**History Department**

**Course: Histories of Capitalism**

**Credits: 2**

**Instructor: Mladen Medved**

**Email: MedvedM@ceu.edu**

**Time: Tue 13.30-15.10**

**Course description:**

Spurred by the financial crash of 2007-8, there has been a growing interest in the study of capitalism. This tendency seems certain to be reinforced by the unique economic downturn brought about by the lockdown measures against the current pandemic. In this course, students will gain an understanding of the specificity of capitalist social relations, conditions of their emergence and manner of their expansion. Importantly, the course is *not* one of economic history. The category of capitalism is rather employed in recent historiography to analyze all aspects of a capitalist society, from economics to politics and ideology. Capitalism is thus a synthetic lens through which students may (re)interpret history. Students will become familiar with major topics and different theories and methodologies in the studies of capitalism. The course relies on a global perspective and combines literature on East Central Europe and other areas of the world. It invites students to reflect on the impact of global processes in different regions of the world. I am open to reasonable changes in the syllabus based on your interests and ambitions.

**Learning goals and outcomes:**

- gain an understanding of the specificity of capitalist social relations, conditions of their emergence and mechanisms of expansion

- critically assess major theoretical frameworks and approaches in the study of capitalism

- employ the category of capitalism beyond economic phenomena

**Course policy**:

Students are required to regularly attend class and participate in class discussions. It is not mandatory to read all the materials listed in the syllabus. You will usually be required to read one or two texts (they are in bold in the reading list). You are however encouraged to consult other readings. The function of additional readings is to signal different approaches to a certain topic and provide a basis for a presentation and the final paper. I suggest you do a presentation. But should you feel uncomfortable with this assignment you may opt for a short paper of around 1500-2000 words instead.

You can further develop the argument of your presentation or short paper in the final paper or you may opt for another topic. You have to decide on a topic for the final paper by week 8. The final paper should be between 4000 and 6000 words. I suggest you send me a draft of the final paper before submission. The deadline for submission is the **25th of March**. You will lose 10 percent of points for the final paper per day of delay.

**Assessment:**

**Attendance and participation**: 30%

**Presentation (or short paper)**: 20%

**Final paper**: 50%

**Readings:**

The list of readings, including required ones, may change to better correspond to your scholarly interests.

**Week 1: Definitions**

Wallerstein, Immanuel (2004). *Introduction to World-Systems Analysis*. Durham, London: Duke University Press, 23-41.

**Required: Brenner, Robert (2008). “Property and Progress: Where Adam Smith Went Wrong.” *Marxist History-Writing for the Twenty-First Century*, Chris Wickham (ed). Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 49–82.**

Piketty, Thomas (2017). *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Harvard University Press, 1-48.

Beckert, Sven and Christine Desai (2018). *American Capitalism. New Histories*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1-34.

**Week 2: England, Europe, or Eurasia? Origins of Capitalism**

Wallerstein, Immanuel (1992). “The West, Capitalism and the Modern World-System.” *Review* 15 (4): 561–619.

**Required: Brenner, Robert (2008). “Property and Progress: Where Adam Smith Went Wrong.” *Marxist History-Writing for the Twenty-First Century*, Chris Wickham (ed). Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, 82–111.**

**Required: Anievas, Alexander, and Kerem Nisançioglu (2017). “How Did the West Usurp the Rest? Origins of the Great Divergence over the *Longue Durée*”. *Comparative Studies in History and Society* 59 (1): 34-67.**

**Week 3: Transition to Capitalism and Gender Relations**

**Required: Federici, Silvia (2004). *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation.* New York: Autonomedia, 163-219.**

Leach, Nicole (2019). “Rethinking the Rules of Reproduction and the Transition to Capitalism: Reading Federici and Brenner Together.” In *Case Studies in the Origins of Capitalism*, Lafrance, Xavier and Charles Post (eds.), Palgrave Macmillan, 317-343.

**Week 4: Divergence between China and Europe**

Pomeranz, Kenneth (2000). *The Great Divergence. China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World-Economy*. Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 4-27, 264-297.

O’Brien, Patrick (2001). “Metanarratives in Global Histories of Material Progress.” *The International History Review*, 23 (2): 345-367.

