

**“CRITICAL POLITICAL ECONOMY” (3 CREDITS)**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY (StFX)**  
**WINTER 2020**

**COURSE INFORMATION:**

Student: Mitchell Moxon, Student ID: 201902148  
Instructor: Dr. Joel Garrod; E: [jgarrod@stfx.ca](mailto:jgarrod@stfx.ca); T: 902-867-5736  
Office Hours (Remote via Microsoft Teams): By appointment  
Course Meeting Day and Time: Thursdays 11:00AM – 12:15PM  
Course Meeting Location: 617 Nicholson Tower

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is meant to provide an introduction to the subfield of critical political economy. After examining the work of the quintessential classical political economist, Adam Smith, we will move on to Marx’s critique of this work—mainly, that it neglects the violent lived history of the transition from feudalism to capitalism. As such, the rest of the course will be devoted to exploring this theme through: important works by Polanyi and Wood; debates within Canadian and global political economy; the rise of neoliberalism; and feminist critiques of critical political economy. The course will conclude with a reflection on what lessons we can draw from the history of capitalism, and how those lessons might be usefully applied to understanding our today, and changing our tomorrow.

**Course Delivery:** Moodle will be used to submit and store course materials. Weekly face-to-face meetings between the student and the professor will take place in 617 Nicholson Tower (75 minutes).

**Online Course Reader:** An online course reader will also be posted on Moodle which includes core readings from the reading list.

**GRADING SCHEME:**

**Meeting Discussions = 15%**

The student and professor will engage in active weekly discussions of course content. The student will be expected to come to the meeting prepared to engage, having developed a brief analysis of the reading(s) and 3 questions to guide the discussion.

**Weekly Reading Analysis = 20%**

For each meeting, the student will prepare a summary and analysis of the reading(s) that will include 3 questions meant to guide our discussion. The summary/analysis should be no longer than 3 pages, double spaced.

### **Film Analysis = 20%**

The student will complete a critical political economy analysis of a film that is agreed upon by student and professor. It should be presented in essay form, and be at least 6 pages double-spaced, not including cover page and reference list. Class readings and discussions must be used to analyze the film.

### **Final Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography = 15%**

The student will submit a proposal for the final paper which includes a research question and describes how the question will be examined using a critical political economy perspective (1–2 pages double-spaced). The proposal must also include an annotated bibliography for 5 external sources (2 pages double-spaced).

### **Final Paper = 30%**

The final paper will draw on the course readings and academic literature identified in the review, to report and interpret the results and discuss their significance. The paper should be at least 8–10 pages, double-spaced, not including the cover page and reference list, and formatted using an ASA or APA style guide for citations.

## **SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1: Introduction to the Course (Jan 14)**

- Welcome, review syllabus and course expectations
- Co-develop a research question of interest which will be woven throughout the course (may be adapted as the course proceeds)

### **Week 2: Classical Political Economy (Jan 21)**

#### ***Required***

- Heilbroner, R. (1997). Adam Smith. In *Teachings from the worldly philosophy* (pp. 55–105). W.W. Norton & Company.

### **Week 3: The Critique of Political Economy (Jan 28)**

#### ***Required***

- Marx, K. (1990a). The secret of primitive accumulation. In *Capital: Volume I: A critique of political economy* (pp. 873–876). Penguin Classics.
- Marx, K. (1990b). The expropriation of the agricultural population. In *Capital: Volume I: A critique of political economy* (pp. 877–895).

### **Week 4: The Satanic Mill (Feb 4)**

#### ***Required***

- Polanyi, K. (2001a). “Habitation versus improvement”. In *The great transformation* (pp. 35–44). Beacon Press.
- Polanyi, K. (2001b). Evolution of the market pattern. In *The great transformation* (pp. 59–70). Beacon Press.
- Polanyi, K. (2001c). The self-regulating market and fictitious commodities: Labor, land, and money. In *The great transformation* (pp. 71–80). Beacon Press.

