

Critical Political Economy

Semester number	First
Course code	M.A. (DLB)0572
Level	BA & MA
Academic year	Fall 2022
Course Pre-requisites	Ideally, but not required, introductory courses to economics and political economy
Credit Points (ECTS)	4 CP
Course Professor	Dr. Oleksandr Svitych E-mail: osvitych@jgu.edu.in

Course Description

This is a course about domination, resistance and emancipation. Critical political economy (CPE) problematizes taken-for-granted socioeconomic and political structures and demystifies relations of power. We will adopt such a perspective to explore the links between wealth and power, states and economy, and structure and agency. Furthermore, CPE carries a strong emancipatory impulse. From the perspective of CPE, the key social institutions – such as the state, civil society and capitalist economy – are both sites of domination and political contestation. Imagining a more equitable, just, and humane world is especially pertinent in the current climate of economic disruption and populist nationalist backlash. To this end, in this course will explore the prospects for a counter-hegemonic bloc and “imperceptible politics” of everyday resistance. Hence, we will follow the famous dictum to “not only interpret the world, but also change it.”

Some of the questions the course asks are the following. Why are the assumptions of “mainstream” international political economy (IPE) problematic? Does the ongoing transformation of the postwar socio-economic order of “embedded liberalism” give rise to political change? How is it that free market ideas remain so durable? What are alternatives to the current neoliberal order? Structured around two pillars – theory and issues – it starts with the definitions, moves to the main CPE approaches, and explores their applications both in the global and Indian context. Overall, this course seeks to develop both critical thinking and ambition for social change.

Course Objectives

Following the tradition of classical political economy from Adam Smith to Karl Marx, this course provides an opportunity to develop a holistic view of social science. Such a view highlights interactions between the society, economy, and politics, rather than confining oneself to the disciplinary boundaries of sociology, economics or political science. Its primary objective is to inculcate the ability to expose the relations of power, domination and inequality within the “natural” social order. Simultaneously, its aim is to offer intellectual and political tools to mount resistance and tilt the status quo toward a more equitable world.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

Knowledge and Understanding

1. Understand the main concepts and the course such as capitalism, neoliberalism, class, state, civil society, domination, hegemony, ideology, counter-hegemony, resistance, and emancipation.
2. Understand the ontological and epistemological differences between critical political economy (CPE) and “mainstream” international political economy (IPE).
3. Understand that “theory is always for someone and some purpose.”

Professional and Practical Skills

1. Evaluate critically political economic discourse and rhetoric.
2. Formulate suggestions for public policies.
3. Enhance presentation skills.

Critical Thinking and Intellectual Skills

1. Discern distinctions between the related concepts and conceptions of the course.
2. Get a clearer sense of one’s own position on socio-cultural and socio-economic scales.
3. Enhance the ability to think critically about your own situation.

General and Transferrable Skills

1. Gather, analyze, and interpret information. (*This is highly-intensive reading course*).
2. Make substantiated and verifiable claims in speaking and writing.
3. Be able to argue for a chosen viewpoint.

Course Content/Weekly Plan

Module	Week	Topic	Lecture hrs	Office hrs
Introduction	1	<i>What is critical political economy?</i> - Problem-solving vs. normative - CPE, IPE and GPE - Syllabus review	3 hrs	1 hr
	I. Theory	2	<i>Critical theory</i> - The Frankfurt School - Anxiety and politics - Trump and Trumpism	3 hrs
	3	<i>Neo-Marxist approaches</i> - Historical materialism - Neoliberalism as a political project - Transnational state and class	3 hrs	1 hr
	4	<i>Neo-Gramscian approaches</i> - Common sense - Hegemony - Counter-hegemony	3 hrs	1 hr
	5	<i>Neo-Polanyian approaches</i> - Social embeddedness - Market fundamentalism - Beyond Polanyi	3 hrs	1 hr
	6	<i>Post-structural approaches</i> - Biopolitics - Post-modern empire - Crack capitalism	3 hrs	1 hr
	7	<i>Informality</i> - Everyday resistance - Domination vs. disruption - Exam Q&A	3 hrs	1 hr
	8	Mid-term exam	3 hrs	1 hr
II. Issues	9	Neoliberal transformation	3 hrs	1 hr

	10	The global financial crisis	3 hrs	1 hr
	11	Poverty and inequality	3 hrs	1 hr
	12	Populist nationalism	3 hrs	1 hr
	13	The Indian state	3 hrs	1 hr
	14	The pandemic and beyond	3 hrs	1 hr
	15	Revision	3 hrs	1 hr
	16	Final exam		
	Total contact during the semester		60 hrs	

List of readings

Week 1 This is an introductory class. No readings are required.

Week 2 Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*
 Franz L. Neumann, *Anxiety and Politics*
 Christian Fuchs, *Donald Trump: A Critical Theory-Perspective on Authoritarian Capitalism*

Week 3 Karl Marx, *Capital (Vol. 1)*.
 David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*
 William Robinson, *Global Capitalism Theory and the Emergence of Transnational Elites*
Black Mirror: "Fifteen Million Merits" (2011). Directed by Euros Lyn

Week 4 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*
 Robert Cox, *Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations*
 Nancy Fraser, *From Progressive Neoliberalism to Trump – and Beyond*
They Live (1988). Directed by John Carpenter

Week 5 Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*
 Fred Block and Margaret R. Somers, *The Power of Market Fundamentalism: Karl Polanyi's Critique*
 Christopher Holmes, *Polanyi in Times of Populism: Vision and Contradiction in the History of Economic Ideas*
RoboCop (1987). Directed by Paul Verhoeven

