problems of reproducing capitalism, therefore, have a systematic tendency – not a contingent one, but a systematic tendency – to become less effective over time. This generates a pattern of development in which periods of stability are followed by crises of various sorts which provoke episodes of institutional renovation. Given that this occurs in the context of on-going capitalist accumulation and development of the forces of production, there is a certain kind of directionality to these successive institutional solutions and reconstructions, and thus they can be described as constituting a “trajectory” of change rather than simply random variations over time.

In this session we will explore this way of thinking about large-scale social change within capitalism. There are many debates over these issues and a variety of different substantive accounts of the dynamic trajectory of capitalist development. Because of time constraints, we will only examine in detail one very interesting approach, that of Giovanni Arrighi in his interesting and challenging book, *The Long Twentieth Century*. The objective here will be less to establish a definitive theory of this trajectory than to examine the underlying reasoning that would go into the development of this kind of theory.

CORE READINGS:

- Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century* (revised edition, Verso 2010), pp.1-27, 219-246, 336-386.
 Robert Brenner, “The Economics of Global Turbulence,” *New Left Review*, May/June 1998, pp. 24-38

(7) Internationalization of Capital and Problems of Stagnation

The most important structural development in the world economy in the past twenty years has been its qualitatively increased integration. No country is any longer immune from international competitive pressures, and none is independent of export markets; most capital controls have been abolished, and financial markets are much more integrated than they once were; and “natural” comparative advantage is less and less relevant to locational and production decisions by the steadily increasing ranks of multinational firms. This process of increased structural integration has coincided with a general deterioration in economic performance among the advanced capitalist powers, whose growth since the early 1970s has been only about half their previous postwar levels, and has coincided as well with a pronounced erosion in the comparative performance of the U.S. economy, the centerpiece of the postwar capitalist system. In this session we explore this “coincidence,” examining the ways in which -- given the decline in U.S. power, and the unwillingness of the major capitalist powers to coordinate their macroeconomic policies -- integration contributes to stagnation. We give particular attention to the problems of international monetary instability, including the “deflationary bias” produced by the actions of international capital markets, the general difficulties of running a world economy off the currency of a declining economic power, and the collective action problems that plague efforts at international monetary reform.

CORE

- Michael Stewart, *The Age of Interdependence* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984), especially 1-100, 151-70

SUGGESTED:

- Gerald Epstein, "The Triple Debt Crisis," *World Policy Journal*, vol. 2, no. 4 (Fall 1985), pp. 625-657.
- Harley Shaiken, Stephen Herzenberg and Sarah Kuhn, "The Work Process under Flexible Production", *Industrial Relations*, vol.25:2 (Spring, 1986), pp.167-183)
- Fred Block, *The Origins of International Monetary Disorder* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).
- Michael Bruno and Jeffrey Sachs, *The Politics of Worldwide Stagflation* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984).
- F.Frobel, J. Heinrichs and O. Kreye, *The New International Division of Labor* (Cambridge, 1980)
- Joseph Grunwald and Kenneth Flamm, *The Global Factory: Foreign Assembly in International Trade* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1985).
- Michael Piore and Charles Sabel, *The Second Industrial Divide: Possibilities for Prosperity* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).
- W. Arthur Lewis, *The Evolution of the International Economic Order* (Princeton: Princeton U Press, 1978).
- Harry Magdoff and Paul Sweezy, *Stagnation and the Financial Explosion* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987).

(8) The Distinctive Contradictions of Late Capitalism

Periods of "structural crisis" are periods in which solutions to the crisis require basic structural reorganizations in the capitalist system. The normal mechanisms of crisis management are themselves in crisis -- what Claus Offe refers to as the "crisis of crisis management." The question then becomes: what are the likely trajectories of structural reorganization being posed within the present crisis and what kinds of struggles are likely to influence the paths of those reorganizations.

READINGS:

- G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: a Defense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), chapter XI. "Use-Value, Exchange Value and Contemporary Capitalism," pp. 297-325.
- Erik Olin Wright, "Transformations.....", *op.cit.* pp.175-180.
- Alvin Gouldner, "Marxism as a Theory of Indefinite Growth", in *The Two Marxisms* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976).
- T. Weisskopf, "The Current Economic Crisis in Historical Perspective", *Socialist Review* #57, 1981, pp.9-54.
- Ernest Mandel, *Late Capitalism* (London: NLB, 1975), pp.523-589
- Lester C. Thurow, *The Zero-Sum Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1980).

(9) Explaining Technical Change

At the core of Marx's account of capital accumulation and crisis is a specific theory of technical change, namely that as a result of capitalist competition and class struggle, capitalists innovate to (a) increase productivity by (b) substituting machines for labor. Technical change is thus, in Marx's view, both *systematic* and *biased* (towards labor saving innovations). Recent discussions have challenged the second of these postulates, and furthermore have raised some issues with the mechanisms involved in technical change and technical diffusion. These readings explore these issues.

