

American Studies 510 - 003
Marxism and Cultural Interpretation
Fall 2011 Course Proposal. 30802

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Course Description: This course explores the development of Western Marxism and Marxist cultural interpretation through the reading of key Marxist and post-Marxist texts. We will critically entertain the questions “What relevance does Marxist cultural critique hold for current scholarship?” and “Was Marx right?” Course readings will illustrate Marxist understandings of capitalism and modernity as well as Marxist perspectives on cultural production, domination/resistance, and aesthetic experience. In the second half of the course, discussion will increasingly focus on works that contest, reveal the limitations of, or seek to expand Marxist thought. Readings will include selections from Marx, Gramsci, the Frankfurt School, and British and American Cultural Studies.

Objectives:

Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to

- articulate the basic concepts and organizing principles of Marx’s writings.
- articulate the develop of several significant schools of western Marxist thought.
- understand and apply key concepts for the Marxist in interpretation of culture.
- critically evaluate the usefulness and validity of Marxist writing for current scholarship.
- Offer their own original analysis of Western Marxism.

Evaluation: You will be graded on 1) journal entires, 2) final paper, 3) discussion questions; and 4) class participation.

Journal Entries	40 percent
Final Paper	40 percent
Discussion Questions	5 percent
Participation and Attendance	15 percent

Course Texts:

- *The Marx-Engels Reader*. 1978. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. W.W. Norton and Company.
- *Representing Capital: A Reading of Volume One*. 2011. Fredric Jameson. Verso.
- *Why Marx Was Right*. 2011. Terry Eagleton. Yale University Press.
- *Antonio Gramsci*. 2010. Antonio Santucci. Monthly Review Press.

- *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics*. 1979. Herbert Marcuse. Beacon Press.
- *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. 1969. Walter Benjamin. Schocken.
- *Marxism and Literature*. 1978. Raymond Williams. Oxford University Press.
- *Cultures in the Age of Three Worlds*. 2004. Michael Denning. Verso.
- *The Enigma of Capital: And the Crises of Capitalism*. 2010. David Harvey. Oxford University Press.
- *The Reification of Desire: Toward a Queer Marxism*. 2009. Kevin Floyd. University of Minnesota Press.
- *Hegel, Haiti, and University History*. 2009. Susan Buck-Morss. University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Selections from *Living in the End of Times*. 2011. Slavoj Žižek. Verso.