**Required: Arrighi, Giovanni (2007). *Adam Smith in Beijing. Lineages of the Twenty First Century.* London, New York: Verso, 309-350.**

**Week 5**: **‘Second Serfdom’**

Allen, Robert (2000). “Economic Structure and Agricultural Productivity in Europe, 1300-1800,” *European Review of Economic History* 4 (3): 1-25.

**Required: Cerman, Markus (2012). *Villagers and Lords in Eastern Europe, 1300-1800*. Palgrave Macmillan, 1-38**, 94-129.

DuPlessis, Robert. (2019). *Transitions to Capitalism in Early Modern Europe. Economies in the Era of Early Globalization*, *c. 1450-1820.* Cambridge University Press, 232-274.

**Week 6: Slavery**

**Required: Post, Charles (2011). *American Road to Capitalism. Studies in Class Structure, Economic Development and Political Conflict 1620-1877.* Leiden, Boston: Brill, 103-154.**

Rosenthal, Caitlin (2018). *Accounting for Slavery. Masters and Management*. Harvard University Press, 85-120.

**Required: Clegg, John (2020). “A Theory of Capitalist Slavery.” *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 33 (1): 74-98.**

**Week 7: Non-capitalist classes managing capitalism: Hungary and Japan**

**Required: Janos, Andrew (1982). *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary* *1825-1945*. Princeton University Press, 50-77, 87-96.**

**Required: Allinson, Jamie and Alexander Anievas (2010). “The uneven and combined development of the Meiji Restoration: A passive revolutionary road to capitalist modernity”. *Capital & Class*, 34 (3): 469-490.**

Clark, Gregory and Tatsuy Ishii (2012). “Social Mobility in Japan, 1868-2012: The Surprising Persistence of the Samurai.” UC Davis working paper, 1-44.

Szélenyi, Iván (2015). “Capitalisms After Communism.” *New Left Review* II, 96, 39-51.

**Week 8: Theorizing underdevelopment: Romania and Brazil**

**Required: Love, Joseph (1996). *Crafting the Third World. Theorizing Underdevelopment in Rumania and Brazil*.Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1996, 71-86, 182-201.**

Boatcă, Manuela (2006). “Semiperipheries in the World-System: Reflecting Eastern European and Latin American Experiences.” *Journal of World-Systems Research* 12 (2): 321–46.

**Week 9: Debating neoliberalism**

Harvey, David (2005). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press, 5-38.

**Required: Slobodian, Quinn (2018). *Globalists. The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism*. Harvard University Press, 1-27, 182-217.**

Djelic, Marie-Laure and Reza Mousawi (2020). “How the Neoliberal Think Tank Went Global: The Atlas Network, 1981 to the Present.” In *Nine Lives of Neoliberalism*, Plehwe, Dieter, Quinn Slobodian and Philip Mirowski (eds.). London; New York: Verso, 257-282.

**Week 10: Developmentalist seeds of neoliberalism: Eastern Europe and Latin America**

**Required: Bockman, Johanna (2011). *Markets in the Name of Socialism. The Left-Wing Origins of Neoliberalism*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 157-188.**

Besnik, Pula (2018). *Globalization Under and After Socialism: The Evolution of Transnational Capital in Central and Eastern Europe*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 108-141.

Offner, Amy (2019). *Sorting Out the Mixed Economy: The Rise and Fall of Welfare and Developmental States in the Americas*. Princeton University Press, 249-289.

**Week 11: Law and Inequality**

**Required: Evans, Alice (2019). “How Cities Erode Gender Inequality: A New Theory and Evidence from Cambodia.” *Gender & Society* (33) 6: 961-984.**

**Required: Pistor, Katharina (2019). *Code of Capital. How the Law Creates Wealth and Inequality*. Princeton University Press, 1-22, 132-157.**

Piketty, Thomas (2020). *Capital and Ideology*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 648-716.

**Week 12: Capitalism and Democracy**

Acemoğlu, Daron and James Robinson (2006). *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1-46.

**Required: Streeck, Wolfgang (2014). *Buying Time: The Delayed Crisis of Democratic Capitalism*. London; New York: Verso, 47-89.**

Milanović, Branko (2019). *Capitalism, Alone. The Future of the System that Rules the World.* The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 176-218.

Piketty, Thomas (2020). *Capital and Ideology.* The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 862-966.