

SOCIOLOGY 621

**CLASS, STATE AND
IDEOLOGY:**

**AN INTRODUCTION TO
SOCIAL SCIENCE
IN THE MARXIST TRADITION**

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BASIC OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

From the middle of the 19th century until the last decade of the 20th, the Marxist Tradition provided the most systematic body of ideas and social theory for radical critics of capitalism as an economic system and social order. Even those critics of capitalism who did not directly identify with Marxism relied heavily on Marxist ideas about class, exploitation, commodification, the state, ideology. And while many anticapitalists felt that the specific political project that came to be identified with Marxism -- the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism -- was deeply flawed, they nevertheless shared the emancipatory vision of a socialist society within which class inequalities attenuated and the economy was democratically controlled in the interests of everyone. Above all it was this defense of *a vision of an emancipatory alternative to capitalism* which gave Marxism its emotional and ideological power: we might live in a world of great misery, inequality and oppression, but an alternative was both imaginable and achievable.

In recent years, particularly since the end of Communist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Marxism has declined as an intellectual force. TINA – “there is no alternative” – has replaced confidence in the possibility of radical alternatives. Instead of being viewed as a threat to capitalism, talk of socialism now seems more like idle utopian musing. Culture, discourse and identity have replaced class and economic inequality as the central themes in critical social theory. Some critical sociologists have even proclaimed the “Death of Class,” seeing it as a virtually irrelevant dimension of social life in the “postmodern” era. When you add to this dismissal of class as an object of inquiry the equally prevalent postmodernist methodological distaste for social structural arguments in general, Marxist-inspired class analysis may seem to many students to be a retrograde approach to understanding social issues, plagued by a host of metatheoretical sins: determinism, economism, materialism, structuralism, positivism.

Yet, ironically, we also live in a period in which inequality and economic polarization in many developed societies has been deepening; in which the commodification of labor has reached unparalleled heights with the entry of masses of women into the labor force; in which capital has become increasingly footloose, deeply constraining the activities of states; in which the market appears ever-more like a law of nature uncontrollable by human device; in which politics is ever-more dominated by money. We live in an era in which social dynamics intimately linked to class are increasingly potent, and yet class analysis is increasingly marginalized.

In this political and intellectual context, many students will be skeptical that it is still worthwhile to devote concentrated attention to the Marxist tradition of social theory and social science. There are three reasons why I feel it is indeed worth the time and effort. First, and most importantly from my point of view, I believe that the Marxist theoretical tradition continues to offer indispensable theoretical tools for understanding the conditions for the future advance of a radical egalitarian project of social change. Marx is famous for saying in the *eleventh thesis on Feurbach* that philosophers have only tried to understand the world, but that the real point is to change it. It is equally true, however, that without effectively understanding the world we cannot know how to change it in the ways we desire. Marxism may not provide all of the theoretical tools we need for understanding the world, but it provides some of the fundamental ingredients, and for this reason it is worth studying. Second, I also believe that the Marxist tradition has a great deal to offer to sociology in general even if one does not identify strongly with the vision of human emancipation in that tradition. In particular I think that class analysis in the Marxist tradition has considerable explanatory power for a wide range of issues of sociological importance. Third, the Marxist tradition of social thought is interesting and provocative. It contains some of the most elegant and ambitious theoretical constructions in all of social science and raises all sorts of intriguing puzzles and problems. Even if one rejects the substantive theses of the Marxist tradition, it is worth taking the time to understand them deeply as part of the general process of developing one's analytical skills in social theory.

This course will explore a broad range of issues in the Marxist tradition of social theory and social science. I refer deliberately to “the Marxist *tradition*” rather than *Marxism* as such. “Marxism,” like other “isms,” suggests a doctrine, a closed system of thought rather than an open theoretical framework of scientific inquiry. It is for this reason, for

example, that “Creationists” (religious opponents to the theory of biological evolution) refer to evolutionary theory as “Darwinism”. They want to juxtapose Creationism and Darwinism as alternative doctrines, each grounded in different “articles of faith”. It has been a significant liability of the Marxist tradition that it has been named after a particular historical person and generally referred to as an ism. This reinforces a tendency for the theoretical practice of Marxists to often look more like ideology (or even theology when Marxism becomes Marxology and Marxalatro) than social science. It is for this reason that I prefer the looser expression “the Marxist tradition” to “Marxism” as a way of designating the theoretical enterprise. I feel that the broad Marxist tradition of social thought remains a vital setting for advancing our understanding of the contradictions in existing societies and the possibilities for egalitarian social change, but I do not believe it provides us with a comprehensive doctrine that automatically gives us the right answers to every question.

The overall objective of this course is to provide a rigorous introduction to the core concepts, ideas and theories in the Marxist tradition of critical social science. The course will revolve around six broad topics: The theory of history; class structure; class formation and class struggle; the theory of the state and politics; ideology and consciousness; socialism and emancipation.

A NOTE ON THE SCOPE OF THE COURSE

A number of comments are needed on the scope of this course.

First, while from time to time we will discuss some of Marx’s own writings and those of other “classical” Marxists this is not a course on Marx *per se*, or on the historical development of Marxism as an intellectual tradition, but rather on the logic, concepts and theories of that tradition. The emphasis, therefore, will be on contemporary problems and debates rather than on the history of ideas.

Second, the course will also not attempt to give equal weight to all varieties of Marxisms, but rather will focus especially on what has come to be known as “Analytical Marxism”. Over the years that I have taught versions of this course some students complain that it is not really a course on Marxism but on “Wrightism”: some of the readings come from my own published work, and most of the lectures focus on the core ideas of the variety of Marxism within which I do my own work, “Analytical Marxism”. There is thus very little discussion of Hegelian Marxism, of the Frankfurt school, of various forms of culturalist Marxism, of classical Marxism, or of the rich body of Marxist historical writing. Some of the times I have taught the course I tried to incorporate significant material from these other perspectives, but in the end this was never very satisfactory. Including these kinds of alternative perspectives always meant dropping important topics from the course agenda, and in any case, many students wondered why I included these readings when I was so critical of them (especially for their frequent obscurantism). Given the time constraints, I decided in the end that it is better to organize the course around the ideas and approaches I find most powerful and compelling.

Third, because of time constraints we also cannot give adequate attention to every important topic within contemporary Marxism. The course will focus on six main clusters of problems: the theory of history; class structure; class formation and class struggle; the theory of the state and politics; ideology and consciousness; socialism and emancipation. A range of important issues will get at most cursory treatment: the theory of imperialism and capitalism as a world system; accumulation and crisis theory; the theoretical and historical evaluation of socialist revolutions and communist regimes; the analysis of gender relations and male domination; and the problem of racial domination. Perhaps in the contemporary context the most serious of these gaps is the study of race and gender. We will discuss these in the context of the analysis of class structure, and also at least briefly in the discussion of the state and ideology, but we will not have time to explore carefully the wide range of discussions within the Marxist tradition of either of these. When this was a two-semester course, we spent three weeks specifically on feminism and at least two weeks on race. In a single semester, this was impossible. As a result, the course is restricted to the core topics within Marxist class analysis – class, state and ideology.

GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS

WRITTEN WORK

I strongly believe that the way to really understand and engage a set of complex readings is to write about them. Writing is a way of processing ideas and should be a normal, on-going aspect of academic reading. In a real sense, to *study* a piece of scholarship involves writing about it. The writing assignments in this course are therefore designed to facilitate this kind of intense, engaged reading and studying.

There will be four different kinds of written assignments in the course:

1. *Readings interrogations for Part One of the Course*

There are nine topics in Part One of the course, which comprises the first ten sessions of the semester (9/5 through 10/8). For **five** of these topics students are required to hand in 200-300 word (= no more than one page) interrogations of one of the assigned readings for that session. These should raise some kind of question about the argument or analysis in the reading. These interrogations can identify a specific passage that you do not understand, something you read in which the meaning is not clear, or it can involve a question about the reasoning behind an argument or about the evidence in support of an argument. *These statements are due on the day the topic is discussed in class. Late submissions will not be accepted.*

2. *Short Papers*

During Part Two of the course students are required to write *two* short 8-10 page papers (2500-3000 words). These are **NOT** meant to be mini-term papers requiring additional reading, but instead should be concise reflections and analyses of issues raised in the core readings and lectures. These papers should be typed, and should not exceed 3000 words. Longer papers are not better papers.

For each paper, your assignment is to take one or more of the readings in the syllabus for a section of Part Two of the course preceding the paper's due date (see below), and write an essay engaging the central idea(s) of the reading. The precise form of this essay is up to you. It can be written as if it were designed to be a published "commentary" in a journal, or a book review, or a substantive essay in its own right dealing with the issues in the reading. The paper can certainly bring in material from outside the readings for the course, but this is not necessary. The important thing, however, is that the essay should not be merely (or even mainly) expository. It should be "critical," meaning that you should engage the arguments under review. In general, in an 8 page paper of this sort no more than two pages should be directly summarizing the reading itself.

The papers (drawing from the readings and discussion for the indicated sessions) are due at the beginning of class on the following dates:

- Paper #1 Monday November 19 (covers Sessions 11-21)
- Paper #2 Wednesday December 12 (covers sessions 22-29)

The two papers must be written on different sections of the course. Thus, if you write a paper from Part III for paper #1 you must write on part IV in paper #2.

Be warned: *These are firm deadlines.* The punishment for delinquent papers is that I will not write *any* comments on them.

I encourage students to hand in their papers before the due date. I will try to read them quickly and give you comments so you will have time to revise and resubmit the paper if you wish. Students can also revise the first paper in light of my comments up to the due date for the second paper and resubmit it *so long as the revisions are not merely cosmetic.*

If the paper is significantly better, your grade will change accordingly.

3. *Student Comments on Papers*

In addition to writing these short papers, students are required to prepare written comments on papers by **three** other students in the class for the first of the two papers handed in. It is often easier to recognize problems in reading other people's writing than in one's own, and thus exchanging and criticizing each other's papers is a good way of improving one's writing and analytical skills. **Students should thus hand in four copies of the first short paper.** I will keep one and distribute the other two. Comments on other students' papers will be due one week after the papers are distributed. When you give the comments back to the students whose papers you have read, you should give me copies of the comments so that I know that they have been done.

4. *Take-home final*

On the last day of classes a final "exam" will be handed out that will be due on Wednesday, 12/19. The exam will contain the kinds of questions which frequently appear on the Sociology Department's Class Analysis and Historical Change prelim examination.

