

Political Science 320
**Global Political Economy:
Capitalism and Global Inequalities**

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MWF 220-320
CAR 204

Course Description:

This course, as the catalog suggests, examines political economy as a peculiarly modern way of understanding and organizing social life and that we need to think of political economy as in some sense global. Capitalism is thought to stand at the center of modern forms of social life and our readings engage the topic of what it means to speak about capitalism and what it means to speak about capitalist as in some sense global. In our work on global capitalism, we will be attentive to the way the distinction between the political and the economic is drawn and implemented in interconnected ways within nation-states and in international society, and with the various social/political/ethical consequences that we need to understand: including understanding capital and capitalism as a form of power, as a mechanism for opening new spaces for governance by markets, and the way that markets distribute life chances or, to put it more starkly, life and death.

Course Assignments:

1. Mid-term and final take-home exams: 20 each (40 total)
2. Classroom participation: 25 points

On the second point, it is expected that students will attend class and will come prepared, having read and thought about the assigned readings. This is what it means to be a student. Because an active engagement in the classroom is required, classroom participation is given substantial weight in grading.

3. Research exercise: 35 points (5 points initial drafts; 25 points final draft)

The research paper may take a variety of forms: a policy report or analysis; a review of the literature that might be the basis of future research; or a research project driven by a puzzle or question.

A policy report documents and analyzes a current matter of concern or policy issue, including issues now invisible to policymakers. It traces the historical processes and identifies the key causal factors that have produced the current circumstances. Finally, it draws “policy”

conclusions, including identifying “problems,” priorities, and solutions or directions for action. Or, think of it this way. You will need to (1) identify a problem or a challenge the international community or the globe faces; (2) provide evidence and reasoning to show that the problem is serious and will be persistent without some change of direction or policy; (3) survey the options, and an assessment of which policy option seems the most promising, based on evidence and reasoning.

Formally, the written project will be couched as a report by a consultant (that is, you; give yourself a title and make up a name for your consulting firm) addressed to a particular audience. You may address your report to the international community, a particular institution, the governing body of a particular country or place. The written report will begin with an “executive summary” and end with “policy recommendations,” though some students may want to adopt a slightly different format. However organized, policy reports (1) provide an account of the current circumstances in some issue area; (2) identify the key characteristics of that problem, including obstacles to solving that “problem;” and (3) make recommendations to redress the problem.

In brief, a *critical review of the literature* **describes, analyzes, and evaluates** the current state of knowledge, thinking and debate on a topic. It provides a characterization of the current discussions or conversations relevant to the topic; it assesses the usefulness of these discussions and indicates what seem like the most promising directions for understanding and for further work. While no review is exhaustive, it is important that reviews of the literature be relatively comprehensive, that they cover the main authors, schools of thought, and domains of discussion.

Put differently, a critical review of the literature answers a series of questions. What do we “know” about this topic? Or, how is the issue or topic discussed by major authors? What sub-topics define the study of this topic? Can the discussion be organized as a set of schools of thought or perspectives? What divides and/or joins these various ways of thinking? What concepts do they use? Which methods? What does each author or point of view highlight? What do they obscure or hide? In your view, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the literature or its various parts? Which views or authors seem most promising? Which help us best to understand the issues involved? How does the literature link to broader debates on the development? That is, what are the broader implications of this literature?

By way of summary, I would stress that this assignment is not a term paper, but a report on the state of the literature about a certain topic. It is, however, a report that necessarily makes a point—or a series of points—in that it draws conclusions about the state of inquiry on a particular topic. I will hand out additional materials to students doing reviews of the literature.

This *research project option* involves disciplined research; that is, the project will apply a method or methods from the repertoire of methods used by social scientists and be presented in a form (such as an academic article or a policy report) used by scholars. **Think back to prior courses, including methods courses.**

In most cases, student projects will be guided by a research question that expresses the puzzle that motivates and defines the scope of the project. Remember that the question must be of the

kind that can be answered via research: Why does x happen? What makes x possible as an important part of social life? Questions like: why doesn't x happen? are harder to research but not impossible. Questions like: what is the solution to social problem x? are also possible, but require a different method. Your research might be organized around your guess as to the answer: is your guess true to the evidence or not? Or, you might explore a social or political theoretical question, building on the work of a particular thinker or school of thought.

Your examination of the question does not begin at a zero point; you are part of a discipline—a social process of ongoing research. Others have researched this or very similar questions, examining various aspects of the phenomena in question, using various methods and theoretical vocabularies, and producing various conclusions. Your project requires an examination of at least some of the existing literature, cataloging and analyzing it, so you can place your own project in relation to other research that approaches the issue in a similar fashion or in a quite different fashion. Given this, **you may want to build on earlier research or courses you have done.**

Execution of your project will involve the appropriate mobilization of evidence (that you produce or that others have produced before you) to answer your research question or solve the puzzle you describe. You might examine historical accounts of a single case, tracing processes over time to see what kinds of events or factors lead to x in that case/country. You might compare cases to see if a process or causal relation holds across different cases. You might utilize the data produced in quantitative form (census data; canned data sets), using statistical analysis to see isolate correlations (and at what level and controlling for which factors) across many cases. Or you might directly observe some phenomenon or process and record your observations in a systematic way in order to explain why x happens or what makes x possible. Or you might conduct interviews for a similar purpose. Or you might examine discursive structures (in speeches, interviews, popular culture, academic discourse, visual images, etc.) in order to understand what social practices they enable and legitimate as well as the exclusions they perform. **Have you already gathered 'data' that might be usable for this project? Is there 'data' or 'evidence' readily available that you could use or easily gather or produce?**

This account doesn't quite exhaust the possibilities. Some students might want to apply a critical methodology that analyzes the internal logic of social practices, considering the tensions, or contradictions that are central to that social practice, and which locate the possibilities for change immanent to that practice. If so, a slightly different methodological strategy is required. A few students may want to explore projects in social or political theory. A very different approach is required: close, critical reading of the logical structures or perhaps metaphors organizing a text, or maybe a conceptual history (placing the author's arguments in an intellectual and social/political context). If you want to explore social or political theoretical issues or take a critical theory approach, please talk to me as soon as possible.

