



ECON 376: Marxist Economic Thought

Course Information:

Instructor: *Edward R. Teather-Posadas*

Email: edward.teather-posadas@colostate.edu

Office: Remote-Only

Office Hours: TBD

Meeting Times: TR 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

Location: Chem A103

Course Description:

Marxist Economic Thought is a seminar-style course that introduces the basic concepts and methods of Marxist economics, and broader Marxist thought. It seeks to explore how Marxist economic thought can provide both a critique of capitalism and of “orthodox” economics, both in its original form and through its developments over the last 150+ years. Several current debates in Marxist thought will be explored, with special attention being given to the role of ideology and the concept of crisis.

Course Objectives:

After completing this course, a successful student should:

- Be familiar Marx’s basic economic method and be able to distinguish this from other economic methods
- Be able to evaluate the relevance of this approach to understanding capitalist economies today
- Understand the broad features of how capitalism emerged and has evolved
- Be able to use Marxian analysis to understand and explain contemporary economic problems

Course Materials:

There are no required course materials for this class, all readings will be made available via Canvas.

Prerequisites:

This course requires AREC 202 – Agricultural or Resource Economics (OR) ECON 101 – Economics of Social Issues (OR) ECON 202 – Principles of Microeconomics.

Coursework and Grading Schedule:

There are 1000 pts possible in this class, distributed in the following manner:

| <i>Assignment:</i> | <i>Points/Frequency:</i> | <i>Total Points:</i> |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Exams</i> | Three @ 250 pts | 750 |
| <i>Final Project</i> | 150 | 150 |
| <i>Participation</i> | 100 | 100 |
| | <i>Class Total:</i> | 1000 |

Exams: Three exams will be given throughout the semester, one at the end of each section of the class (i.e. every four weeks). The exams will be take-home essay exams, with ample time given for completion.

Course Project: Details to follow later in the semester.

Participation: Participation is key in this class. Participation involves asking/answering questions, being involved in classroom discussions, and generally taking an active role in your learning. There will be two sources of participation points: being an active participant in class discussions (50 pts) and submitting the weekly reflections (50 pts). The weekly reflections will ask you to consider the readings from that week in writing. More information can be found on Canvas.

Extra Credit: Some extra credit will be offered sporadically across the semester.

Total Course Time Estimates:

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Attend Lecture | 1.5 hrs |
| Prepare for Exams | 2 hr |
| Personal Reading/Studying | 5.5 hrs |
| Total Hours per Week | 9 hrs |

Letter Grades:

Each number below represents the minimum point threshold necessary to achieve the following letter grade, *note that this class uses +/- grading.*

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| 980 pts. – 1000 pts. | A+ |
| 921 pts. – 979 pts. | A |
| 900 pts. – 920 pts. | A- |
| 880 pts. – 899 pts. | B+ |
| 820 pts. – 879 pts. | B |
| 800 pts. – 819 pts. | B- |
| 780 pts. – 799 pts. | C+ |
| 700 pts. – 779 pts. | C |
| 600 pts. – 699 pts. | D |
| 000 pts. – 599 pts. | F |

Make-ups, Missing Assignments, and Regrades:

No makeup exams or participation point activities will be allowed. The only exceptions are for exams and papers in cases of documented medical emergencies or conflicts with University sanctioned activities. Generally these need to be made up prior to the actual deadline, with rare exception. Any regrade requests must be made within one week of receiving the grade. I reserve the right to regrade the entire assignment when requests are made.

Academic Integrity:

We take academic integrity seriously. At minimum, academic integrity means that no one will use another's work as their own. The CSU writing center defines plagiarism this way:

“Plagiarism is the unauthorized or unacknowledged use of another person's academic or scholarly work. Done on purpose, it is cheating. Done accidentally, it is no less serious. Regardless of how it occurs, plagiarism is a theft of intellectual property and a violation of an ironclad rule demanding credit be given where credit is due.”

—Writing Guides: Understanding Plagiarism.

<http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/researchsources/understandingplagiarism>

Academic Dishonesty could result in expulsion from the university. This course will adhere to the CSU Academic Integrity Policies and Guiding Principles as found in the General Catalog and the Student Conduct Code. At a minimum, violations will result in a grading penalty in this course and a report to the Office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services.