EXTRA SESSIONS AND TUTORIAL HELP

The ideas and readings in this course are difficult, and it is always a challenge to teach this kind of material when students in the class have such different levels of background and the class includes graduate students as well as undergraduates. Because this is a core course in the graduate sociology program in class analysis, I do not want to water it down by gearing it primarily to students without much prior knowledge of the material. In order to deal with this problem I am doing three things:

(1). *Undergraduate discussion session.* I will hold a bi-weekly discussion section with undergraduates on Fridays 10-11ish. I will meet with the undergraduates in the class the first week to see if students would actually come to this discussion. I do not want to schedule this extra session unless students make a strong commitment to come.

(2). *Office Hours.* I will hold office hours on Mondays and Wednesdays before class from 8:30-10 in the Catacombs coffee house (the basement of Pres House). Students do not need to make appointments for this; it is a chance to ask questions and get clarifications on the material.

(3). *Graduate Student Mentoring.* We will set up a mentoring system within the class in which every undergraduate will have a specific graduate student mentor to help with the material. I strongly believe that teaching is one of the best ways of learning and thus I see this mentoring relation as beneficial to the graduate students as well as the undergrads. (Depending upon the ratio of graduate students to undergrads, we may rotate the mentoring responsibilities during the semester.)

READING MATERIALS

This course requires extensive reading. I would not assign a given piece if I didn't think it worth the effort, but the effort required will be considerable. For the entire semester there are about 2,500 pages of reading, or about 150 pages per week. Ideally, you should try to do most of the reading before the lectures. The following books, which are suggested for purchase, have been ordered at Rainbow Bookstore. Most of them should also be on reserve in H.C. White:

- Adam Przeworski, *Capitalism and Social Democracy* (Cambridge U. Press, 1985)
- Erik Olin Wright *Class Counts (student edition)* (Cambridge University Press, 2000)
- Erik Olin Wright, *Interrogating Inequality* (Verso: 1994)
- G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: a defense* (expanded edition) (Princeton U.P., 2000)
- Göran Therborn, *The Power of Ideology and the Ideology of Power* (London, Verso: 1980)
- Göran Therborn, *What Does the Ruling Class Do When It Rules?* (London, Verso: 1978) [Note: This book is out of print, so I have included the required pages in the photocopy reader. If you can find a copy, I recommend it for purchase]

In addition, a packet of photocopied reading materials has been prepared for your use covering the CORE readings assigned in the course. These will be available at the Social Science Copy Center. There will also be a copy on reserve in the Social Science Reading Room.

Organization of the Syllabus

The readings in each section are grouped under several categories. These should be interpreted as follows:

BACKGROUND READINGS: These readings generally provide a quick and simple overview of a general topic area. They are frequently not as analytically rigorous as the main readings, but may be useful to get a general sense of concepts and issues, especially for people with little or no background in the particular topic.

CORE READINGS: These are the readings which all students are expected to read as part of the normal work in the course. The lectures will presuppose that students have read these core readings prior to the lecture. In the syllabus, readings in the photocopied reader are denoted by brackets.

SUGGESTED READINGS: Graduate students taking the course are expected to read at least some of the suggested readings, and undergraduates are encouraged to do so. Students who are using the bibliography to study for the Class Analysis and Historical Change Prelim Examinations should read extensively in the suggested readings sections.

SCHEDULE OF LECTURE TOPICS

Part One. Introduction: A Preliminary Tour Across the Terrain of Social Science in the Marxist Tradition

- W 9/5 1. The Broad Structure of Marxist Theory: Normative Foundations, the Diagnosis of Capitalism, Historical Materialism, and “Sociological Marxism”
M 9/10 2. The Broad Structure of Marxist Theory, continued
W 9/12 3. Oppression, Exploitation and Class
M 9/17 4. Complexities of Class Structure: the Middle Class, Careers, Families & Other Problems
W 9/19 5. Class and Race
M 9/24 6. Class and Gender
W 9/26 7. Class Formation
M 10/1 8. Class Analysis of the State
W 10/3 9. The Class Analysis of Ideology
M 10/8 10. Thinking about Alternatives to Capitalism: Envisioning Real Utopias

Part Two. Elaborations

I. Methodological and Philosophical Issues

- W 10/10 11. Knowledge and Reality: the Tasks of “Critical Realism” as a Stance in Social Science
M 10/15 12. Miscellaneous Metatheoretical Issues: Levels of Abstraction; Structures & Actors; Micro/macro Analysis

II. the Theory of History

- W 10/17 13. What Is a “Theory of History”?
M 10/22 14. Classical Historical Materialism: the Strong Version
W 10/24 15. Classical Historical Materialism, continued
M 10/29 16. Critiques and Reconstructions of Historical Materialism
W 10/31 17. Capitalist Dynamics: a Sketch of a Theory of Capitalist Trajectory

III. Class Structure and Class Formation

- M 11/5 18. Class Structure: Alternative Conceptualizations
W 11/7 19. Elaborations of the Concept of Exploitation
M 11/12 20. Rationality, Solidarity and Class Struggle
W 11/14 21. The Dilemmas of Working Class Collective Action

IV. the Theory of the State and Politics

- M 11/19 22. What Is “Politics”? What Is “The State”?
W 11/21 23. The State & Accumulation: Functionality and Contradiction
M 11/26 24. The State and the Working Class: Democratic Capitalism and Social Stability

V. Ideology and Consciousness

- W 11/28 25. Mystification: Ideology as False Consciousness
M 12/3 26. Ideological Hegemony and Legitimation
W 12/5 27. Ideology and Exploitation: the Problem of Consent
M 12/10 28. Explaining Consciousness: Micro-foundations for the Theory of Consciousness

VI. Transforming/transcending Capitalism

- W 12/12 29. Alternative Scenarios for Radically Transforming Capitalism

Readings

PART ONE. INTRODUCTION:

A preliminary tour across the terrain of social science in the Marxist tradition

Studying a theoretical tradition is a bit like learning a language: in order to really understand in a dictionary what any given word means (except for words that can be defined by a picture of some concrete thing) you need to already know the language in which the dictionary is written. In a sense, therefore, to fully understand any given concept within the Marxist tradition requires that you already have a pretty good familiarity with the whole conceptual framework. It is for this reason that this course begins with a relatively rapid tour across the full range of topics within the Marxist tradition. We will begin in the first two sessions with a kind of aerial flight that lays out the broad structure of this conceptual terrain. Then, in the next 8 sessions we will introduce the basic themes of class, the state, ideology.

Sessions 1 & 2. The broad structure of Marxist theory: normative foundations, the diagnosis of capitalism, historical materialism, and “sociological Marxism”

Marxism has always been easier for non-Marxists to define than for Marxists themselves. Non-Marxists generally define Marxism as a doctrine (or worse, dogma) which defends a set of propositions about society based on the work of Karl Marx. Marxism = Marx’s-ism. Marxists, on the other hand, have engaged in endless debates over precisely what constitutes the irreducible core of that doctrine, what is essential and what is not, what aspects of Marx’s work should be retained and what aspects discarded or revised, whether Marxism is primarily a “method” or a set of substantive propositions, whether Marxism is a general theory of society and history, or just a specific theory of certain properties of societies. Such debates are complex and often opaque. We will encounter them in many different guises throughout the course.

In these initial sessions we will not want to delve into the intricacies of these debates. Rather I will lay out what I see as the central properties that define Marxism as a distinctive tradition of critical social science. I will do this in two ways: First, I will lay out a series of core propositions which I map out the basic substance of Marxist theory. These will be organized around three themes:

1. *Normative foundations* – the core values which provide the motivational unity to the intellectual and political tasks of the Marxist tradition. Here we will focus especially on the idea of “human flourishing” as implicitly understood in the Marxist tradition and the role of “economic equality” and “community” as conditions for enhancing such flourishing.
2. *Diagnostic theses* – the core theses of the Marxist critique of capitalism, theses that answer the question: what is wrong with capitalism? Here the critical issue is the way in which capitalism is seen to both generate an enhanced *potential* for human flourishing and, at the same time, to *block the realization* of that potential.
3. *Historical possibility theses* – the core theses that frame the strategic problem of what to do about the ways in which capitalism blocks the realization of the potential for flourishing. This turns out to be the most controversial part of Marxism. Here we will map out two different clusters of arguments, one closely identified with classical Marxism and usually called “historical materialism”, and another one more identified with contemporary neo-Marxist reconstructions, which I will call “sociological Marxism”

Second, I will briefly compare the broad character of Marxism as a field of critical social theory with feminism.

Both of these can be viewed as “emancipatory social theories” and both of them establish, at least in part, agendas within social science. Seeing where these currents of theory differ will help us map out the problem of Marxist class analysis as a distinctive kind of theoretical enterprise.

BACKGROUND READINGS:

Tom Mayer, *Analytical Marxism*, chapter 1, “Foundations of Analytical Marxism”, pp.1-24
Rius, *Marx For Beginners* (London: Two Worlds Publishers, 1977)

CORE READING:

[1] G.A. Cohen, “Back to Socialist Basics”, *New Left Review* #207, September-October, 1994, pp.3-16

Erik Olin Wright, “Marxism After Communism”, Chapters 1, pp.234-248 in *Interrogating Inequality*

Erik Olin Wright, “A Framework of Class Analysis in the Marxist Tradition,” chapter 1 in *Foundations of Class Analysis* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming), pp. 6-11:
<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/found-c1.PDF>

Michael Burawoy and Erik Olin Wright, “Sociological Marxism,” in Jonathan Turner (ed), *Handbook of Sociological Theory* (Plenum: forthcoming), pp. 1-16, 24-32:
<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/SocMarx.pdf>

Erik Olin Wright, “Explanation and Emancipation in Marxism and Feminism,” chapter 10 in *Interrogating Inequality*

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Erik Olin Wright, Andrew Levine and Elliott Sober, *Reconstructing Marxism: essays on explanation and the theory of history* (London: Verso, 1992), Chapter 1. “Marxism: Crisis or Renewal?” and Chapter 8. “Prospects for the Marxist Agenda”

FURTHER READINGS:

David McLellan, *Karl Marx* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), chapter ii, “The Thought”, pp.19-76.

Frederick Engels, “Socialism: Utopian and Scientific”

Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism* (London: NLB, 1976)

Ernest Mandel, *The Formation of the Thought of Karl Marx* (Monthly Review Press, 1971).

V.I. Lenin, “Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism” (in Selected Works [Moscow: Progress Publishes]).