READINGS:

- Jon Elster, *Explaining Technical Change* (Cambridge University Press, 1983)
- Larry Hirschhorn, *Beyond Mechanization* (MIT Press, 1984)
- Arthur Stinchcombe, *Economic Sociology* (Academic Press, 1983), chapter 3, "Technology and Manipulation of the Environment"
- G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History*, *op.cit.*, chapter II, "The Constitution of the Productive Forces"

(10) Imperialism I: Why Imperialism? Classical Views and Contemporary Reformulations.

Contemporary Marxist views of Imperialism have been substantially shaped by the debates in the early part of the 20th century. Particularly important in those discussions were the works of Lenin and Luxemburg. While in many ways the current discussion has gone beyond these early studies, nevertheless they remain a crucial point of

departure for the definition of imperialism and the analysis of its causes and consequences.

READINGS:

- V.I.Lenin, *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism*
 Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital* (Monthly Review Press, 1964)
 Tom Kemp, *Theories of Imperialism* (London: Dobson, 1967), especially pp.1-8, 45-85
 Giovanni Arrighi, *The Geometry of Imperialism* (London: NLB, 1978), especially pp.9-34
 Albert Szymanski, *The Logic of Imperialism* (New York: Praeger, 1981)
 Albert Szymanski, "Capital Accumulation on a World Scale and the Necessity of Imperialism," *The Insurgent Sociologist*, special issue on Imperialism and the State, VII:2, 1974
 Harry Magdoff, "How to Make a Molehill out of a Mountain" (a reply to Szymanski), *Insurgent Sociologist*, VII:2, 1974, pp.106-112

(11) Imperialism II: Dependency Theory.

In the 1960s and 1970s one of the most important perspectives on the problem of the impact of imperialism on the third world came to be known as "dependency theory". The thrust of dependency theory was to see capitalism as an integrated world system in which the development of the industrialized capitalist "CORE" countries was at the expense of the underdeveloped "peripheral" third world countries. Indeed, in the strongest versions of dependency theory, imperialism leads to an intensified underdevelopment in the periphery, a "development of underdevelopment" as it was sometimes called. This process, it is argued in dependency theory, is essentially animated by dynamics of the core and orchestrated by the monopoly bourgeoisie of the imperialist countries.

READINGS:

- Ronald H. Chilcote, "Dependency: A critical Synthesis of the Literature," *Latin American Perspectives*, 1:1, 1974, pp.4-29
 Andre Gunder Frank, "Dependence is Dead, Long Live Dependence and the Class Struggle: an answer to critics," *Latin American Perspectives*, 1:1, 1974, pp.87-106
 Frederico H. Cardoso, "Dependency and Development in Latin America," *New Left Review* #74, 1972
 Samir Amim, *Accumulation on a World Scale* (Monthly Review Press, 1974).
 Robert Brenner, "The Origins of Capitalist Development: a critique of neo-Smithian Marxism," *New Left Review* #104, 1977
 Frank Bonilla and Robert Girling (eds), *Structures of Dependency* (Stanford, 1973)

(12) Imperialism III: The Impact of Imperialism -- progressive or regressive?

At least since the time of Lenin it has been a basic doctrine of Marxism that imperialism is a regressive force in the world, that it is on the one hand a central cause of war among capitalist societies in the developed world, and, on the other, that it has led to a deterioration of social and economic conditions in the third world and is the main cause of the persistent poverty and underdevelopment of those countries. This view is quite different from Marx's. Marx generally had a positive historical view of imperialism, seeing it as a progressive force in that it destroyed precapitalist fetters on the forces of production. Just as Marx and Engels saw capitalism itself as a revolutionary and progressive force in the world in spite of the human suffering associated with it, so they saw the global expansion of capitalism -- imperialism -- as largely progressive. This pre-Leninist, Marxist position, is defended in an important and controversial book by Bill Warren.

READINGS:

- Bill Warren, *Imperialism: pioneer of capitalism* (London: NLB/Verso, 1980)
 Arghiri Emmanuel, "Myths of Development versus Myths of Underdevelopment," *New Left Review* #85, 1974, pp.61-82
 Philip McMichael, James Petras and Robert Rhodes, "Imperialism and the Contradictions of Development," *New Left Review* #85, 1974, pp. 83-102

Supplementary Topics on MARXISM AND FEMINISM

There have been few more profound challenges to traditional Marxist theory than that posed by feminism. Marxists and Marxism have paid relatively little attention to understanding the specificity of the oppression of women, and most discussions have tended in one way or another to collapse the problem of women's oppression into the problem of class and exploitation. The response by many feminists has been to fracture the link between class and sex almost completely, seeing the relations of sexual domination (Patriarchy) as a completely autonomous structure. In the most extreme "radical" feminist versions, class relations virtually disappear entirely, being subordinated to the relations of patriarchy which assume the role of the "fundamental" structure of social domination.