Of course, academic integrity means more than just avoiding plagiarism and cheating. It also involves doing your own reading and studying. It includes class attendance, careful



consideration of all class materials, and engagement with the class and your fellow students. Academic integrity lies at the core of our common goal: to create an intellectually honest and rigorous community. Each exam and assignment you submit will require signing the CSU student honor pledge:

"I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance."

Department Statement on Copyright:

Please do not share material from this course in online, print or other media. Course material is the property of the instructor who developed the course. Materials authored by third parties and used in the course are also subject to copyright protections. Posting course materials on external sites (commercial or not) violates both copyright law and the CSU Student Conduct Code. Students who share course content without the instructor's express permission, including with online sites that post materials to sell to other students, could face disciplinary or legal action.

Classroom Conduct:

Students are required to act respectfully in the classroom at all times, any disruptive behavior that inhibits fellow-student learning will not be permitted and will constitute a one day removal from lecture/recitation; a second offense will require a formal meeting with the student and instructor. Such behavior includes holding conversations during lecture/recitation, any unauthorized cell phone, laptop, or tablet use, or other behavior which detracts from the class.

Office Hours:

Cancellation of any office hours or appointments will be notified via an announcement in class, or by email. If you wish to speak to me outside of office hours, please make an appointment by email.

Tell Someone:

*If you are concerned about safety or mental health – your own or someone else's, please call (970) 491-1350 or complete the online referral form at:
<https://supportandsafety.colostate.edu/tell-someone/>.*

Rams take care of Rams. Helping others, speaking up when something doesn't feel right or when you're worried about someone else, and reaching out are foundational values at Colorado State University. **Tell Someone** is a Colorado State University service where anyone can report concerns about a student or employee who may be struggling with issues such as mental health, stress management, and safety, as well as share concerns about threats of violence (against themselves or others). Through **Tell Someone**, you can



report anything that threatens your safety or the safety of others in the university community. **Tell Someone** is available to seek help for or report a concern about any CSU community member, including employees who work off campus. **Tell Someone** is not designed to get people in trouble; it is designed to help students and employees who may be struggling, as well as help enhance university safety. **Tell Someone** is your resource if you're worried about a friend's well-being. If a student or employee is disruptive, **Tell Someone** is the right place to turn for intervention as well as university support to help put consequences and boundaries in place. **Tell Someone** is run by the Office of Support and Safety Assessment. The office is comprised of trained specialists who can identify concerns, pathways to resolution, and university resources. **Tell Someone** online and phone reports are only reviewed during regular business hours. If you believe someone is at risk of immediate harm, call 911.

Accommodations and Tutoring Options:

All students are *highly* encouraged to take advantage of these extremely beneficial and costless resources.

- **Resources for Disabled Students:** Students with disabilities may be eligible for accommodations in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is the student's responsibility to disclose any learning disabilities. Please contact the instructor if a special accommodation is required. To request accommodations, students should contact Resources for Disabled Students at (970) 491-6385 or go to <https://disabilitycenter.colostate.edu>. Documentation of disability is required and the RDS office will assist in this process.
- **Study Group:** Attending this **FREE** program will help you improve your understanding of course material while learning effective study techniques. All study groups are drop-in, so students can come as many times as they want. For more information and study group schedule, see Canvas or visit: <http://tilt.colostate.edu/learning/tutoring/studyGroups/index.cfm>
- **Writing Center:** Help with written assignments can be found at the Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.colostate.edu>).

Course Withdrawal Policy:

Any student who wishes to withdraw from the course must submit a request directly to Division of Continuing Education. For complete information, please visit their website at <http://www.learn.colostate.edu/help/creditstudents/registration/drop-policy.dot>

Technological Requirements:

All courses will require that students have online access and a computer. Students can check out an iPad from the [library](#) or use a computer in a computer lab. Exams can also be scheduled at the CSU Testing Center (costs about \$5/30 minutes/exam cost to CSU students).

The technology requirements for this course are listed below:

- **Hardware (see [recommendations from CSU](#))**
 - A Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and a fast, reliable broadband Internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL).
 - Recommended computer monitors and laptop screen size be 13-inches or larger for optimum visibility of course material.
 - Computer speakers or headphones to listen to recorded content.
 - A [webcam](#) or other camera may also be necessary if proctoring services are used in this course.
 - Enough space on your computer for
 - install the required and recommended software and,
 - save your course assignments.