Session 3. Oppression, Exploitation and Class

Perhaps the most distinctive property of the Marxist concept of class is the link between “class” and “exploitation”. In this session we will try to develop a rigorous definition of exploitation and examine the relationship between exploitation so defined and class structure.

Traditionally, the Marxist concept of exploitation has been closely linked to the labor theory of value. In recent years the labor theory of value has come under considerable attack, and these attacks have called into question the concept of exploitation as well. In this lecture we will first briefly look at the labor theory of value as the original way in which exploitation in capitalist societies was analyzed by Marx and then turn to sociological reformulation of the concept of exploitation that does not depend upon the technical apparatus of the labor theory of value. At its core this reformulation understands exploitation as a form of *antagonistic material interests* of actors within a system of production that satisfy three primary conditions: (1) the material well-being of the advantaged group is causally at the expense of the material well-being of the other; (2) this inverse relationship between material well-being is generated by the exclusion of the disadvantaged group from access to economically important resources; (3) this exclusion enables the advantaged group to appropriate the labor effort of the disadvantaged group. If only the first two of these criteria are present we have a situation of *nonexploitative economic oppression*. When all three are present we have exploitation.

BACKGROUND READING:

Tom Mayer, *Analytical Marxism*, chapter 3, “Exploitation: conceptual issues”, and Chapter 4, “Exploitation: applications and elaborations” pp.58-130

CORE READINGS:

[2] Erik Olin Wright, *The Debate on Classes* (London: Verso, 1990), pp. 278-301

Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts*, chapter 1, “Class Analysis”, pp. 1-15

Session 4. Complexities of Class Structure: the middle class, careers, families & other problems

The most intense debates among Marxists over the analysis of class structure have revolved around the problem of specifying the location of the “middle class(es)” in the class structure. This is distinctively a problem posed at the middle level of abstraction of class analysis. At the level of abstraction of mode of production, classes are polarized; at the level of abstraction of conjunctures, the analysis of “empty places” involves an array of intra-class divisions, segments, fractions, nonclass locations, etc. The problem of the middle class, is thus a problem of decoding the class structure at the level of the “social formation” as it is sometimes called.

In this session we will very briefly review a range of alternative strategies that have been adopted by Marxists to deal with the problem of the middle classes. Four alternatives have been particularly important:

1. *Simple polarization* views of the class structure: In this view, there is no “middle class” at all, except perhaps for the traditional petty bourgeoisie. All positions are either in the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. In effect, this stance insists that classes can only be defined at the highest level of abstraction, the level of the polarized mode of production.

2. *Segments of Traditional Classes*: There are two versions of this stance. In the first, the middle class is viewed as a segment of the petty bourgeoisie (the New Petty Bourgeoisie); in the second, it is treated as a segment of the working class (the New Working Class). In both of these views the distinction between manual and mental labor looms large as a class criterion. Frequently the distinction between productive and unproductive labor is important as well.

3. *The New Class*: the middle classes of advanced capitalism are viewed, in this perspective, as a distinctively new class in its own right, a class which emerges in the course of capitalist development and which is defined by its distinctive relationship to knowledge or culture. In some versions this new class has the potential of vying for the position of dominant class; in others it is a permanent subsidiary class. But in either case it is a proper class, not a segment of any other class.

4. *Contradictory Class Locations*: This stance rejects the assumption of all of the others that all locations within a class structure must be viewed as falling into a unique class. Class locations -- the "empty places" in the structure of class relations -- may be simultaneously located within two or more classes. We will examine two versions of this account, one centering on the relationship between domination and exploitation, and the other on the problem of multiple forms of exploitation.

We will also, again briefly, explore a number of additional complexities in the analysis of class structure:

1. the *temporal* dimension of class locations (class locations embody time horizons)
2. *multiple* class locations (many people hold more than one job in different class locations)
3. *mediated* class locations (links to the class structure via family and social networks)

CORE READINGS:

[3] Erik Olin Wright, *Classes* (London, Verso, 1985), pp. 37-42

Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts*, pp. 15-27

Erik Olin Wright, "A Framework of Class Analysis in the Marxist Tradition," chapter 1 in *Foundations of Class Analysis* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming), pp. 12-25.

<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/found-c1.PDF>

[4] Erik Olin Wright, *The Debate on Classes*, pp. 323-348

SUGGESTED READINGS

John Goldthorpe, "On the Service Class", in Anthony Giddens and Gavin Mackenzie (eds), *Social Class and the Division of Labor* (Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp.162-85

Philippe van Parijs, "A Revolution in Class Theory", in *The Debate on Classes*, pp.213-243

Tom Mayer, *Analytical Marxism*, chapter 5. "Class", pp.131-171

John Gubbay, "A Marxist Critique of Weberian Class Analysis" *Sociology*, 31:1, February 1997, pp.73-89

Val Burris, Arthur Stinchcombe, Peter Meiksins, Johanna Brenner and Erik Wright, "Symposium on Erik Olin Wright's *Classes*", in *The Debate on Classes*, pp.157-211

Erik Olin Wright, "Varieties of Marxist Conceptions of Class Structure," *Politics & Society*, 9:3, 1980

Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, Chapter 6.1, "Defining Classes", pp.319-331

FURTHER READINGS

- Peter Whalley and Steven Crawford, "Locating Technical Workers in the Class Structure," *Politics & Society*, v.13:3, 1984, pp. 239-52
- Guiglielmo Carchedi, "Two Models of class analysis -- a review of E.O.Wright, *Classes*", *Capital & Class*, #29, Summer 1986, pp.195-215, reprinted in *The Debate on Classes*
- Albert Szymanski, *Class Structure: a critical perspective* (New York: Praeger, 1983), Appendix, "Critique of Alternative Conceptualizations of Class," pp.602-645
- Richard Hyman, "White Collar Workers and Theories of Class", in *The New Working Class?* edited by Richard Hyman and Robert Price (London: MacMillan, 1983), pp. 3-45
- Richard Hyman and Robert Price (eds), "The Search for Theory: Synthesis or Dissonance", in *ibid.*, pp.98-144.
- Gavin Mackenzie, "Class Boundaries and the Labor Process", in Anthony Giddens and Gavin Mackenzie (eds), *Social Class and the Division of Labor* (Cambridge University Press, 1982).pp. 63-86.
- Nicos Poulantzas, "On Social Classes", *New Left Review*, 78, 1973
- Erik Olin Wright, *Class, Crisis and the State*, chapter 2, especially pp.61-97
- Pat Walker (ed), *Between Capital and Labor* (Boston: South End Press, 1979).
- Nicos Poulantzas, *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* (London: NLB, 1975).
- G. Carchedi, *On the Economic Identification of Social Classes*, (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977).
- R.W. Connell, "A Critique of the Althusserian Approach to Class," *Theory and Society*, 8:3, 1979
- N. Abercrombie and J. Urry, *Capital, Labour and the Middle Classes* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983)
- John Gubbay and Rosemary Crompton, *Economy and Class Structure* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978).
- Dale L. Johnson (ed), *Class & Social Development: a new theory of the middle class* (Sage, 1982).
- Allin Cottrell, *Social Classes in Marxist Theory* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), especially ch. 2

Session 5. Class and race

Frequently radical theorists tend to see race as posing very similar problems for class analysis as gender. I think this is a mistake. These are distinctively different kinds of social relations and practices, and they have distinctively different kinds of articulation to class. Specifically, racial domination has often had a much more direct and powerful articulation to class domination than has been the case for gender. This is strikingly the case for slavery in capitalist societies, where racial domination was a central component of the system of class exploitation. In this sessions I will explore the general issue of the articulation of race and class by discussing two specific empirical problems:

(1) Who benefits from racism? One of the central problems in the interrelationship between race and class is the issue of who benefits from racism. Specifically, it is a contentious political issue whether white workers, white capitalists or both benefit from racism. This is a complex issue and we cannot possibly explore it in detail here, but I will try to clarify the theoretical issues at stake in the debate. Answering this question will require some attention to a difficult counterfactual: which social categories would have their material interests undermined by reductions in racial oppression.

(2) How should we explain transformations in race relations in the United States? Here I want to address a specific historical question posed by the sociologist David James: why was the civil rights movement successful in the 1960s whereas it had failed earlier? Why were race relations transformable towards less oppressive forms in the U.S. South then, but not in 1900 or 1930? James proposes an interesting class theory of the conditions for the *transformability* of racial domination which still gives racial domination real autonomy.

CORE READINGS:

[5] David James, "The Transformation of the Southern Racial State: class and race determinants of local-state structures", *ASR*, 53, 1988, pp.191-208

[6] Edna Bonacich, "Class Approaches to Ethnicity and Race," *Insurgent Sociologist*, X:2, Fall 1980, pp.9-24.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel, *Marxism and Socialist Theory* (Boston: South End Press), chapter 6, "Community and History" pp.231-268

Harold Wolpe, "Class concepts, class struggle and racism", in John Rex and David Mason (eds) *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp.110-130

Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, second edition (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1994)

Peter Weinreich, "The Operationalization of identity theory in racial and ethnic relations," in Rex and Mason (eds) *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp.299-320

Larry Bobo, "Group Conflict, Prejudice and the Paradox of Contemporary Racial Attitudes", in P.A. Katz (ed), *Eliminating Racism: profiles in controversy* (New York: Plenum, 1988)

Larry Bobo, "White's Opposition to Busing: Symbolic Racism or Realistic Group Conflict?", *J. of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1983, Vol.45:6, pp.1196-1210.

Tom Nairn, "The Modern Janus," *The Break up of Britain* (New Left Books)

Steve Erie, *Rainbow's End: Irish-Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics, 1840-1985* (University of California Press, 1988). Selections

Robert Miles, *Racism* (London: Routledge, 1989)

Session 6. Class and gender

Perhaps the biggest challenge to class analysis among radical intellectual has revolved around the problem of the relationship between class and other forms of oppression and struggle, particularly gender and race. The characteristic form of this challenge involves the accusation that Marxist class analysis is guilty of one or more of the following sins:

1. The concept of class in Marxism is gender-blind and/or race-blind, whereas class relations are inherently gendered and racialized.
2. Marxist class analysis tends to "reduce" gender and race to class. That is, gender and race oppression are treated as if they can be fully explained by class oppression.
3. Marxist class analysis treats race and gender as "epiphenomena" -- that is, as effects which are not themselves causally important for anything else. They are treated as "surface phenomena", symptoms of something else, but not important in their own right.