The answer or solution to the question or puzzle is normally presented as a set of findings that take the form of an argument about or an explanation of events or phenomena that occur in the world. The findings might be presented in the form of a causal story: x is caused by y or the combination of y and z, while controlling for a, b, and c. Or you might tell an historical story that

carefully traces processes of causal or constitutive influence in a particular country. Or you might compare cases that allow you to see how difference and similarities in the two countries impact on certain social processes. Or you might carefully pair textual evidence and evidence about the workings of real social practices, noting the way texts seem to constitute social positions and social practices, while also excluding other possibilities for the way we live.

Whatever style of project, you will complete the research exercise in several steps as outlined on the syllabus.

Course Readings:

1. Robert Heilbroner, *The Nature and Logic of Capitalism* (Norton, 1986)
2. Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power and the Origins of our Times* (Verso, 2010)
3. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of our Time* (Beacon, 2001)
4. Erik Ringmar, *Surviving Capitalism: How we Learned to Live with the Market and Remained Almost Human* (Anthem, 2005)
5. Anna Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton, 2005)
6. Guy Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* (Bloomsbury, 2011)
7. Immanuel Wallerstein, Randall Collins, Michael Mann, Georgi Derluguian, and Craig Calhoun, *Does Capitalism have a Future?* (Oxford, 2013)
7. Other readings can be found on the moodle site for the course or via journal finder on the library webpage (if there is a full citation)

Course Outline:

Sept 3 (W)	Introductions I. Capitalism
Sept 5 (F)	Heilbroner, Preface, chapter 1 and 2 Meek, “The Rise and Fall of the Concept of the Economic Machine”
Sept 8 (M)	Heilbroner, chapters 3 Nitzan and Bichler, from <i>Capital as Power</i>
Sept 10 (W)	Heilbroner, chapter 4 Foucault. “Liberalism and the Implementation of a New Art of Government”
Sept 12 (F)	Heilbroner, chapter 5 Foucault, “The Model of Homo Oeconomicus”
Sept 15 (M)	Heilbroner, chapter 6

Cardoso, "Dependency and Development in Latin America

Sept 17-20 **No class**; blaney leading evaluation team at Whitman College [read ahead in Arrighi book; we will move quickly once I am back]

Sept 19 (F) Research Project idea: 1-2 pages (topic area; discussion of approach/method; format: research exercise, policy report, review of literature; linked to senior research project? Send as attachment.

2. Capitalist as Historical Global System

Sept 22 (M) Arrighi, *Long Twentieth Century*, Preface, Introduction, Part 1

Sept 24 (W) Arrighi, Part 2

Sept 26 (F) Arrighi, Part 3

Sept 29 (M) Arrighi, Part 4, Epilogue

3. Capitalism and Social Protection

Oct 1 (W) Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, chapters 5 and 6; Introduction by Bloch; Ringmar, *Surviving Capitalism*, Chapter 1

Oct 3 (F) Polanyi, chapters 11, 12, and 13

Oct 6 (M) Polanyi, chapters 14, 15, 16, Ringmar, chapter 2

Oct 8 (W) Ringmar, chapters 3 and 4

Oct 10 (F) Ringmar, chapters 5, 6, and 7

Oct 13 (M) Ringmar, chapters 8 and 9

Oct 15 (W) Ringmar, chapter 10 and 11; Gill, "Globalisation, Market Civilization, and Disciplinary Neoliberalism"

Oct 17 (F) Discussion of formats for research exercise

Oct 20 (M) **No class**; Midterm take-home due

4. Globalizing Capitalism: Production Chains, Global Flows, and Friction

Oct 22 (W) Bair, "Global Capitalism and Commodity Chains"
Gereffi, Humphrey, and Sturgeon, "The Governance of Global Values

Chains”

- Oct 23-26 Fall break
- Oct 27 (M) Daviron and Gibbon, “Global Commodity Chains and Africa Export Agriculture”; Linden, Kraemer, and Dedrick, “Who Captures Values in a Global Innovation Network?”
- Oct 29 (W) Tsing, *Friction*, pp. 1-54
- Oct 13 (F) Tsing, pp. 55-120
- Nov 3 (M) Tsing, 121-170
- Nov 5 (W) Tsing, 171-238
- Nov 7 (F) Tsing, 239-272
- Nov 10 (M) **No class: First installment of research project (6-8 pages)**
- 5. Labor Precarity**
- Nov 12 (W) Standing, *The Precariat*, Preface, chapters 1 and 2
- Nov 14 (F) Standing, chapter 3; Winant, “The Modern World Racial System”
- Nov 17 (M) Standing, chapters 4 and 5
- Nov 19 (W) Standing, chapters 6 and 7
- Nov 21 (F) Discussion of research projects
- Nov 24 (M) **No class: second installment of research project (a different 6-8 pages)**
- Nov 26-Nov 30 **Thanksgiving Break**
- 6. The end of capitalism?**
- Dec 1 (M) *Does Capitalism Have a Future?*, Introduction and Wallerstein
- Dec 3 (W) *DCHF?*, Collins and Mann
- Dec 5 (F) *DCHF?*, Calhoun, Conclusion
- Dec 8 (M) **Final Things**

Dec 10 (W)

No class

Dec 12 (F)

Final take-home exam due

Dec 15 (M)

Final Project due