The project of Marxist Feminists is, at least in part, both to grasp the specificity and autonomy of the oppression of women and to understand the systematic character of the articulation of patriarchal relations to class relations. This project is not complete, and various different strands of theorizing are currently being debated as possible strategies for producing a genuinely Marxist Feminist theory. We will explore some of the precursors of these debates and some of the important contemporary discussions in this section.

(1) The Classical Marxist Interpretation: Engels on Women

The classical position within Marxism has been that the oppression of women is one of the earliest consequences of the emergence of a social surplus and private property, and that it is institutionalized primarily through the sexual division of labor (the separation of home and work). One of the consequences of this was the conviction that the full participation of women in the wage labor force would erode any basis for their continued subordination to men.

CORE READINGS:

- F.Engels, "The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State", especially the sections on the family.
Karen Sacks, "Engels Revisited: Women, the Organization of Production and Private Property" in *Women, Culture, and Society*, ed.by Rosaldo and Lamphere (Stanford University Press, 1974).
Alison M. Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (Rowman & Allenheld, 1983), pp. 51-82

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- M.Godelier, "The Origins of Male Domination", *New Left Review* #127, May-June, 1981
Lise Vogel, *Marxism and the Oppression of Women* (Rutgers University Press, 1983)

(2) Contemporary Marxist Approaches to the Oppression of Women

In this section we will examine two different attempts to go beyond the traditional Marxist accounts of the oppression of women. The first attempts to derive an explanation of the oppression of women from the labor theory of value. Of particular importance in this approach was the attempt to link an analysis of housework to the accumulation of capital by seeing unpaid labor in the home as functional for the accumulation process. The second approach shifts the analysis from production to ideology, and tries to understand the oppression of women in terms of the ideological requirements for the reproduction of class relations. Both of these approaches make important contributions to understanding sexism, but both of them largely fail in inadequately theorizing the contradictory character of the link between class and patriarchy. In different ways both of these approaches adopt some kind of functionalist-totality in their conceptualization of male domination.

CORE READINGS:

- Maxine Molyneux, "Beyond the Domestic Labour Debate" *NLR* #116

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Michele Barret, *Women's Oppression Today: problems in Marxist feminist analysis* (NLB: Verso, 1980) pp.8-41, 83-113, 187-226, 248-259
- Eli Zaretsky, *Capitalism, The Family and Personal Life* (Harper and Row, 1975)
- Walley Secombe, "The Housewife and Her Labour under Capitalism" NLR #83, 1974
- Jean Gardiner "Women's Domestic Labor" NLR #89, 1975
- Veronica Beechey, "Women and Production: a critical analysis of some sociological theories of women's work" in Kuhn and Wolpe, *Feminism and Materialism* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978)
- Paul Smith, "Domestic Labor and Marx's Theory of Value" in Kuhn and Wolpe, op cit.
- Margaret Coulson, et. al., "The Housewife and her Labor Under Capitalism -- a critique" NLR #89, 1975
- Roisin McDonough and Rachael Harrison, "Patriarchy and the relations of production" in Kuhn and Wolpe, op. cit.
- M. McIntosh, "Reproduction and Patriarchy" *Capital & Class* #2, 1977.
- Bridget O'Laughlin, "Production and Reproduction: Meillassoux's Femmes, Greniers et Capitaux" *Critique of Anthropology* vol. 2, 1977

(3) The "Dual Systems" Approach

The second principal form of anti-class reductionist socialist feminist theory has come to be known as the "dual systems" approach (although the socialist feminist work that emphasizes psychoanalytic mechanisms could also be given this name). Rather than focus on deep psycho-sexual dynamics, the emphasis is on the relationship of men and women to central aspects of production and reproduction. The argument is that through male control of certain pivotal resources -- in particular, the labor power of women -- patriarchy is built up as a parallel system to capitalism. The task of analysis, then, is to understand the mechanisms which reproduce this material basis and which articulate the two systems of domination.

This "dual systems" approach has probably been most cogently elaborated in the work of Heidi Hartman. In this session we will examine in some detail her arguments and a number of the core criticisms that have been raised against it.