Because of time constraints we cannot, in this course, thoroughly explore the theoretical and empirical problem of the relation of class to gender and to race. Nevertheless, it is important to respond to these objections and define a general perspective on how to think about the structural interconnection between class and other forms of oppression.

In this session we will lay out a general conceptual menu for how to think about the interconnection of class and gender. Specifically, we will look at five ways in which class and gender are interconnected:

1. gender as a form of class relations
2. gender as a sorting mechanism into class locations
3. gender relations causally affecting class relations and class relations causally affecting gender relations
4. gender as a basis for mediated class locations
5. gender and class as distinct mechanisms co-determining various outcomes.

I will briefly illustrate a number of these possibilities, but give particular attention to the problem of gender and mediated class locations. This issue has been particularly salient in a recent British debate over how to conceptualize the class location of married women, particularly in two-earner households. Is a secretary married to a factory worker in the same class as a secretary married to a top manager? This problem of defining the class location of married women has been sharply posed in an essay by the British sociologist John Goldthorpe. Goldthorpe argues, quite contentiously, that:

- (a) families are the units of class analysis;
- (b) all members of a family share the same class;
- (c) the class of families is strictly determined by the head of households;
- (d) in nearly all cases the head of household is father/husband in a nuclear family;
- (e) therefore, in general, the class of married women is derived from the class of her husband.

We will carefully examine Goldthorpe's position both theoretically and empirically.

CORE READING

Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts*, Chapters 6-8, pp.115-158

[7] J. Goldthorpe, "Women and Class Analysis: In defense of the Conventional View", *Sociology* 17:4, 1983, pp.465-488

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Michelle Stanworth, "Women and Class Analysis: a reply to John Goldthorpe," *Sociology* 18:2, May, 84, pp.161-169

A. Heath & N. Britten, "Women's Jobs do make a difference: a reply to Goldthorpe," *Sociology* 18:4, 1984, pp.475-90

Robert Erikson, "Social Class of Men, Women and Families", *Sociology* 18:4, November, 1984, pp.500-514

John Goldthorpe, "Women and Class Analysis: a reply to the replies," *Sociology*, 18:4, Nov. 1984, 491-499

Nicky Hart, "Gender and the Rise and Fall of Class Politics", *New Left Review*, 1989, #175, pp. 19-47

Jane Humphries, "Class Struggle and the persistence of the working class family", *Cambridge J of Econ*, 1:3, 1977, pp.241-258

Gita Sen, "The Sexual Division of Labor and the Working Class Family: towards a conceptual Synthesis of Class Relations and the Subordination of Women", *RRPE*, 12:2, 1980, pp.76-86

Session 7. Class Formation

Classes are not simply formed or unformed, organized or disorganized. They are organized in particular manners, with historically specific inter-relationships with the class formation of other classes. One of the important tasks of a Marxist analysis of class formation is to understand the variability in types of class formation, and the central determinants of this variability. In this session our focus will be on one specific kind of class formation: *class compromise*. At first glance, at least within a Marxist framework, class compromise might seem like an oxymoron: if classes are constituted by antagonistic, contradictory, exploitative relations, how can there be genuine “compromises.” Some Marxists, in fact, have regarded compromise as almost always a sham, as simply the ideological dressing for hegemonic class rule. In contrast, we will explore the conditions under which meaningful forms of compromise are possible even within a framework of antagonistic relations.

We will focus specifically on Adam Przeworski's very important contributions to the theory of “class compromise”. Przeworski seeks to demonstrate how class compromise emerges out of the concrete material conditions faced by workers and their organizations, thus avoiding explanations of reformism and economism that rely primarily on “misleadership”, “corruption” or “false consciousness.” Different levels and forms of class organization permit different strategies for advancing interests, and shape those interests themselves. With high levels of organization, reflected in high union density and electoral vehicles of their own, workers are capable of, and commonly interested in, striking accommodations with capitalists through the state. Typically, this takes the form of wage moderation, coupled with the provision of a more generous social wage. Within less highly organized regimes, by contrast, workers' action typically takes the form of more militant “economism” (that is, collective action confined to the economic sphere, centering on particular wage and benefit gains), and is distinctly less solidaristic.

CORE READINGS:

Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts*, pp.190-193

Adam Przeworski, *Capitalism and Social Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), chapter 5.
“Material Interests, Class Compromise and the State” pp.171-203.

[8] Erik Olin Wright, “Working-Class Power, Capitalist-Class Interests and Class Compromise” (*American Journal of Sociology*, January, 2000, pp.957-1002)

FURTHER READINGS:

Michael Burawoy, “Marxism without Micro-Foundations,” *Socialist Review* 89/2 (1989), pp. 54-85.

Adam Przeworski, “Class, Production and Politics: A Reply to Burawoy,” *Socialist Review* 89/2 (1989), pp. 87-111.

David Cameron, “Social Democracy, Corporatism, Labour Quiescence, and the Representation of Economic Interest in Advanced Capitalism,” in Goldthorpe, *Order and Conflict in Contemporary Capitalism* (Oxford: 1984),pp.143-178.

Joel Rogers, “Don't Worry, Be Happy: Institutional Dynamics of the Postwar Decline of Private Sector U.S. Unionism.” *University of Wisconsin Law Review*, 1990.

Ira Katznelson, *City Trenches*

Walter Korpi, *The Working Class in Welfare Capitalism* (RKP, 1981), and *The Democratic Class Struggle* (RKP, 1983)

Francis Castles, *The Social Democratic Image of Society* (RKP, 1978)

Scott Lasch, *The Militant Worker: Class and Radicalism in France and America* (London: Heineman, 1984)

Duncan Gaillie, *Social Inequality and Class Radicalism in France and Britain* (Cambridge, 1983)

Session 8. Class Analysis of the State

The State and Politics can be analyzed in many ways. One can do a game theoretic analysis which focuses on the strategic action dilemmas of actors situated in various ways within and outside of the state. One can do a cultural analysis stressing the formation of norms, values, worldviews and how these impact on state institutions. One can do an historical-institutional analysis of the state, focusing on the processes by which institutions get built in historically critical junctures, and how the legacies of these processes of state building constrain and facilitate subsequent trajectories of politics and the state. And, one can do a “class analysis of the state” in which one attempts to understand the specific class determinants of the state and political processes. The central objective of this session is to explore exactly what it means to do such an analysis. Specifically, we will try to accomplish four things:

- (1) Explore why the problem of the capitalist character of the state is a “problem”. This will involve explaining the distinction between viewing the state as a “state in capitalist society” versus “a capitalist state”.
- (2) Examine some of the possible properties of the “capitalist” state that various theorists have argued have a distinctively capitalist character to them. In particular we will discuss Göran Therborn's attempt at constructing a fairly comprehensive typology of the class character of formal aspects of state institutions.
- (3) Discuss the methodological problems in validating these kinds of arguments. Even if it is legitimate to treat the state as having a distinctive class character, it is a difficult task to empirically establish that a given state intrinsically has a particular class character. It is not sufficient to show that the *policies* of the state are biased in favor of one class, since this could be the result either of instrumental actions of class actors or of the structural properties of the form of the state. Claus Offe argues that in order to establish the class character of the form of the state itself, it is necessary to demonstrate that this form itself produces the class bias, that is, that the form as such excludes anticapitalist policies and effects. This means that the task of proving the class character of the state requires explaining “non-events” -- things which do not happen -- as well as events.
- (4) Think about what it might mean for the state to be a “patriarchal state” rather than simply a “state in patriarchal society”. The reasoning behind the specification of the class character of the state may also be relevant for feminist analyses of the state, but this requires a quite precise understanding of what would constitute a “patriarchal” attribute of a political institution.

CORE READINGS:

- [8a] Göran Therborn, *What Does the Ruling Class Do When It Rules?* (London: NLB, 1978).pp 23-97, 118-119
- [9] Claus Offe, “Structural Problems of the Capitalist State: Class rule and the political system. On the selectiveness of political institutions”, in Von Beyme (ed). *German Political Studies*, vol. I (Sage, 1974).pp. 31-54

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Catherine A. MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp.157-170
- David Gold, Clarence Lo and Erik Olin Wright, “Recent Developments in Marxist Theories of the State”, *Monthly Review*, October and November, 1975.
- Martin Carnoy, *The State*, pp. 131-140
- Claus Offe and Volker Ronge, “These on the Theory of the State” *New German Critique* #6, Fall, 1975.
- Ellen Meiksins Woods, “The Separation of the Economic and the Political in Capitalism,” *NLR* #127, 1981

- Steven Lukes, *Political Power: a radical View* (London: McMillan, 1974)
- John Keane, "The Legacy of Political Economy: Thinking with and against Claus Offe," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, 1978.
- Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, pp.411-422
- Bob Jessop, "Towards a Theoretical Account of the State", chapter 5 in Jessop, *The Capitalist State*.
- Herbert Kitschelt, "Review of Goran Therborn, *What Does...*", *Kapitalistate* #7, 1979
- S. Sardei-Biermann, et. al., "Class Domination and the Political System: a critical interpretation of recent contributions by Claus Offe", *Kapitalistate* #1, 1973.
- Claus Offe, "Advanced Capitalism and the Welfare State" *Politics & Society*, Summer 1972.
- Claus Offe, "Competitive Party Democracy and the Keynesian Welfare State", *Policy Sciences*, 15, 1983, pp.225-246.

Session 9. The Class Analysis of Ideology

The problem of subjectivity has become an increasingly salient theme in all varieties of critical theory. Within the Marxist tradition such concerns are generally theorized under the rubric "ideology and consciousness", whereas in some other traditions "culture" is the buzzword for the study of subjectivity in social life. The increased attention to such themes within Marxism is partially a reaction to the underdevelopment of the theory of ideology in early Marxist work and partially a result of a growing realization that capitalist societies are reproduced not merely through repressive force but through the pervasive impact of various forms of ideology on the subjectivity of workers. In this section of the course we will try to sort out some of the salient features of ideology as a process of reproduction and struggle and some of the critical debates on the theory of ideology in contemporary Marxist discussion.

One preliminary word of caution: Discussions of ideology are particularly complex (and sometimes opaque) because they so directly impinge on questions of methodology, epistemology and philosophy. Disagreements about what is ideology and how its effects and determinants are to be understood are directly implicated in disagreements over what is knowledge and how scientific understandings are to be constructed. Frequently it happens that discussions of ideology become totally preoccupied with these methodological issues, and the actual elaboration of the real mechanisms and dynamics of ideology never gets analyzed in a sustained way. I will try in this section of the course to keep the lectures and readings as substantive as possible. While we will spend some time reflecting on the methodological questions bound up with the study of ideology, we will reserve a full-dress discussion of these problems for a later section of the course.

