Course Overview
A study of Karl Marx as the originator of a philosophical and political tradition. This course critically examines the formation, elaboration, and practical deployment of Marxian concepts such as alienation, class struggle, science, economic determination, progress, and ideology. In addition to studying Marx’s classic works and discussing their continued relevance, this course will explore representative development in Marxist theory made over the last century and a half by such figures as Lenin, Lukács, Luxembourg, Mariátegui, Lefebvre, Althusser, Cohen or Fraser.

In addition to familiarizing yourself with Marx’s works and with the two principal strands of Marxist Philosophy, this course will also provide you with the opportunity to pursue your own research on the development of a Marxian concept and to present this research to the class. As such, the course will function both as a survey and as a seminar. The expectation is that you will not only come to know something about Marx and Marxisms, but that you will be able to do something with this knowledge. Fulfilling both goals will require that you not only keep up with the class reading, but that you also keep up with the research. At times, this will seem like a lot of work (and it is), but the results will be more rewarding than any seminar where you merely learn to regurgitate the ideas of others.


2 The syllabi of Christopher Brooke (Oxford U.), Bertell Ollman (NYU), and Tamsin Shaw (NYU) were helpful to me in the
Learning Goals
By the end of the class, students in this class should be able to
• read original philosophy texts on their own and come to class with an informed opinion about them;
• carry out a sustained examination of a philosophical topic and philosopher;
• engage in a philosophical discussion with peers with little guidance from the professor;
• develop an original research project that takes into account relevant primary and secondary sources;
• accurately apply philosophical methods to specialized content;
• demonstrate intellectual humility, patience, and persistence.

Class Format and Expectations
Run as an advanced seminar, this course demands much student participation and independent research. It is imperative that you be prepared each day to discuss the assigned readings and to talk about your research. As these are very difficult (and sometimes lengthy) readings, sufficient preparation entails going over the texts multiple times. Class discussions will aim at: (a) gaining an understanding of the text at hand; and (b) applying the issues, ideas, and concepts that the texts raise to problems and issues both contemporary and historical.

For each class meeting, it is expected that you will arrive having formulated a response to the reading(s) to be discussed that day. These responses should contain a brief summary of the author(s) points (noting key passages, concepts, moments, etc.) and should then extend to the analysis of one concept that is developed in the readings, for instance, “species being” in the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts or “surplus value” in Capital. This analysis should be exegetical (that is, a close reading of how the term is used in the text, what it means, and what role it plays) and it may be enhanced by additional research. This analysis may include questions regarding your own understanding of the text. Each day, I will call on every seminar participant to name their concept and on a few participants to relate their analysis to the class. This does not mean that you need to come to class with a paper to read every day. However, a few paragraphs or, at the very least, some clear and detailed notes outlining your analysis will be necessary. In addition to discussing assigned readings, there will be some classes where you will discuss your research with the rest of the class.

Many of the ideas and texts that we are dealing with in this class are hard to understand on our own. Because of this and because this class includes discussion and discussions need participants, attendance is mandatory and you are expected to take part in all class discussions. This aspect of your performance will be reflected in a portion of your grade that reflects its overall importance to the class and that includes the informal presentation of your responses to each text. This grade is based upon both the quality and quantity of your participation.

Assignments, Values, and Policies
10% In-class presentation of research project
20% Class participation (see above for expectations)
30% Paper explaining and critiquing one concept from Marx’s philosophy.
40% Research paper on one important figure, idea, or school in Marxist philosophy

To pass the class, all assignments must be completed in the order assigned. No late assignments will be accepted without express permission of the instructor obtained at least 24 hours before the assignment’s due date. Violations of the Skidmore College Honor Code will result in an “F” for a class grade as well as all penalties imposed by the Honor’s Council.
Required Texts:
• McLellan (ed.), *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*.
• Course Packet [CP]

Suggested Texts:
• Wolff, *Why Read Marx?*

Disabilities
If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need academic accommodation, you must formally request accommodation from the Skidmore Coordinator for Students with Disabilities. You will also need to provide documentation that verifies the existence of a disability and supports your request. For further information, please call 580-8150, or stop by the office of Student Academic Services in Starbuck Center.
Schedule and Readings

Introduction
Wednesday, September 7th
Introduction:
- Chronology, Biography and Bibliography of Marx and Marxisms.
- Scope of course; review of learning goals & expectations.
Discussion:
- What is a political philosophical concept?