CORE READINGS:

- Heidi Hartman, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: towards a more progressive union", in *Women and Revolution*, ed by L Sargent (Boston: South End, 1981), pp. 1-42
- Alison M. Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (Rowman & Allenheld, 1983), pp. 83-167

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Critiques of Hartman's position (all in *Women and Revolution*):
- Iris Young, "Beyond the Unhappy Marriage: a critique of the Dual Systems Theory", pp.43-70
- Sandra Harding, "What is the Real Material Base of Patriarchy and Capital?" pp. 135-164
- Ann Ferguson and Nancy Folbre, "The Unhappy Marriage of Patriarchy and Capitalism," pp. 313-338
- Deborah Fahy Bryceson and Ulla Vuorela, "Outside the Domestic Labor Debate: towards a theory of modes of human reproduction:", *Review of Radical Political Economics*. vol. 16 (2/3), 1984, pp.137-166
- Zillah Eisenstein, "Developing a theory of Capitalist Patriarchy and Socialist Feminism," in Zillah Eisenstein (ed), *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism* (New York: MR Press, 1979), pp.5-40
- Arthur Britaan and Mary Maynard, *Sexism, Racism and Oppression* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984)
- Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel, *Marxism and Socialist Theory* (Boston: South End Press, 1981), chapter 5, "Kinship and History", pp.197-230

(4). Towards a Dialectical Theory of class and gender: Class and Sex as Asymmetrically Interdependent

In this session we will discuss a general strategy for resolving the theoretical limitations of the perspectives we have already examined. Specifically, we will discuss a modified version of the “dual systems” approach, one which recognizes the irreducibility of patriarchy to class and which insists that there are mechanisms which reproduce male domination quite apart from any functional relationship to the requirements of class domination but which nevertheless also argues that this autonomy or independence does not imply that class and patriarchy are symmetrically related to each other, particularly in terms of the dynamic development of social structures. Class relations, it can be argued more fundamentally define the limits of possibility for the transformation of sex-gender relations than do sex-gender relations limit the possibilities for the transformation of class relations.

This asymmetrical relation can perhaps best be examined in the context of trying to explaining the historical trajectory of transformations in the relationship between class and gender. At the **CORE** of the problem of the articulation of capitalism and patriarchy is the problem of explaining changes in the form of male domination. We will look at this problem in terms of a specific debate over the transformations of gender relations during the industrial revolution centered on a paper by Johanna Brenner and Maria Ramas on the interactions between material conditions and biological constraints in the historical construction of “capitalist patriarchy.”

Johanna Brenner and Maria Ramas have tried to develop a perspective which recognizes the importance of biological factors in explaining gender relations and their development while still rejecting biological reductionism. Essentially what they argue is that biological facts of childbearing and early childhood nurturance have real effects on gender relations contingent upon the social, economic and technical environment in which those biological factors operate.

This conceptual issue becomes particularly salient in debates around the historical development of gender relations in the 19th century. In particular, Brenner and Ramas argue that the family wage should be viewed as a rational, adaptive demand of both male and female workers, given the constraints of biological reproduction under the conditions of capitalist oppression and exploitation in early industrial capitalism. While they also argue that the family wage, once in place, tends to reinforce and perpetuate female dependency and male domination, it should not be primarily viewed as a strategy by men to ensure their domination. In this perspective, both class and gender have “autonomous” effects, but the dynamics of class relations and the transformations of material conditions play a larger role in explaining the transformations of *constraints* on social practices.

CORE READING:

Johanna Brenner and Maria Ramas, “Rethinking Women’s Oppression,” *NLR* #144, 1984, pp. 33-71

SUGGESTED READINGS

Jane Lewis, “The Debate on Sex and Class,” *NLR* #150, 1985

Heidi Hartman “Capitalism, Patriarchy and Job Segregation by Sex,” in Zillah Eisenstein (ed). *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism* (New York: MR Press, 1979), pp.206-247

Michele Barrett, “Rethinking Women’s Oppression: a Reply to Brenner and Ramas”, *New Left Review* #146, July-August, 1984

Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, “Beyond Sexless Class and Classless Sex: Towards Feminist Marxism,” *Studies in Political Economy* #10 (Winter, 1983)

Jane Humphries, “The Working Class Family, Women’s Liberation and Class Struggle: the case of 19th Century British History,” *Review of Radical Political Economics* 9:1

Jane Humphries, “Class Struggle and the persistence of the working class family”, *Cambridge J of Econ*, 1:3, 1977, pp.241-258

Gita Sen, “The Sexual Division of Labor and the Working Class Family: towards a conceptual Synthesis of Class Relations and the Subordination of Women”, *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 12:2, 1980, pp.76-86

SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS METHODOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

When social scientists talk about “methodology” or “methods” they usually refer to the procedures by which data are gathered and analyzed. Methodology in this sense is almost equivalent to technique. In Marxist discussions, the term “methodology” is used in a much broader sense to refer to the entire process by which knowledge of the social world is produced. The technical procedures of gathering and analyzing data constitute only a small part of this process and in many ways the least complex part.