Debates on ideology typically revolve around two interconnected but distinct questions (a) How should we understand the social process by which ideology is determined? (b) How should we understand the social consequences of ideology? The first of these has been at the heart of discussions of the relative autonomy of ideology, of the ways in which ideology does or does not reflect (in inverted fashion or otherwise) "real" relations, *sect*. The second issue centers on different views of what ideology really is, on how it "functions" within social relations and why it matters. We will focus most of our energies on this second cluster of problems, not because the problem of the determination of ideology is uninteresting, but because the analysis of such determination can be made intelligible only once we understand the logic by which ideology is consequential for human affairs. As we shall see the problem of the "class character of ideology", like the problem of the class character of the state, concerns both of these questions: how class processes in various ways shape ideology and how ideology, in various ways, may reproduce (or, sometimes, undermine) class relations.

There is relatively little consensus among Marxists about precisely what the term "ideology" denotes, and thus, of course, little consensus about why ideology is consequential. We will discuss several different usages of the term

“ideology” that are common in Marxist discussions and then turn to the general problem of the relationship between ideology and subjectivity as a way of integrating these different views. Note that in any case these different usages are overlapping and interdependent rather than mutually exclusive.

In this session I will defend an overarching conception of ideology that has some of its roots in the work of Louis Althusser as this has been transformed by Goran Therborn, although I will criticize Althusser's functionalist tendencies in his analysis of ideology, some of its roots in rational action theory, and some of its roots in what might be termed “Marxist social psychology.” I will argue that other conceptions of ideology -- conceptions which revolve around the concepts of false consciousness, mystification or normative beliefs -- all make important contributions, but are incomplete. Instead a viewing ideology as primarily a set of ideas whether mystified or normative, I will argue that ideology should be regarded a kind of practice (or perhaps more rigorously, as a specific dimension of social practices), namely *a practice which produces human subjectivity*. (Sometimes this is referred to as practices which produce subjects, or subject-producing practices). Ideology is a social practice, a structure of real activities which have the effect of producing and transforming forms of human subjectivity. A “class analysis” of ideology, then, is an analysis of how class relations shape such practices and are, in turned, shaped by them.

BACKGROUND READINGS:

- Raymond Boudon, *The Analysis of Ideology* (London: Polity Press, 1989), c.2, “What is Ideology?”, c. 3 “Is Homo Sociologicus (always) irrational?” and c. 3, “Journey around a Table”, pp.18-68
Jorge Larrain, *The Concept of Ideology* (The University of Georgia Press, 1979), particularly chapter 1, “Historical origins of the concept of ideology” and chapter 2, “Marx's theory of ideology” pp.17-67
Richard Lichtman, “Marx's Theory of Ideology” *Socialist Revolution* #23, 1975
Stuart Hall, “The Hinterland of Science: Ideology and the Sociology of Knowledge” in *On Ideology*, Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (Hutchinson, 1978). pp.9-33

CORE READINGS:

- Göran Therborn, *The Power of Ideology and the Ideology of Power* (Verso, 1980), pp. 1–49
Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts*, pp. 193-197

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Terry Eagleton, *Ideology* (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 1-63
Raymond Geuss, *The Idea of Critical Theory* (Cambridge University P., 1981), chapter 1, “Ideology”, pp.4-44
Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” in *Lenin and Philosophy* (NLB, 1971)
G.McLennan et al., “Althusser's Theory of Ideology” in *On Ideology* (op.cit.), pp.77-108
N. Abercrombie, S.Hill and B. Turner, “Determinacy and Indeterminacy in the theory of Ideology,” *New Left Review*, #142, 1983
Erik Olin Wright, *Classes* (London: Verso, 1985), “What is Class Consciousness?”, pp.242-250
Raymond Williams, “Ideology”, pp.55-74 in *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1977)
Jorge Larrain, *Marxism and Ideology* (Humanities Press, 1983)

Session 10. Thinking about alternatives to capitalism: Envisioning real utopias

All varieties of Marxists have always assumed that some kind of statist socialism -- state ownership of the principal means of production under the control of the working class -- was an essential precondition for the transition to an emancipatory future, generally identified as (small-c) “communism” -- a society without classes, without exploitation, with maximal freedom, etc. This model of a postcapitalism has lost credibility in recent years. While it can certainly be debated whether or not the irrationalities and oppressions of the authoritarian command economies decisively demonstrate that centralized, statist models of socialism inevitably thwart the aspirations of democratic socialists, still, few socialists today have much faith in such models. This loss of faith in statist socialism, in turn, has underwritten the growing power of TINA claims (“there is no alternative”) about the inevitability of capitalism.

In this historical situation, it becomes an especially important task to elaborate alternative models of post-capitalist, emancipatory possibilities. Such alternatives might be termed “real utopias”.

“Real Utopia” seems like a contradiction in terms. Utopias are fantasies, morally-inspired designs for social life unconstrained by realistic considerations of human psychology and social feasibility. Realists eschew such fantasies. What is needed are hard-nosed proposals for pragmatically improving our institutions. Instead of indulging in utopian dreams we must accommodate to practical realities.

In this session we will embrace this tension between dreams and practice. Its premise is that what is pragmatically possible is not fixed independently of our imaginations, but is itself shaped by our visions. Self-fulfilling prophecies are powerful forces in history, and while it may be pollyannaish to say “where there is a will there is a way”, it is certainly true that without “will” many “ways” become impossible. Nurturing clear-sighted understandings of what it would take to create social institutions free of oppression is part of creating a political will for radical social changes to reduce oppression. A vital belief in a Utopian ideal may be necessary to motivate people to leave on the journey from the *status quo* in the first place, even though the likely actual destination may fall short of the utopian ideal. Yet, vague utopian fantasies may lead us astray, encouraging us to embark on trips that have no real destinations at all, or worse still, which lead us toward some unforeseen abyss. Along with “where there is a will there is a way”, the human struggle for emancipation confronts “the road to hell is paved with good intentions”. What we need, then, are “real utopias”: utopian ideals that are grounded in the real potentials of humanity, utopian destinations that have accessible waystations, utopian designs of institutions that can inform our practical tasks of muddling through in a world of imperfect conditions for social change.

In this session we will briefly review several such “real utopian” possibilities: universal basic income; market socialism; empowered deliberative democracy.

CORE READING:

Erik Olin Wright, “Overview: *The Real Utopias Project*”,
<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/OVERVIEW.html>

[9a] Robert Van der Veen and Philippe van Parijs, “A Capitalist Road to Communism”, *Theory & Society* v.15:5, 1986, pp.635-655

Erik Olin Wright, *Interrogating Inequality* (London: Verso, 1994), Chapter 7. “Why Something like Socialism is Necessary for the Transition to Something like Communism”, pp. 157-172

FURTHER READINGS:*Books in the Real Utopias Project*

Joshua Cohen & Joel Rogers, *Associations and Democracy* (London: Verso)

John Roemer, *Equal Shares* (London: Verso)

Samuel Bowles and Herb Gintis, *Recasting Egalitarianism* (London: Verso)

Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright, *Deepening Democracy: Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance* (Verso, 2002 forthcoming), available at: <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/DeepDem.pdf>

Basic Income

Robert Van der Veen and Philippe van Parijs, "A Capitalist Road to Communism", *Theory & Society* v.15:5, 1986, pp.635-655

Erik Olin Wright, "Why Something like Socialism is Necessary for the Transition to Something like Communism", *Theory & Society* v.15:5, 1986

Philippe Van Parijs, "Competing Justifications of Basic Income," in Philippe Van Parijs (ed). *Arguing for Basic Income* (London: Verso, 1992), pp. 3-29

Jon Elster, "Comment on Van der Veen and Van Parijs", *Theory & Society* v.15:5, 1986, pp.709-721

David Purdy, "Citizenship, Basic Income and the State", *New Left Review* #208, November-December 1994, pp.30-48

Philippe Van Parijs, "The second marriage of Justice and Efficiency," in Philippe Van Parijs (ed). *Arguing for Basic Income* (London: Verso, 1992), pp. 215-234

Stakeholder Grant Capitalism

Bruce Ackerman and Ann Alstott, *The Stakeholder Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

Market Socialism

John Roemer, *Equal Shares* (London: Verso)

Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel, *Looking Forward: participatory economics for the 21st Century* (Boston: South End Press, 1991), pp.65-94. To be distributed in class.

Alec Nove, *The Economics of Feasible Socialism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), final chapter: "feasible socialism"

Real Utopian models of Democracy

Joshua Cohen & Joel Rogers, *Associations and Democracy* (London: Verso)

Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright, "Deepening Democracy: innovations in empowered participatory governance", *Politics & Society*, vol. 29, no. 1, March 2001, pp. 5-42

Other sources

Henry Hansman, *The Ownership of Enterprise*

Thad Williamson, *What Comes Next? Proposals for a different Society* (Washington, D.C. National Center for Economic and Security Alternatives, 1997)

Steven Lukes. *The Curious Enlightenment of Professor Caritat* (London: Verso, 1996)

Russell Jacoby, "Utopia-Phobia," *Tikkun* (May/June 1999).

PART TWO. ELABORATIONS

I. METHODOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES

Session 11. Knowledge and Reality: the logic and tasks of “critical realism” as a stance in social science

Social theory in the Marxist tradition has always been closely associated with a set of fierce debates over what are usually called methodological and epistemological issues in social science. Many Marxists have insisted that Marxism is defined, above all, by a distinctive set of methodological principles: Marxism is said to be dialectical, materialist, anti-positivist, in contrast to “bourgeois social science” which is undialectical, idealist, and positivist. Some Marxists, in fact, have gone so far as to say that what is distinctive about Marxism is entirely a question of “method” rather than substance: all of the substantive propositions of Marxism could be proven wrong and yet Marxism would remain valid because its method is valid.

I want to argue against this methodologicalization (to coin an inelegant expression) of what is valuable in the Marxist tradition, or, to put it another way, to argue against the tendency to substitute *meta*-theory for theory. What is vital in the Marxist tradition are the substantive questions it asks about the social world; the concepts it uses to frame those questions, organize empirical research and formulate answers; and the substantive theoretical arguments that get constructed on the basis of the research using these concepts to answer those questions. This does not mean that there are no methodological and philosophical questions that need clarification in order to give precision to the concepts, questions, and answers that constitute the Marxist tradition, but it is the substance which should drive the theory, not method as such.