Week 6 Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College De France**

- Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Empire*
 John Holloway, *Crack Capitalism*
Black Mirror: "Rachel, Jack and Ashley Too" (2019). Directed by Anne Sewitsky
- Week 7 James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*.
 Abel Polese, *What is informality? (mapping) "the art of bypassing the state" in Eurasian spaces – and beyond*
 David J. Bailey, Mònica Clua-Losada, Nikolai Huke and Olatz Ribera-Almandoz, *Beyond Defeat and Austerity: Disrupting (the Critical Political Economy of) Neoliberal Europe*
A guerilla gardener in South Central LA | Ron Finley (2013). TED
- Week 8 Mid-term exam. No readings are required. **Abstracts for research essay are due.**
- Week 9 Stephen Gill, *Power and Resistance in the New World Order*
 Philip G. Cerny, *The competition state today: from raison d'État to raison du Monde*
 Toby Carroll, Ruben Gonzalez-Vicente & Darryl S. L. Jarvis, *Capital, conflict and convergence: a political understanding of neoliberalism and its relationship to capitalist transformation*
The Social Dilemma. (2020) Netflix
- Week 10 *99 Homes* (2014). Directed by Ramin Bahrani.
- Week 11 Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*
 Roberto Roccu, *Inequality and Poverty in the Neoliberal Era*
Elysium (2013). Directed by Neill Blomkamp.
- Week 12 Heikki Patomäki, *Disintegrative Tendencies in Global Political Economy: Exits and Conflicts*
 Nancy Fraser and Rahel Jaeggi, *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory*
- Week 13 Waqar Ahmed and Ipsita Chatterjee, *Antinomies of the Indian State*
 Raju J Das, *The Political Economy of New India: Critical Essays*
The Social Distance (2021). VICE News
- Week 14 Slavoj Žižek, *Pandemic!: COVID-19 Shakes the World*
 Tithi Bhattacharya, T. and Gareth Dale. *Covid Capitalism. General Tendencies, Possible "Leaps."*
 Paul Apostolidis and Albenaz Azmanova, *In a Pandemic, We're More Precarious than Ever.*
- Week 15 Erik O. Wright. *How to Be an Anti-Capitalist for the 21st Century*
- Week 16 **Final research essay**
-

Learning and Teaching Methods

- Overall, the course includes 45 hours of lectures, discussions, and group assignments (1 lecture per week), and 15 office hours (1 hr per week).
- Students must ensure that they are able to attend the weekly lecture and be involved in different class activities such as group-discussions, group-activities or debates.

Assessment

Student Assessment Methods	Assessment Weights
• Final exam	40%
• Midterm exam	25%
• Presentation	25%
• Class participation	10%

1. **Class participation.** Active participation and regular attendance is required for this class. You are expected to actively engage in class discussions.
2. **Mid-term exam.** It will take place at the 8th week and consist of submitting your research paper abstracts. An alternative under consideration is a set of three practical tasks during the first half of the course. The exact format will be confirmed as the course progresses.
3. **Presentation.** This is a group exercise to critically assess the previous lecture's readings. The task is three-fold: 1) summarize what has been covered; 2) comment critically on these ideas; 3) discuss the contemporary relevance (ideally relating to a piece of news or a political issue).
4. **Final essay.** It is in the format of a research paper of no more than 2500 words on a chosen topic. Alternatively, you may opt for a *creative option*. Detailed instructions will be announced as the course progresses.
 - Rules of plagiarism to be respected
 - Referencing style: any as long as it's consistent.

Plagiarism Rules

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's words OR ideas without proper acknowledgement. Any idea, sentence or paragraph you take from a web source or from printed material must be credited with the original source. If you paraphrase or directly quote in the exam or essays, the source must be explicitly mentioned. You should not plagiarize content, be it from scholarly sources (i.e. books and journal articles) or from the Internet.

Grade Definition

Marks	Grade	Grade Point Average
>=80	O	8
79	A+	7.5
78	A+	7.5
77	A+	7.5
76	A+	7.5
75	A+	7.5
74	A	7
73	A	7
72	A	7
71	A	7
70	A	7
69	A-	6
68	A-	6
67	A-	6
66	A-	6
65	A-	6
64	B+	5
63	B+	5
62	B+	5
61	B+	5
60	B+	5
59	B	4
58	B	4
57	B	4
56	B	4
55	B	4
54	B-	3

Marks	Grade	Grade Point Average
53	B-	3
52	B-	3
51	B-	3
50	B-	3
49.5	F	2
49	P1	2
48	P1	2
47	P1	2
46	P1	2
45	P1	2
44.5	P2	1
44	P2	1
43	P2	1
42	P2	1
41	P2	1
40	P2	1
Less than 40	F	0

Learning Resources

Recommended Textbooks

- Alan Cafruny, Leila Simona Talani, Gonzalo and Pozo Martin Editors (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical International Political Economy* (Palgrave, 2016)
- Jason P. Abbott and Owen Worth (eds.), *Critical Perspectives on International Political Economy* (Palgrave, 2002)
- Stuart Shields, Ian Bruff and Huw Macartney (eds.), *Critical International Political Economy: Dialogue, Debate and Dissensus* (Palgrave, 2011)

Useful Websites

- *Critical Political Economy Research Network*
<https://criticalpoliticaleconomy.net/>
- *Progress in Political Economy (PPE)*
<https://www.ppesydney.net/>
- *Economic Sociology & Political Economy*
<https://economicsociology.org/>