### **Week 5: Histories of the Transition to Capitalism: Part I (Feb 11)**

#### **Required**

- Wood, E. M. (2002a). The commercialization model and its legacy. In *The origin of capitalism* (pp. 11–34). Verso.
- **Film analysis due**

### **Week 6: Histories of the Transition to Capitalism: Part II (Feb 18)**

#### **Required**

- Wood, E. M. (2002b). Marxist debates. In *The origin of capitalism* (pp. 34–50). Verso.
- Wood, E. M. (2002c). Marxist alternatives. In *The origin of capitalism* (pp. 50–70). Verso.

### **Week 7: The Agrarian Origin of Capitalism (Feb 25)**

#### **Required**

- Wood, E. M. (2002d). The agrarian origin of capitalism. In *The origin of capitalism* (pp. 95–121). Verso.

### **Week 8: Canadian Political Economy: Old Debates (Mar 4)**

#### **Required**

- Naylor, R. T. (1972). The rise and fall of the third commercial empire of the St. Lawrence. In G. Teeple (Ed.), *Capitalism and the national question in Canada* (pp. 1–42). University of Toronto Press.
- McNally, D. (1981). Staple theory as commodity fetishism: Marx, Innis, and Canadian political economy. *Studies in Political Economy*, 6(1), 35–63.

### **Week 9: Neoliberalism (Mar 11)**

- Birch, K., & Springer, S. (2019). Peak neoliberalism? Revisiting and rethinking the concept of neoliberalism. *Ephemera: Theory & Politics in Organization*, 19(3), 467–485.
- Gamble, A. (2019). Why is neoliberalism so resilient? *Critical Sociology*, 45(7–8), 983–994.
- **Final paper proposal and annotated bibliography due**

### **Week 10: Global Political Economy (Mar 18)**

#### **Required**

- Harvey, D. (2004). The ‘new’ imperialism: Accumulation by dispossession. *Socialist Register 2004*, 40, 63–87.
- Robinson, W. I. (2007). Beyond the theory of imperialism: Global capitalism and the transnational state. *Societies Without Borders*, 2(1), 5–26.

### **Week 11: Canadian Political Economy: New Debates (Mar 25)**

#### **Required**

- Klassen, J. (2009). Canada and the new imperialism: The economics of a secondary power. *Studies in Political Economy*, 83(1), 163–190.
- Garrod, J. Z. (2018). Imperialism or global capitalism? Some reflections from Canada. *Studies in Political Economy*, 99(3), 268–284.

### **Week 12: Feminist Political Economy (Mar 30)**

- Federici, S. (2009). The accumulation of labor and the degradation of women. In *Caliban and the witch* (pp. 61–132). Autonomedia.

### **Week 13: Course Wrap-Up and Reflections (Apr 8)**

- Butler, O. (2000). Brave new worlds: A few rules for predicting the future. *Essence*, 31(1), 164–166.
- **Final paper due**

### **COMPLETE READING LIST**

- Birch, K., & Springer, S. (2019). Peak neoliberalism? Revisiting and rethinking the concept of neoliberalism. *Ephemera: Theory & Politics in Organization*, 19(3), 467–485.
- Butler, O. (2000). Brave new worlds: A few rules for predicting the future. *Essence*, 31(1), 164–166.
- Federici, S. (2009). The accumulation of labor and the degradation of women. In *Caliban and the witch* (pp. 61–132). Autonomedia.
- Gamble, A. (2019). Why is neoliberalism so resilient? *Critical Sociology*, 45(7–8), 983–994.
- Garrod, J. Z. (2018). Imperialism or global capitalism? Some reflections from Canada. *Studies in Political Economy*, 99(3), 268–284.
- Harvey, D. (2004). The ‘new’ imperialism: Accumulation by dispossession. *Socialist Register 2004*, 40, 63–87.
- Heilbroner, R. (1997). Adam Smith. In *Teachings from the worldly philosophy* (pp. 55–105). W.W. Norton & Company.
- Klassen, J. (2009). Canada and the new imperialism: The economics of a secondary power. *Studies in Political Economy*, 83(1), 163–190.
- Marx, K. (1990a). The secret of primitive accumulation. In *Capital: Volume I: A critique of political economy* (pp. 873–876). Penguin Classics.
- Marx, K. (1990b). The expropriation of the agricultural population. In *Capital: Volume I: A critique of political economy* (pp. 877–895).
- McNally, D. (1981). Staple theory as commodity fetishism: Marx, Innis, and Canadian political economy. *Studies in Political Economy*, 6(1), 35–63.
- Naylor, R. T. (1972). The rise and fall of the third commercial empire of the St. Lawrence. In G. Teeple (Ed.), *Capitalism and the national question in Canada* (pp. 1–42). University of Toronto Press.
- Polanyi, K. (2001a). “Habitation versus improvement”. In *The great transformation* (pp. 35–44). Beacon Press.
- Polanyi, K. (2001b). Evolution of the market pattern. In *The great transformation* (pp. 59–70). Beacon Press.
- Polanyi, K. (2001c). The self-regulating market and fictitious commodities: Labor, land, and money. In *The great transformation* (pp. 71–80). Beacon Press.
- Robinson, W. I. (2007). Beyond the theory of imperialism: Global capitalism and the transnational state. *Societies Without Borders*, 2(1), 5–26.