The kind of social science to which Marxism should aspire, I will argue, can be broadly called “critical realism.” In this session I will try to define what I mean by this expression. In particular we will examine what is “critical” in critical realism and what is “realist” in critical realism.

The Critical in “Critical Realism”

It is useful to distinguish two kinds of theoretical enterprises in social sciences:

#1. Attempts to describe and explain social phenomena in terms of the *actual variations which occur empirically* in the world. Theoretical attention is thus restricted to empirically observable variations which actually occur.

#2. Attempts to describe and explain social phenomena in terms of *variation beyond the limits of what has actually occurred in the world*. Theoretical attention thus allows inclusion of states of the world which do not exist.

Empiricist social science basically adopts the first of these stances. If you want to study inequality, for example, this implies that you study variations in actual levels of inequality, either by looking at variations across individuals or by looking at variations across societies. The value “complete equality” is not considered a legitimate value on the variable “degree of inequality”, since there are no empirical instances where this has occurred.

Critical social science, on the other hand, always encompasses consideration of variation outside of the range of empirically existing reality. The critical theory of communication elaborated by Habermas, for example, includes “domination-free communication” as a form of the variable “communication relations”; the critical theory

of gender relations includes the value “gender equality” in the variable “gender relations”; and the critical theory of class relations -- Marxism -- includes the value “communism” in the variable “social organization of production”. This does not mean that critical theories are not also *empirical* -- they are constructed and revised through an engagement with evidence from the world -- but they are not simply *empirical generalizations* from observable variation.

We will briefly distinguish three forms of critical theory in this session. These are distinguished in terms of how they think about the relevant “alternative” to the existing world: in strictly *moral* terms (utopian critical theory); in terms of *feasible*, but not necessarily likely, alternatives; or in terms of *immanent* alternatives, alternatives that are actively being posed by the causal forces at work in the existing world. Marxism, I will argue, has traditionally been a particular form of an immanent, critical theory, although increasingly many Marxists have shifted towards the less deterministic understanding of feasible alternatives.

The status of “science” in Critical Realism

One of the most contested issues among critical/radical social theorists in recent times is the status of “science” itself. There are strong currents in contemporary thought which often go under the loose rubric “post-modernism” (or sometimes “post-structuralism”) which reject the possibility of anything approaching an “objective” social science. Not only are causal explanations dismissed, but even the possibility of factually accurate descriptions is challenged. Since all knowledge must be constructed through discourses, postmodernists often argue, knowledge can never be said to genuinely “represent” or “reflect” anything.

Here I want to defend an alternative stance towards the enterprise of critical social science, one which affirms the possibility of knowledge within a framework that is sometimes called “scientific realism.” I will try to show that while knowledge is formulated through discourses, nevertheless the goal of science is adopt those discourses which enable knowledge also to be effectively constrained by “reality”. Realism thus rejects the radical perspectivism of post-modernism by claiming that knowledge of the world is possible.

Realism, as I will elaborate it, should not be confused with empiricism and (naive) positivism. In a purely empiricist approach to knowledge, concepts are seen as directly derivable from theory-neutral processes of observation and mental operations, and the causal linkages between concepts are assumed to have a one-to-one correspondence to empirically observable relations among the objects of investigation. Theory, to the pure empiricist, can therefore be constructed simply on the basis of ever-more-refined empirical generalizations. In contrast, within a realist conception of science, it is not assumed that real relations and causes are always observable, and thus the concepts necessary for understanding reality cannot be simply derived from observation in a simple theory-neutral way. Theory is seen as a necessary condition for scientific observation; theory can never simply be a generalization from pre-theoretical observation (since there can be no such thing as pure pre-theoretical observation). The task of theory, then, is to provide a coherent explanation of the real mechanisms and processes which produce the empirical generalizations which we encounter as we experience the world, not simply to order systematically those generalizations.

CORE READINGS:

- [10] Russel Keat and John Urry, *Social Theory as Science* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975) Part One: Conceptions of Science, pp. 27-45 [pp 3-26 and 46-65 are not required, but worth reading]
- [11] Erik Olin Wright “Reflections on *Classes*; section 3. Role of the Scientist”, in Erik Olin Wright, et. al. *The Debate on Classes* (London: Verso, 1989) pp.67-77; Michael Burawoy, “The Limits of Wright's Analytical Marxism and an Alternative”, pp.78-99; Erik Olin Wright, “Reply to Burawoy,” pp. 100-104.

Erik Olin Wright, “What is Analytical Marxism” and “Marxism as Social Science”, chapters 8 & 9 in *Interrogating Inequality*, pp. 178-210

G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History*, expanded edition, pp.xxii-xxviii

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Andrew Collier, *Critical Realism* (London: Verso, 1994), chapter 1., “Why Realism? Why Transcendental?”, pp.3-30

Raymond Geuss, *The Idea of Critical Theory*, chapter 3.”Critical Theory”, pp.55-95

Alvin Gouldner, *The Two Marxisms* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980), especially chapter 1, “Introduction” and c. 2, “Marxism as Science and Critique.”

FURTHER READINGS

Roy Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, (Harvester, 1975), pp.12-62

Roy Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism* (Harvester Press, 1979), pp. 1-30

Ray Pawson, *A Measure for Measures: a manifesto for empirical sociology* (New York: Routledge, 1989)

G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory...*, Appendix I, “Karl Marx and the Withering Away of Social Science”

Alan Garfinkle, *Forms of Explanation* (Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 1-48

Bob Jessop, *The Capitalist State* (New York: NYU Press, 1982), p.211-220

Maurice Godelier, *Rationality and Irrationality in Economics* (MR Press, 1972), “Forward: Functionalism, Structuralism and Marxism” pp. vii-xli

Session 12. Miscellaneous Metatheoretical Issues: Levels of Abstraction; Structures & Actors; Micro/macro Analysis

There are a range of metatheoretical problems which we have already encountered in many of our substantive discussions already which need clarification before we move on to further elaborations. In this session we will briefly explore three issues:

1. *Levels of Abstraction.* Many discussions in sociological theory, whether concerned with Marxist problems or not, become very confused because people are not entirely clear about the appropriate level of abstraction at which concepts and arguments are being posed. More than most traditions of social theory, Marxism attempts to develop a menu of concepts at different levels of abstraction, but Marxists – like everyone else – often forget that different questions get posed at different levels of abstraction and this requires the deployment of appropriate concepts at the same level of abstraction. I will argue that in Marx's own work there is a highly sophisticated and systematic analysis of class structure at a high level of abstraction (usually called “the mode of production”) and of class formation and class struggle at a much more concrete the level of abstraction (sometimes called the “conjuncture”), but that the intermediate levels of abstraction are relatively less developed.

2. *Micro/Macro levels of analysis.* The distinction between *micro-* and *macro-* levels of analysis pervades sociological theory, but often the precise meaning of the contrast is not very clear. This is important because throughout the course we will be exploring microfoundations of macrophenomena. I will also briefly try to explain why the study of microfoundations should not be confused with “methodological individualism” or other efforts at reducing the macro to the micro.

3. *Structure and agency.* Few topics have exercised the attention of sociological theorists in recent decades

more than the “problem” of the relations between what is often called “structure” and “agency”. Often the stakes in these debates are exaggerated – in many contexts the kinds of explanations of social phenomena that come out of empirical research do not depend very much on how one thinks about the structure/agency problem abstractly. Still, when the object of our theoretical work is social change, and especially, perhaps, when it is large scale “epochal” social change, some clarification of the structure/agency problem is helpful. I will elaborate a simple way of thinking through this problem that takes off from Marx’s famous statement that “[people] make their own history, but not just as they please”. The “make” in this statement is a claim about agency; the “not just as they please” is a statement about structure. I will formalize this “dialectic” by seeing structures as *setting limits upon* practices, and practices as *transforming* those structures.

CORE READINGS:

[12] Erik Olin Wright, *Classes* (London: Verso, 1985), pp. 6-24

Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), chapter 10, “A general framework for studying class consciousness and class formation,” pp.185-215

[13] Erik Olin Wright, *The Debate on Classes* (London: Verso, 1990), pp.269-278

[14] Erik Olin Wright, “Methodological Introduction,” *Class, Crisis and the State* (London: Verso, 1978), pp. 9-29

G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx’s Theory of History: a defense* (Princeton University Press, 1978), “The Structural Definition of Class”, pp. 73-77

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Erik Olin Wright, Andrew Levine and Elliott Sober, *Reconstructing Marxism*, Chapter 6, “Marxism and methodological Individualism”, pp.107-127

FURTHER READINGS:

Pierre Bourdieu, “The Social Space and the Genesis of Groups,” *Theory and Society*, vol14:6 (November 1985), pp.723-744

Rogers Brubaker, “Rethinking Classical Theory: the sociological vision of Pierre Bourdieu”, *Theory and Society*, 14:6 (November), pp.723-44

Stuart Hall, “The Political and the Economic in Marx’s Theory of Classes”, in Alan Hunt (ed), *Class & Class Structure*, (Lawrence and Wishart, 1977), pp. 15-61.

E.P. Thompson, “Preface” to *The Making of the English Working Class*, (Penguin, 1968).

Erik Olin Wright, *Class, Crisis and the State*. (London: New Left Books, 1978) “Class Structure and Class Struggle”, pp. 97-108.

II. THE THEORY OF HISTORY

The heart of Marxist social science has traditionally been a theory of history, usually called “historical materialism.” While many Marxists today are highly critical of Marx's formulations of this theory of history, and some even deny the usefulness of any theory of history, historical materialism nevertheless remains in many ways the central point of reference for much general theoretical debate, both among Marxists and between Marxists and non-Marxists.

In these sessions we will examine the central theses of historical materialism as they have been elaborated and defended by G.A. Cohen. Cohen's defense of Marx's theory of history is the most systematic and coherent of any that has been offered. While there is considerable debate over the adequacy of Cohen's reconstruction of historical materialism, I feel that it is faithful to the underlying logic of Marx's argument, and that it has the considerable merit of making that logic much more explicit and accessible than in Marx's own work. Some students will find the idiom of Cohen's exposition -- analytical philosophy -- difficult and awkward. Cohen is preoccupied with making rigorous distinctions in the nuances of the theory, making every assumption explicit and laying out all of the steps in the argument. The first time one reads this kind of analysis, it is easy to become overwhelmed with the fine points and to lose track of the overall thrust of the argument. Still, the book provides a much firmer basis for assessing the merits and limitations of historical materialism than any other discussion I know of, and therefore I think it is worth the effort of mastering it.