The following supplementary readings on methodology focus on the following central issues:

- (1). What are concepts?
- (2). How are concepts formed and transformed?
- (3). How should social causation or determination be understood? Does Marxist social science have a distinctive understanding of determination?

One final preliminary note: Marxists often make exaggerated claims about both the virtues and distinctiveness of Marxist methodological positions. Frequently, such methodological pronouncements become substitutes for substantive debate: it is sometimes assumed that if you can demonstrate methodological sins of an opponent then the substantive positions can be dismissed out of hand. My general stance towards methodological problems will be much more modest than this: On the one hand, it is far from clear that Marxist methodological principles are unique to Marxism and counter to all methodological principles of “bourgeois” social science; on the other hand, methodological principles are only one element in critique and are never a substitute for substantive theoretical debate.

(1) Concept Formation

Concepts constitute the basic tools for constructing theories about the world, for producing knowledge and explanations. But where do we get our concepts? And once we have them, how do they change in response to our research and theoretical elaborations. In this section we will contrast three different strategies of concept formation:

- a. *empiricist concept formation*: concepts are the result of sifting the complexities of direct experience and distinguishing the general from the contingent. Concepts are *simplifications* of reality. The contrast within concepts is thus between the abstract and the real: the more abstract a concept is, the greater a simplification it represents and the further from “reality” it is seen to be.
- b. *ideal-type concept formation*: concepts are the result of an a priori mental process by the theorist in which the theorist produces a concept on the basis of some general principles or conventions, systematically applied to a particular problem. The Weberian concept of rational bureaucracy is the classic example, where a principle of rationality is applied to the problem of organization and a set of ideal-types are seen as purely heuristic devices, whose utility is defined by what they enable the theorist to see in real phenomena by virtue of the *differences* between the ideal-type and the real. They are strictly conceptual measuring devices, and thus are to be assessed only in terms of their usefulness, not their “truth”.
- c. *realist abstraction concept formation*: concepts are based simultaneously on their capacity to map real relations and their coherence within a theoretical structure. They are thus neither constructed a priori nor constructed through empirical simplifications. The function of concepts is to *penetrate* reality not to *simplify* reality, and to do this concepts must in general not have a one-to-one correspondence to directly observable phenomena. Concepts *attempt* to map real relations, to appropriate the real determinations of social life (determinations which exist objectively independently of the observer) in thought, and this implies that the formation of a concept presupposes the theory within which it will function as part of an explanation. Unlike in both empiricist and ideal-type views of concepts, they are not prior to theory, but presuppose theory. Theory advances in this process because the attempt at transforming concepts in the face of research about the world can precipitate a transformation of the theory within which they function.

BACKGROUND:

Max Weber, *Methodology of the Social Sciences*, Chapter II, "Objectivity in Social Science and Public Policy"

CORE READINGS:

Erik Olin Wright, *Classes*, chapter 2, "The Biography of a Concept: Contradictory Class Locations", especially the subsection on "The Logic of Concept Formation", pp.20-24; chapter 5, "Empirically Adjudicating Contending Class Definitions," and Appendix I, "Practical Strategies for Transforming Concepts"

Erik Olin Wright, "Reflections on *Classes*", pp.49-77 in *The Debate on Classes*

Ray Pawson, *A Measure for Measures: a manifesto for empirical sociology* (New York: Routledge, 1989), especially chapter 2, "Against variable analysis"; Chapter 3, "Against scaling"; and chapter 6, "From variables to mechanisms (and back again)".

(2) Varieties of Explanation: functional, causal, intentional

There are different strategies of explanation in social science, and it is important to be able to recognize their differences and characteristic strengths and weaknesses. Perhaps most important is the distinction between intentional and functional explanations. The former explain human behavior by reference to the intended consequences of actions, the latter by reference to actual consequences, or, put otherwise, by arguing from consequence to cause. Here this distinction is explored in the context of a debate over the use, and usefulness, of different explanatory strategies in Marx.

BACKGROUND READINGS:

Arthur Stinchcombe, "Functional Causal Imagery," in *Constructing Social Theories*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), pp.80-101.

CORE READINGS:

Jon Elster, "Marxism, Functionalism and Game Theory: the case for methodological individualism", *Theory and Society*, 11:4, July 1982, pp. 453-482.

G.A. Cohen, "Reply to Elster on 'Marxism, Functionalism and Game Theory'", *Theory & Society*, 11:4, pp.483-496.

Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, 1."Explanation and Dialectics", pp.3-36

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Philippe van Parijs, "Functionalist Marxism Rehabilitated: a comment on Elster", *Theory and Society*, 11:4, pp.497-512

Johannes Berger and Claus Offe, "Functionalism vs. Rational Choice?: some questions concerning the rationality of choosing one or the other," *Theory & Society*, 11:4, pp.521-526

Jon Elster, "Cohen on Marx's Theory of History," *Political Studies*, XXVIII:1,(March, 1980), pp.121-128.