- **Software (see [recommendations from CSU](#))**
 - Web browsers
 - Firefox generally works well with CSU websites - [free download](#)
 - Chrome: [free download](#)
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader ([free download](#))
 - Flash Player ([free download](#))
 - Microsoft Office ([free download](#) through CSU)

Covid Information:

Important information for Students: All students should fill out a student-specific symptom checker each day before coming to class (<https://covidrecovery.colostate.edu/daily-symptom-checker/>). In addition, please utilize the symptom checker to report symptoms, if you have a positive test, or exposed to a known COVID contact. If you know or believe you have been exposed or are symptomatic, it is important for the health of yourself and others that you report it through this checker. You will not be in trouble or penalized in any way for reporting. If you report symptoms or a positive test, you will receive immediate instructions on what to do and CSU's Public Health Office will be notified. Once notified, that office will contact you and most likely conduct contact tracing, initiate any necessary public health requirements and/or recommendations and notify you if you need to take any steps. For the latest information about the University's response, please visit the CSU COVID-19



site (<https://covidrecovery.colostate.edu/>).

Third-Party Tools/Privacy:

Please note that this course may require you to use third-party tools (tools outside of the Canvas learning management system), such as Zoom and others. Some of these tools may collect and share information about their users. Because your privacy is important, you are encouraged to consult the privacy policies for any third-party tools in this course so that you are aware of how your personal information is collected, used and shared.

Undocumented Student Support:

Any CSU student who faces challenges or hardships due to their legal status in the United States and believes that it may impact their academic performance in this course is encouraged to visit [Student Support Services for Undocumented, DACA & ASSET](#) for resources and support.

Additionally, only if you feel comfortable, please notify your professor so they may pass along any additional resources they may possess.

Disclaimer:

All of the information in this course syllabus is subject to change when deemed necessary by the instructor. Students will be notified verbally in class, via postings on the class homepage, or by email if such changes occur.

Schedule:

Note: This is a tentative schedule, its contents are subject to change at the instructor's discretion. The associated readings can be found on Canvas.

| | <i>Lecture Topic(s):</i> | <i>Important Dates:</i> |
|--|---|----------------------------------|
| Week One (Aug 24 – 28) | <i>Marx is Dead! Long Live Marx!</i> | |
| <i>Topic One: The Philosopher</i> | | |
| Week Two (Aug 31 – Sept 04) | <i>The Spectre Endures: The Communist Manifesto Today</i> | |
| Week Three (Sept 07 – 11) | <i>HEGEL: (or) How I Learned to Stop Worrying</i> | Last Day to Drop Classes (09/09) |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| | <i>and Love the Dialectic</i> | |
| Week Four (Sept 14 – 18) | <i>Living in a Materialist World: The “Materialist Conception of History”</i> | |
| Topic Two: The Economist | | |
| Week Five (Sept 21 – 25) | <i>Know Your Fetish: Marx and Commodities</i> | Exam One Due (09/25) |
| Week Six (Sept 28 – Oct 02) | <i>Alone Together: Alienation in the 21st Century</i> | |
| Week Seven (Oct 05 – 09) | <i>The Price of Everything (and the Value of Somethings): Value, Exchange, and Exploitation</i> | |
| Week Eight (Oct 12 – 16) | <i>Ending at the Beginning: The Circulation of Capital</i> | |
| Week Nine (Oct 19 – 23) | <i>First as Tragedy, Then As Farce: The Crisis of Capitalism</i> | |
| Topic Three: The Prophet | | |
| Week Ten (Oct 26 – 30) | <i>Is Capital Dead, or are We Dead to Capital?</i> | Exam Two Due (10/30) |
| Week Eleven (Nov 02 – 06) | <i>Revolt Without Revolution?</i> | |
| Week Twelve (Nov 09 – 13) | <i>The Once and Future Marx: What is to Become of Communism?</i> | |
| Week Thirteen (Nov 16 – 20) | [OPEN TOPIC] <i>Will be determined by the class.</i> | |
| Fall Recess (Nov 21 – 29) | | |
| Week Fourteen (Nov 30 – Dec 04) | <i>Remote: Work on Final Project</i> | Exam Three Due 12/04) |
| Week Fifteen (Dec 07 – 11) | <i>Remote: Work on Final Project</i> | |
| Finals Week: | Final Exam: Dec 15 th , 9:40 am –11:40 am | |