Session 13. What is a “theory of history”?

In what sense can “history” as such be a legitimate theoretical object in social science? or is history such a contingent process that no theory of history is possible? In order to approach these questions, a range of possible ways in which history can be included within social theory can be elaborated:

1. History as contextual or conjunctural analysis
2. history as cumulative account of contingent change.
3. History as temporality within theory.
4. history as path-dependent explanations
5. history as developmental trajectories
 - 5.1 evolutionary models
 - 5.2 within-system dynamic models of “laws of motion” of given types of society
 - 5.3 across-system dynamic models of epochal trajectories

The core of the Marxist theory of history is the attempt to coherently theorize history in the sense of type 5, but there are disagreements as to which variety of trajectory theory Marxism attempts to realize.

CORE READINGS:

- [15] Erik Olin Wright, Andrew Levine and Elliott Sober, “What is Historical about Historical Materialism?” chapter 3 in *Reconstructing Marxism* (London: Verso, 1993), pp.47-61

G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History* (Princeton University Press, 1978), Chapter I. “Images of History in Hegel and Marx,” pp.1-27

Sessions 14 & 15. Classical Historical Materialism

We will spend most of our time exploring the strongest version of classical historical materialism -- the version which attempts to produce a general theory of the overall trajectory of human history. In the course of discussing this possibility we will entertain the alternatives.

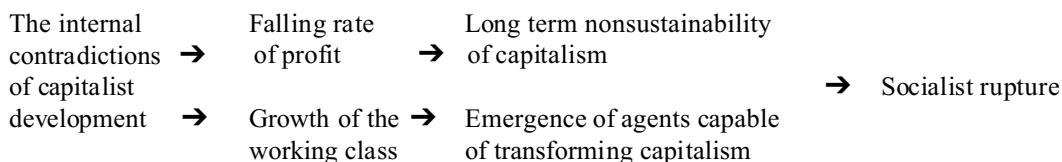
To say that the overall trajectory of historical change is a legitimate theoretical object of explanation implies that history is not simply an empirical outcome of a myriad of entirely contingent processes; some kind of systematic process is operating which shapes the trajectory of historical development. This systematic process need not produce a unique path of historical development -- actual, empirical history is undoubtedly the result of a variety of contingent processes intersecting this more law-like developmental logic -- but there will be some kind of determinate pattern to historical change.

If we provisionally accept the legitimacy of the *project* of building a theory of history, the question then becomes: what are the central driving forces which explain this trajectory? By virtue of what does historical development have a systematic, noncontingent character?

G.A. Cohen has argued in his influential and important book on Marx's theory of history that the only coherent way to reconstruct Marx's views on history is to argue that he was fundamentally a technological determinist. Historical materialism is based on the thesis, Cohen argues, that the forces of production explain the form of the social relations of production, and by virtue of this, the development of the forces of production ultimately explains the trajectory of social development. The heart of this argument is what Cohen characterizes as a "functional explanation", that is, an explanation in which the effects of a structure figure into the explanation of that structure. We will try to understand the central logic of this claim for the primacy of the forces of production. This means we will spend some time examining the nature of functional explanations in general, and then see how Cohen uses such explanations in his analysis of historical materialism.

Within Marxism the crucial pay-off of a theory of history is its application to the specific case of understanding the logic of capitalist development. Historical materialism is not just a general theory of all of human history; it is also a specific theory of the trajectory capitalist history. Indeed, one might argue that this is the very heart of classical Marxism: a theory about the historical trajectory of the development of capitalism culminating in a revolutionary rupture which leads to socialism. The theory is based on two causal chains, both rooted in the internal dynamics of capitalism as a mode of production. One causal chain leads from the contradictions between forces and relations of production within capitalist development through the falling rate of profit to the fettering of the forces of production within capitalism and thus the long term nonsustainability of capitalism; the other causal chain leads through the growth of the working class to the increasing capacity to transform capitalism of those historic agents with an interest in such transformation. The coincidence of these two causal chains makes a rupture in capitalism desirable and possible.

The Traditional Marxist Theory of How Capitalist Contradictions → Socialism



BACKGROUND READING:

Tom Mayer, *Analytical Marxism*. (Sage, 1994), chapter 2. “The Theory of History”, pp. 25-58

CORE READING: (* = required)

*Karl Marx, “Preface” to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, pp. vii-viii in Cohen, Karl Marx's *Theory of History: a defense*. Expanded edition (Princeton University Press, 2001)

G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History* (Princeton University Press, 2001)

The following sections provide definitions and conceptual background for Cohen's arguments:

Chapter II. “The Constitution of the Productive Forces”, pp. 28-37, 40-47, 55-62

Chapter III. “The Economic Structure”, pp.63-69, 77-87

Chapter IV. “Material and Social Properties of Society”, pp. 88-90, 105-108.

The following chapters lay out the central structure of Cohen's argument:

*Chapter VI. “The Primacy of the Productive Forces”, pp.134-171

*Chapter VII. “The Productive Forces and Capitalism”, pp. 175-214

Chapter X. “Functional Explanation in Marxism”, pp.278-296

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Erik Olin Wright, Andrew Levine and Elliott Sober, *Reconstructing Marxism: essays on explanation and the theory of history* (London: Verso, 1992), Part I. The Theory of History.

G.A. Cohen, *KMTH*, the remaining sections of chapters VI, VII and X, and chapter XI.

John McMurtry, *The Structure of Marx's World View* (Princeton University Press, 1978), chapters 2, 3, 7 and 8. [This is a somewhat less rigorous development of a position rather similar to Cohen's].

Gregor McLennan, *Marxism and the Methodologies of History* (London: Verso, 1981)

G.A. Cohen, “Forces and Relations of Production” in Betty Matthews (ed), *Marx: 100 years on* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1983), pp. 111-134

Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1985), 5.1 “The general theory of modes of production” pp.243-272; 5.3 “Marx's periodization of history”, pp.301-317; 7.1 “The nature and explanation of the state”, pp.399-428; 8.1 “Ideologies: stating the problem”, pp.461-476.

Erik Olin Wright, *Classes* (London: NLB/Verso, 1985), pp. 26-37

William H. Shaw, *Marx's Theory of History* (Stanford Univ. Press, 1978), chapter 2, “Marx's Technological Determinism”, pp.53-82.

Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital* (London: NLB, 1970), Chapter 4. “The Errors of Classical Economics: Outline of a concept of Historical Time,” and chapter 5. “Marxism is not a Historicism”, pp.91-144

Maurice Godelier, “Structure and Contradiction in Capital”, in Robin Blackburn (ed), *Ideology in Social Science* (Vintage, 1972).

Session 16. Critiques and Reconstructions of Historical Materialism

These readings explore a number of criticisms of historical materialism and explore some general possible lines for its reconstruction. This discussion will help to frame many of the issues we will engage throughout the year. In particular, we will look at three major issues: the problem of *functional explanation*, the problem of *class reductionism* and the problem of *interests and capacities* for social change.

Functional explanation. Cohen's reading of Marx relies very heavily on functional explanations. The forces of production, he argues, "explain" the relations in that only those relations will persist which are functional for the development of the forces of production. John Elster, among others, has criticized such reasoning on the grounds that functional explanations are, with rare exceptions, illegitimate in social explanations. Since in many places in this course -- in the discussions of ideology, of the state, of patriarchy, of accumulation and crisis -- we have encountered functional explanations it will be useful now to explore in at least a preliminary way the structure and problems of such explanations in Marxism.

Class reductionism. One of the most common critiques of historical materialism is that it is reductionist, that it collapses or reduces all of the complex processes of social life to either the economic or the technological. Typically such anti-reductionist critiques are accompanied by pleas for causal pluralism, or a recognition of the multiplicity of autonomous causal processes operating in history. In order to assess this kind of critique, several theoretical issues need to be clarified: (1). What precisely does historical materialism attempt to explain? Does it try to explain all aspects of historical development or only some? (2). Does assigning primacy of one causal process imply that other causal processes are reducible to the primary process? (3) Is it possible to see various kinds of causal processes as having a "relative" autonomy in their effects, or must causes be either autonomous or nonautonomous? These are all difficult questions, raising a host of methodological and epistemological problems.

Interests and Capacities. Classical historical materialism emphasizes how contradictions between structures -- between the forces and relations of production -- are the driving process of historical transformation, the process which gives it a necessary directionality. Class struggle is important, but "secondary" in the sense that the potential for such struggles to have epochal revolutionizing effects is strictly dependent upon the structural contradictions themselves. This is not a satisfactory way of theorizing the relationship between class struggle and the structural conditions/contradictions within which such struggles occur. One way of dealing with these issues is to argue that with respect to the development of structural contradictions, the *capacities* for struggle by classes have a much more contingent character than assigned them in classical historical materialism. And yet, it can be argued that the *directionality* of the trajectory of social change is to be explained by the possibilities inherent in specific patterns of structural contradiction. This, then, is the basic thrust of one theoretical reconstruction of historical materialism: a materialist approach to history provides us with a map of the *possible* trajectories of social change, but not a satisfactory account of the actual process by which movement along the paths of that map occur. For the latter a theory of the capacities of classes is needed -- a theory of class power and class struggle -- which cannot itself be derived from historical materialism as such.

CORE READINGS:

[16] Erik Olin Wright, Andrew Levine and Elliott Sober, *Reconstructing Marxism* (London: Verso, 1992), chapter 2, "Classical Historical Materialism" (pp. 33-46 required; pp. 13-32 recommended), and chapter 5, "Toward a Reconstructed Historical Materialism" (pp. 89-100).

[17] Jon Elster, "Marxism, Functionalism and Game Theory", *Theory & Society*, 11:4, July, 1982, pp. 453-482

G.A. Cohen, *KMTH*, "Reconsidering Historical Materialism" and "Restricted and Inclusive Historical Materialism", pp. 341-388

SUGGESTED

[18] Ellen Meiksins Wood, "History or Technological Determinism?", chapter 4 in *Democracy Against Capitalism: renewing historical materialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp.108-145

Joshua Cohen, "Review of G.A. Cohen, KMT" *Journal of Philosophy*, 1982, v.79, 253-73

Erik Olin Wright, *Classes* (NLB/Verso, 1985), "The Theory of History", pp.114-118

The Critique of Economic Determinism:

Anthony Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (UC California Press, 1981)

Erik Olin Wright, "Giddens' Critique of Marx", *New Left Review*, #139, 1983.