G.A. Cohen, "Functional Explanation: a reply to Elster," *Political Studies*, XXVIII:1 (March 1980), pp. 129-135.

G.A. Cohen, *KMTH*, chapter IX. "Functional Explanations: in general"

Jon Elster, *Ulysses and the Sirens*, (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979), chapter 1. "Perfect Rationality", pp.1-35.

Philippe Van Parijs, "Marxism's Central Puzzle" in Terrance Ball and James Farr (eds) *After Marx* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 88-104

James Noble, "Marxian Functionalism", in Ball and Farr, *ibid.*, pp. 105-120

Richard W. Miller, "Producing Change: work, technology and power in Marx's Theory of History," in Ball and Farr, *ibid.*, pp. 59-87

Richard W. Miller, *Analyzing Marx: morality, power and history* (Princeton, 1984), pp.171-270

(3) Causal Primacy

A great deal of the methodological debate surrounding Marxism has focussed on the question of the extent to which class or the economy or “material conditions” can be considered the “most important” cause of various phenomena. Feminists in particular have attacked “class primacy”, seeing it as a posture that has the effect of marginalizing the salience of gender as a structure of social relations and a site of oppression. Typically in such discussions, however, it is quite unclear precisely what “most important” means or how one would really assess the relative importance of one cause or another in a multicausal process. The following reading explores this issue in some detail.

Erik Olin Wright, Andrew Levine, and Elliott Sober, *Reconstructing Marxism*, ch7, “Causal Asymmetries”

(4) Methodological Individualism and Holism

Traditionally Marxists have always derided the “individualism” of “bourgeois” social science. One of the methodological hallmarks of Marxist theory, it was argued, was its view that society was a “totality” which could not be understood as simply a sum of the attributes of the individuals within it. Recently a number of scholars in the Marxist tradition have argued in favor of methodological individualism and have attacked holism as an unacceptable form of scientific practice. The readings below try to clarify the distinction between holism and individualism and assess the merits of these different methodological postures.

CORE READING

Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 3-8

Andrew Levine, Elliott Sober and Erik Olin Wright, “Marxism and Methodological Individualism,” chapter 6 in *Reconstructing Marxism*

Joshua Cohen, “Situational Individualism” (unpublished manuscript, 1987)

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Alan Carling, “Rational Choice Marxism,” *New Left Review*, #160, 1986

John Roemer (ed), *Analytical Marxism* (Cambridge University Press, 1986)

Jon Elster (ed), *Rational Choice* (NYU Press 1986)

(5) Determination and Contradiction

Many Marxists argue that the distinctiveness of a Marxist methodology lies in its conception of determination. Some have characterized this as “dialectical” determination; others have said that it is determination based on a logic of “organic totality” and “internal relations”; and others have seen the distinctiveness of Marxist claims about determination lying in the emphasis on contradiction and structured totality.

In my work on determination, I try to extend an account of determination that is rooted in structuralist conceptions, but which, hopefully, avoids some of the problems of Althusserian structuralism. In particular I try to advance an understanding of determination which retains the structuralist emphasis on structured totality and contradiction without obliterating the role of subjectively based practice and agency in historical explanations.

Determination

At the core of the argument is the difference between conceptions of structural causation and the conventional “linear” causation of most sociology. The critical concept in this discussion is “limitation”. Instead of seeing causes and effects as temporally defined chains of events, limitation sees determination as involving the ways in which the limits of possible variation of one structure or process are established by another structure. Much of the analysis of the forms of the capitalist state discussed last semester centers on such limitation processes, the argument being that by virtue of their form (their internal structure) the apparatuses of the capitalist state “filter out” certain kinds of state policies, delimit the range of possible policies. It is important to note that structural limitation is a distinct kind of causation from functional causation since it may or may not be the case that what is possible corresponds to what is

functional. As we shall see, a central form of contradiction in capitalism centers on the forms of disjunction between structural determinations and functional requirements.

Contradiction

To make a claim about a contradiction existing in a society is to make an argument about the nature of determinations, namely that those determinations contain within themselves a set of intrinsically opposing forces which make the simple reproduction of the social order problematic. Two forms of contradiction are especially salient in Marxist theory: contradictions between and within *practices*, principally (but not exclusively) class struggle; and contradictions between and within *structures*, especially (but again, not exclusively) between the forces and relations of production. It is the combination of these two kinds of contradictions which provides the causal underpinnings of the theory of social change in historical materialism.

