

## CAPITAL

COLI 380E, PHIL 480W  
Fall 2009  
Wednesdays, 3:30-6:30  
TU 309

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Office hours: W 1:30-3:00; R 2:30-4:00

### Course Description

This course is very modest in its ambition: we will seek only to understand the manifest sense of the fundamental concepts of volume 1 of *Capital*. We therefore embark on a patient reading of the text: the work of the seminar will consist precisely in that work of reading. Our wager is that something new, something indispensable, appears in Marx's articulation of fundamental concepts. That is, we proceed on the assumption that when Marx speaks of "economy," or "labor," or "value," etc. etc., there is a philosophical work of thinking that makes of economy, labor, and value (etc. etc.) radically different conceptual objects than such concepts are for liberal political and economic thought. So our goal is to read Marx not in relation to the question of the verisimilitude of his explanations and diagnoses of what counted for him as the world, but as a philosopher. In other words, we seek the use-value of Marx's work. It is further part of our wager that it is precisely at this level that a reading of Marx is indispensable in the current situation.

### Course Requirements

Seminar. Attendance and participation required. More than one unexcused absence will result in the precipitous lowering of your grade (by one full grade per absence). Excused absences, however, are of course not penalized. This seminar, whatever else it may be, is an exercise in reading. It is therefore obligatory that you keep up with the reading.

You will be required to write two 10-12 page papers, each of which you will submit in draft and rewrite to receive a grade. Each paper will require you to provide an exposition of one of the concepts we have encountered in our reading. The first paper will be due 7 October, the second on 11 December.

The University obliges me to inform you that plagiarism, the unacknowledged appropriation of someone else's words or ideas, is a bad thing. Now you know.

## Books

Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume One*, trans. Ben Fowkes (Penguin Books, 1976).

## Tentative Schedule

- 9.2 Introduction, no readings.
- 9.9 Prefaces and Chapter 1, "The Commodity," pp. 89-177.  
[All page numbers are for the Penguin Classics edition of Ben Fowkes' translation of *Capital*.]
- 9.16 Chapter 2, "The Process of Exchange," pp. 178-187.
- 9.23 Chapter 3, "Money, or the Circulation of Commodities," pp. 188-244.
- 9.30 Part Two, "The Transformation of Money into Capital," pp. 245-280.
- 10.7 Part Three, "The Production of Absolute Surplus Value," pp. 283-339.
- YOUR FIRST ESSAY IS DUE 10.7**
- 10.14 Part Three, continued, pp. 340-426.
- 10.21 Part Four, "The Production of Relative Surplus Value," pp. 427-491.
- 10.28 Part Four, continued, pp. 492-639.
- 11.4 Part Five, "The Production of Absolute and Relative Surplus Value," pp. 641-672.
- 11.11 Part Six, "Wages," pp. 673-706.
- 11.18 Part Seven, "The Process of Accumulation of Capital," pp. 707-761.
- 12.2 Part Seven, continued, pp. 762-870.
- 12.9 Part Eight, "So-Called Primitive Accumulation," pp. 871-940.

**YOUR SECOND ESSAY IS DUE 12.11**