Monday, September 12th
Required:
- Marx & Engels (1848), The Communist Manifesto, pp. 245-272.
Suggested:

Antecedents to Marx
Wednesday, September 14th
Required:
- Kant (1784), “Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View” [CP].
- Hegel (1821), Philosophy of Right, preface [CP].

Monday, September 19th
Required:
- Hegel (1821), Philosophy of Right, pp. 1-2, 4-7, 21, 31-32, 35-46, 49-51, 54, 59, 64-67, 230-259, 343-353 [CP].

Wednesday, September 21st
Required:
- Smith (1776), “Wealth of Nations” [CP].
- Lenin (1913), “The 3 Sources and 3 Component Parts of Marxism” [CP].
- Balibar (1993), “Three Sources or Four Masters” [CP].
Suggested:

Marx's Debt and the Settling of Accounts
Monday, September 26th
Required:

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Alienation and Ideology
Wednesday, September 28th
Required:
- Marx (1845), The Holy Family, pp. 148-149.
Suggested:
- Wolff, pp. 21-47.

Monday, October 3rd
Required:

Philosophy of History and Philosophy of Science
Wednesday, October 5th
Required:
- Marx (1845-46), The German Ideology, [CP].
- Marx (1846), Letter to Pavel Vasilyevich Annenkov [CP].

First Paper Assigned

Monday, October 10th
Required:
- Engels (1890), Letter to J. Bloch, [CP].
Suggested:
- Wolff, pp. 48-65.

Wednesday, October 12th
Required:
- Engels (1883), Dialectics of Nature (selections) [CP].

Term Paper Project Assigned

Exploitation and Economics
Monday, October 17th
Required:

Wednesday, October 19th
Required:
- McCain, “Marxist Economics.” [CP].
Suggested:
- Wolff, 66-82.

Friday, October 20th
First Paper Due
State, Politics, and Revolution
Monday, October 24th
Required:
• Engels (1878), Socialism, Utopian & Scientific [CP]
• Marx, “fragments of letters on violent revolution,” [1872; 1880], p. 642.
Suggested:
• Wolff, 82-100.
Practicum: Researching Philosophy Papers

Marxism–Leninism
Wednesday, October 26th
Required:
• Lenin (1917), State and Revolution, chpts I, III, IV, V [CP].

Monday, October 31st
Required:
• Stalin (1938), “Dialectical and Historical Materialism,” [CP].
Topic Choice Due

Western Marxism
Wednesday, November 2nd
Required:
• Lefebvre (1939), Dialectical Materialism, pp. 09-67 [CP].

Monday, November 7th
Required:
• Lefebvre (1939), Dialectical Materialism, pp. 67-120 [CP].
Research Survey Due

Wednesday, November 9th
Required:
• Lefebvre (1939), Dialectical Materialism, pp. 120-155, [CP].

Mao Zedong and Maoism
Monday, November 14th
Required:
  ○ 毛泽东文集 << http://tinyurl.com/hyact59 >>
Suggested
• Meisner (1977), “Harmony and Conflict in the Maoist Utopian Vision” [CP]
Paper Proposals Due

Wednesday, November 16th
Required:
Suggested
Monday, November 21st
Required Screening:

**Paper Proposals Returned**

Wednesday, November 23rd
**Thanksgiving Vacation**

**Intersectional Marxism**s (Race, Class, Gender, Nation, Democracy)

Monday, November 28th
Required
• Fraser (1990), “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy” [CP].

Wednesday, November 30th
Required
• Amin (1972), “Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa-Origins and Contemporary Forms [CP].

**Monday, December 5th**
Required
• Jones (1949), “We Seek Full Equality for Women” [CP].
• Jones (1949), “An End to the Neglect of the Problems of Negro Women” [CP].

**Term Paper Progress Reports Due**

Wednesday, December 7th
Required
• Taylor “From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation The history of the Left and Black struggle: race and radicalism” (selections)
• Taylor, “Race, class and Marxism” [2016] [CP]

**Presentations**
Monday, December 12th

Wednesday, December 14th
Presentations:

December 18-22
**Final Paper Due, exact date to be announced.**