CORE READINGS:

Claus Offe, "Structural Problem of the Capitalist State"

Erik Wright, "Methodological Introduction" to *Class, Crisis and the State*

Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, section 1.5, "Dialectics" pp.37-48

Alvin Gouldner, *The Two Marxisms* (Seabury Press, 1980), chapter 4 "Social Structure and the Voluntarism of Suffering", 89-108

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Maurice Godelier, "Structure and Contradiction in Capital", in Blackburn, *Ideology in the Social Sciences*,

Erik Wright, "Alternative Perspectives on Income Determination", chapter 3 in *Class Structure and Income Determination* (New York: Academic Press, 1979)

Louis Althusser, "Contradiction and Overdetermination" in *For Marx*

Jon Elster, "Contradictions of Society", pp. 96-174 in *Logic and Society* (John Wiley & Sons, 1978), especially pp. 134-163

(6) Determination: The problem of Agency and Transformative determinations

The problem of "agency" has underscored many of the debates within Marxism. Much of the debate is misposed as a debate between voluntarism and determinism. The real issue centers on the role of subjectivity in historical transformation, and this is a substantive debate over the question of the locus of the core structural dynamics of social change -- in social relations or in the psychic structures (cognitive, affective, character structure, etc) of actors within those relations. In these terms, Bowles and Gintis's discussion of a theory of action as a dual problem of "learning" and "choosing" is particularly helpful.

CORE READINGS:

Perry Anderson, "Agency", c. 2 in *Arguments within English Marxism* (Verso, 1980), pp. 16-58

Sam Bowles and Herb Gintis, *Democracy and Capitalism*, (Basic Books, 1986), Chapter 5. "Action: learning and Choosing", pp.121-151

Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, *On Democracy*, pp.169-183

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Jon Elster, *Logic and Society* (Wiley, 1978), appendices to Chapter 5, pp. 150-163.

Jon Elster, "Introduction" to *Ulysses and the Sirens* (Cambridge University Press, 1979)

Louis Althusser, "Remark on the Category: 'Process without a Subject or Goal(s)'" in *Essays in Self-Criticism*, (NLB, 1976), pp. 94-99

Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979), pp. 3-33

Perry Anderson, *In the Tracks of Historical Materialism* (NLB, 1983) chapter 3, "Structure and History"

(7) Different Marxist Understandings of What Constitutes “Method”

While Marxists are often fond of claiming that what distinguishes Marxism from conventional social science is above all “Method”, there is little agreement among Marxists as to what precisely defines Marxist method as Marxist. Indeed, in many respects, the methodological distance between certain types of “Hegelian Marxism” and what we have called “Analytical Marxism” are undoubtedly greater than between the latter and certain currents in mainstream social science.

The readings below examine four general stances towards Marxist method: the so-called humanist-Marxist or hegelian-Marxist position, as exemplified in the work of George Lukacs; the “structuralist-Marxist” approach represented in the work of Althusser; the stance of a tradition that has come to be known as “post-Althusserian” British Marxism, represented especially by the work of Barry Hindess and Paul Hirst; and the emerging tradition of “Analytical Marxism” exemplified by the work of Jon Elster, John Roemer and others.

BACKGROUND READING:

Miriam Glucksman, *Structuralist Analysis in Contemporary Social Thought* (Rutledge & Kegan Paul), chapter 1 “The approach to structural and structuralist theory”

CORE READINGS:

George Lukacs, “What is Orthodox Marxism?” in *History and Class Consciousness*

Louis Althusser, “On the Materialist Dialectic”, in *For Marx* (NLB, 1969)

Louis Althusser, “From Capital to Marx’s Philosophy” in *Reading Capital* (NLB, 1970) by Etienne Balibar and Louis Althusser, sec. 18 & 19, pp. 60-69

Barry Hindess and Paul Hirst, *Precapitalist Modes of Production* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), Introduction and Conclusion. pp. 1-20, 308-323

Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, chapter 1, “Explanation and Dialectics”, pp.3-48

SUGGESTED:

George Lukacs, “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat”, in *History and Class Consciousness*

Melvin Rader, “Organic Structure” and “Organic Development” in *Marx’s Interpretation of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979)

Bertell Ollman, *Alienation* (Cambridge University Press, 1976)

Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel, *UnOrthodox Marxism*, op. cit. chapter 3., “A Social Theory of Parxis”

Ben Fine and Laurence Harris, *ReReading Capital* (Columbia University Press, 1979), c. 1 “Method and the Structure of Capital”, pp. 3-20

Anthony Cutler, Barry Hindess, Paul Hirst and Athar Hussain, *Marx’s Capital and Capitalism Today*, vol. I (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), chapter 9, “Mode of Production, Social Formation, Classes”

John Mepham and D-H. Ruben (eds) *Issues in Marxist Philosophy* Vol. One, *Dialectics and Method* (Humanities Press, 1979)

(8) The Problem of “Economic Determination in the Last Instance”: in what sense is Marxism “materialist”?