- Wood, E. M. (2002a). The commercialization model and its legacy. In *The origin of capitalism* (pp. 11–34). Verso.
- Wood, E. M. (2002b). Marxist debates. In *The origin of capitalism* (pp. 34–50). Verso.
- Wood, E. M. (2002c). Marxist alternatives. In *The origin of capitalism* (pp. 50–70). Verso.
- Wood, E. M. (2002d). The agrarian origin of capitalism. In *The origin of capitalism* (pp. 95–121). Verso.

## **COVID-19**

The 2020–2021 academic year is taking place during an exceptional period of human history. As the COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing, we may have to adjust the course assessment plan and/or delivery method with little or no notice. You may also have to stay home from sessions for various reasons related to COVID-19 (such as simply feeling ill). If this happens, please contact me so that we can discuss an alternative approach moving forward. Lastly, it is important to take care of yourself by getting adequate amounts of sleep, and by taking appropriate mental health breaks. The university website on COVID-19 provides more information and links (<https://www.stfx.ca/coronavirus>).

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM**

As this course involves the production of written work, you should familiarize yourself with the standards for proper referencing of all cited materials, such as books, journal articles, newspaper articles, websites, and so on. Students that attempt to pass off someone else's work as their own (i.e., plagiarism) will be dealt with through the university policy on academic honesty. Please ensure that you fully understand this policy (see section 3.8 of the academic calendar, found at: <https://www2.mystfx.ca/registrars-office/academic-calendars>). Resources for avoiding plagiarism can be found on the library website (<https://www2.mystfx.ca/library/plagiarism>).

## **WRITING ASSISTANCE**

Despite the fact that this is a writing-intensive course, we will not be able to spend much time on the craft of writing. If you need assistance with your writing, I recommend booking an appointment with me or visiting the Student Success Centre (<http://www2.mystfx.ca/student-success/>).

## **ACCOMODATIONS**

If you have an injury, develop an illness, or encounter a personal crisis that will impact your progress in this course, please email me as soon as you are able. This will ensure that we find a way for you to complete the course. The Health and Counselling Centre is another resource available to you (<http://www2.mystfx.ca/health-and-counselling/>).

If you have any disabilities that require an accommodation in teaching style or evaluation, please speak to me as soon as possible so we can implement those accommodations. You may also want

to contact the Tramble Centre for Accessible Learning (<https://www2.mystfx.ca/accessible-learning/tramble-centre-accessible-learning>).

## **EQUITY AND DISCRIMINATION**

Everyone learns more effectively in a respectful, safe, and equitable learning environment free from discrimination or harassment. I invite you to work with me to create a classroom space that fosters and promotes values of human dignity, equity, non-discrimination and respect for diversity. These values and practices are in accord with the StFX Discrimination and Harassment Policy which can be found at (<https://www2.mystfx.ca/equity/policies>). Please feel free to discuss with me any questions or concerns you have about equity in our classroom or in the StFX community. If I cannot answer your questions or help you address your concerns, I encourage you to talk to the Chair/Coordinator of the Department/Program or the Human Rights and Equity Advisor.

## **COPYRIGHT**

Course materials used in “Critical Political Economy” (SOC 299) are the property of the instructor, unless stated otherwise by the instructor. Online posting or selling of this material to third parties for distribution without permission is subject to Canadian copyright law and is strictly prohibited.

## **GRADE SCALE**

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52
F = Below 50			