The problem of economic determinism (or, in some instances: technological determinism or productivism or similar expressions) has been at the very heart of debates within Marxism and over Marxism. Very few Marxists explicitly defend economic reductionism today, the thesis that all social phenomena can be directly reduced to economic processes. But the problem still remains central as to precisely how economic or technological determination is to be understood in Marxism. One answer which is increasingly popular is to argue that production really has no privileged status at all. Cultural, ideological and political determinants are just as real and potentially just as important as economic ones. In rejecting economic determinism these arguments lead towards a kind of causal

pluralism, or at least a causal agnosticism, in which the determinants of a given phenomenon can only be determined empirically and contingently, with no general principles of determination applying across contexts. It may be possible to develop an account of “determination in the last instance” of material relations (economic and technological) which simultaneously avoids any kind of reductionism and avoids the slide into causal pluralism. The strategy rests on shifting the focus of attention from the structural determination of given relations, forms, processes as they exist, to the conditions necessary for the transformations of those relations, forms and processes. Economic relations, particularly class relations, it can be argued, define the central limits to the *transformation* of society as a whole even if within those limits there is no possible reduction of other relations to the economic. These readings examine several different arguments for economic determination and the proposal of the economic/class being dynamically determinant of limits.

CORE READINGS:

Maurice Godelier, “Infrastructures, Societies and History,” *New Left Review*, #110, 1978
 G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History*, chapters VI, VIII
 G.A. Cohen, “Restricted and Inclusive Historical Materialism”
 Louis Althusser, “On the Materialist Dialectic”

SUGGESTED READINGS:

A. Cutler, B. Hindess, P. Hirst and A. Hussain, *Marx's Capital and Capitalism Today*, vol I (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), chapters 4,5,8

(9). Theory and Practice

“Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary practice” -- Lenin

“Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways. The point is to change it” -- Marx

These two aphorisms tap, in different ways, the problem of the relationship of theory and practice (or, perhaps more precisely, the relationship of theoretical practice to political practice). Most Marxist discussions of the relationship between theory and practice, however, fail to go very far beyond the broad claim that theory must be linked to practice and practice informed by theory. These are vital claims, but in the end they are not terribly helpful unless we can grasp the precise interconnections between theory and practice. In this final section of the course we will try to shed some light on these problems. To do this it is necessary to distinguish three aspects of the “dialectic” between theory and practice:

- a. the relationship of the theorist to practice;
- b. the relationship of practice to theory;
- c. the relationship of theory as such to practice.

READINGS:

Erik Wright, “Intellectuals and the Working Class”, *The Insurgent Sociologist*, summer 1978
 Erik Olin Wright, “Falling into Marxism, Choosing to stay”, *Interrogating Inequality*, chapter 1.
 J. Habermas, “Some Difficulties in the Attempt to Link Theory and Praxis”, *Theory and Practice* (Beacon Press, 1973), pp. 1-19
 L. Althusser, “Philosophy as a Revolutionary Weapon”, in *Lenin and Philosophy* (MR Press, 1971)

The following information is required to be included in Syllabi by the University of Wisconsin

Accommodations. Please send the instructor an email by the end of the second week of the course if you are eligible for special arrangements or accommodations for testing, assignments, or other aspects of the course. This may be the case if English is your second language or you experience a physical or psychological condition that makes it difficult for you to complete assignments and/or exams without some modification of those tasks. Accommodations are provided for students who qualify for disability services through the McBurney Center. Their website has detailed instructions about how to qualify: <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>. Provide a copy of your accommodations request (VISA) to the instructor by the end of the second week of class. We try to reserve rooms and proctors by the third week in class, so we must know of all accommodations by then.

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- uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
- assists other students in any of these acts.

For a complete description of behaviors that violate the University's standards as well the disciplinary penalties and procedures, please see the Dean of Students website. If you have questions about the rules for any of the assignments or exams, please ask your instructor or one of the TAs.

Departmental notice of grievance and appeal rights. The Department of Sociology regularly conducts student evaluations of all professors and teaching assistants near the end of the semester. Students who have more immediate concerns about this course should report them to the instructor or to the chair, 8128 Social Science.

Department learning objectives. Beyond the specific substantive and methodological content I will cover in this course, I have designed this course to achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities by the Department of Sociology:

1. Students will demonstrate a broad understanding of major theories, methodologies, and research findings in the sociological literature.
2. Students will evaluate social science literature and employ most appropriate methods and practices in their own research.
3. Students will develop analytical thinking skills that enable them to evaluate information pertinent to their research question.
4. Students will communicate in a clear, organized engaging manner, using language, methods, and critical tools appropriate to the social sciences.