G.A. Cohen, "Reconsidering Historical Materialism," *NOMOS*, 1983, 227-251

Jean L. Cohen, *Class and Civil Society* (Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1982)

Anthony Cutler, Barry Hindess, Paul Hirst and Athar Hussain, *Marx's Capital and Capitalism Today*, vol. I, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), pp. 135-156, 207-242.

Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production*, (Telos Press, 1975)

The Debate over Functional Explanation in the Theory of History

G.A. Cohen, "Reply to Elster on 'Marxism, Functionalism and Game Theory'", *Theory & Society*, 11:4, pp.483-496.

Philippe van Parijs, "Functionalist Marxism Rehabilitated: a comment on Elster", *Theory and Society*, 11:4, pp.497-512

Johannes Berger and Claus Offe, "Functionalism vs. Rational Choice?: some questions concerning the rationality of choosing one or the other," *Theory & Society*, 11:4, pp.521-526

Jon Elster, "Cohen on Marx's Theory of History," *Political Studies*, XXVIII:1, (March, 1980), pp.121-128.

G.A. Cohen, "Functional Explanation: reply to Elster," *Political Studies*, XXVIII:1 (Mar 1980), pp.129-135.

G.A. Cohen, *KMT*, chapter IX. "Functional Explanations: in general"

Philippe Van Parijs, "Marxism's Central Puzzle" in Terrance Ball and James Farr (eds) *After Marx* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 88-104

James Noble, "Marxian Functionalism", in Ball and Farr, *ibid.*, pp. 105-120

Richard W. Miller, "Producing Change: work, technology and power in Marx's Theory of History," in Ball and Farr, *ibid.*, pp. 59-87

Richard W. Miller, *Analyzing Marx: morality, power and history* (Princeton U. Press, 1984), pp.171-270

Session 17. Capitalist Dynamics: a sketch of a Theory of Capitalist trajectory

Even if we give up the grand ambition of constructing a full-blown theory of history, there remain elements of historical materialism which can serve as the basis for developing a theory – or at least a framework for thinking about – of the trajectory of capitalist development. The centerpiece of this framework is the idea of sequences of social change emerging out of contradictions in the reproduction of capitalist relations. The basic idea is this: capitalist class relations generate contradictory conditions for their own reproduction. This makes a stable, static reproduction of capitalism impossible. Institutional solutions to the problems of reproducing capitalism, therefore, have a systematic tendency – not a contingent one, but a systematic tendency – to become less effective over time. This generates a pattern of development in which periods of stability are followed by crises of various sorts which provoke episodes of institutional renovation. Given that this occurs in the context of on-going capitalist accumulation and development of the forces of production, there is a certain kind of directionality to these

successive institutional solutions and reconstructions, and thus they can be described as constituting a “trajectory” of change rather than simply random variations over time.

In this session we will explore this way of thinking about large scale social change within capitalism. The objective here will be less to establish a definitive theory of this trajectory than to examine the underlying reasoning that would go into the development of this kind of theory.

CORE READINGS:

- [19] Erik Olin Wright, “Historical Transformations of Capitalist Crisis Tendencies,” c.3 of *Class, Crisis and the State*, pp.111-180.
- [20] Robert Brenner, “The Economics of Global Turbulence,” *New Left Review*, May/June 1998, pp. 24-38
- [21] Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century* (Verso1994), pp.1-26, 159-165, 228-238, 364-367

FURTHER READING:

- Paul Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development* (Monthly Review Press, 1942/1968). pp. 75-108, 133-139, 214-236.
- Marx, *Capital*, vol. I.
 - Chapter 23. Simple Reproduction.
 - Chapter 24. The Transformation of Surplus Value into Capital.
 - Chapter 25. The General Law of Accumulation.
- Marx, *Capital*, vol. III. (International Publishers Edition, 1967). Part III. “The Law of the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Fall”
- Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, section 3.3 and 3.4, pp.142-165
- Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital* (Monthly Review Press)
- Ernest Mandel, *Late Capitalism* (London: NLB, 1975)
- James O'Connor, *The Fiscal Crisis of the State* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1973).
- Manuel Castells, *The Economics Crisis and American Society* (Princeton University Press, 1980)
- R. Boddy and J. Crotty, “Class Conflict and Macro-Policy: the political business cycle,” *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 7:1, 1975.

III. CLASS STRUCTURE AND CLASS FORMATION

Session 18. Class structure: alternative conceptualizations

Our initial discussion of class structure in sessions 3 and 4 more or less took for granted a broadly Marxist agenda of class analysis. The concept of class, however, figures in a range of non-Marxist theoretical traditions, and it is important to have a fine-grained understanding of how these different conceptualizations differ. The *word* class is deployed in a wide range of explanatory contexts in sociology and, of course, depending upon that explanatory context, different *concepts* of class may be needed. Four broad kinds of questions are particularly common for which the word “class” figures centrally in the answer: First, the word “class” sometimes figures in the answer to questions such as: “How do people locate themselves within a social structure of inequality?” Class is one of the possible answers to the question. In this case the concept would be defined something like: “a social category sharing a common set of subjectively-salient attributes within a system of social stratification”. In this usage, class is typically understood as some kind of amalgam of status and economic attributes that are culturally salient in people’s identities. Class would be a special kind of status group in this conception, and like other status groups it would be marked by distinctive life styles, tastes, and sensibilities.

Second, class is offered as part of the answer to the question: “What *explains* inequalities in economically-defined life chances and standards of living?” Here, typically, the concept of class would not be defined by subjectively-salient attributes of a social location, but rather by the relationship of people to income-generating resources or assets of various sorts. While people may also share tastes and lifestyles and come to hold beliefs about their locations in the system of inequality generated by their relationship to these resources, and these beliefs and lifestyles in turn may be consolidated into salient identities, it is the relation to resources rather than the subjective identities as such which define classes. In this conceptualization, class would be contrasted with other possible bases by which life chances are determined: gender, race, caste, citizenship.

Third, class often figures in answers to the question, “What are the economic cleavages in society that systematically generate overt conflicts?” As in the second question, this one suggests a concept of class closely linked to the causes of inequalities in economic opportunities, but here the concept attempts to identify those aspects of economic inequality which generate antagonisms of interest. Classes would not be defined simply by a commonality of the conditions which generate economic opportunities, but those specific clusters of common conditions which pit people against each other in the pursuit of those opportunities. Class, here, would be contrasted on the one hand with noneconomic sources of social cleavage – such as religion or ethnicity – and, on the other hand, nonclass forms of economic cleavage – such as economic sector or geographical region.

Finally, class plays a central role in answering the question, “What sorts of struggles have the potential to transform capitalist economic oppressions in an emancipatory direction?” This is a much more complex and normatively contentious question. It implies defining classes in such a way that they do not simply specify social categories with different economic opportunities, nor even simply social categories whose interests are pitted against each other. What is required is a specification of categories whose struggles contain the potential of fundamental transformations of the antagonisms themselves. The contrast here is with conflicts that are entirely contained within the existing “rules of the game” and conflicts that, by virtue of the nature of the cleavage on which the conflict is based, contain the potential to transform the very nature of the game itself.

Given this diversity of the explanatory and descriptive tasks within which the word class appears, it is easy to see why debates over class are often confusing. Sometimes, of course, there is a genuine debate: alternative proposals for what concepts are needed to answer the same question are in dispute. Other times, however, the debate simply reflects different agendas. Some sociologists proclaim that class is disappearing, by which they mean that people are less likely to form stable identities in class terms and thus less likely to orient their political behavior on the basis of class, while others proclaim that class remains an enduring feature of contemporary

society, by which they mean that a person's economic prospects in life continue to depend significantly on their relationship to economically valuable assets of various sorts

In this session we will focus specifically on the conceptual lines of demarcation between the definition of class within the Marxist and Weberian traditions of class analysis. Since in contemporary discussions Weberian approaches to class analysis are often treated as an explicit alternative and challenge to Marxist treatments, it is important to specify rigorously precisely what it is that distinguishes these two perspectives on class.

CORE READING

Erik Olin Wright, *Interrogating Inequality*, chapter 1, "Inequality", pp.21-31

Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts* (Cambridge University Press, student edition, 2000) section on Weber

[22] John H. Goldthorpe, "Social Class and the Differentiations of Employment Contracts," in *On Sociology* (Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.206-229

SUGGESTED READING

Other Marxist-Inspired Class Analysis

Adam Przeworski, "Proletariat into a Class: the process of class formation from Kautsky's *The Class Struggle* to recent contributions", Chapter 2, *Capitalism and Social Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 1985) pp.47-97

Rosemary Crompton and Jon Gubbay, *Economy and Class Structure* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), especially chapter 1

Rosemary Crompton, *Class and Stratification* (Polity Press, 1993)

Albert Szymanski, *Class Structure: a critical perspective* (New York: Praeger, 1983), chapter 1.

Terry Johnson and Ali Rattansi, "Social Mobility without Class", *Economy & Society*, 10:2, 1981.

Charles Tilly, *Durable Inequalities* (University Of California Press, Berkeley 1998)

Stephen A. Resnick and Richard D. Wolff, "A Marxian Theory of Classes", in Resnick and Wolff, *Knowledge and Class* (University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 109-163

The following are a number of non-Marxist discussions of class theory that are useful for clarifying the contrast between Marxist and various nonMarxist approaches:

Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (University of California Press, 1978, edited by Gunther Roth), Chapter IV, "Status Groups and Classes", and Chapter IX, part 6, "The Distribution of Power within the Political Community: Class, Status and Power." pp.302-7, 926-39

John Scott, *Stratification & Power* (Polity Press 1996)

Gordon Marshall, *Repositioning Class* (Sage, 1997)

Anthony Giddens, *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973)

Frank Parkin, *Marxist Class Theory: a Bourgeois Critique* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), especially part one, "Rethinking Class Analysis," pp. 3-116

Ralph Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Societies* (Stanford University Press, 1959).

Gerhard Lenski, *Power and Privilege* (McGraw Hill, 1966)

Werner S. Landecker, *Class Crystallization* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1981).

John H. Goldthorpe, *Social Mobility & Class Structure in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

A. Stewart, K. Prandy and R.M. Blackburn, *Social Stratification and Occupation* (Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp.1-11, 89-113, 173-207, 277-283

Dennis Gilbert and Joseph Kahl, *The American Class Structure* (Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1982)

Session 19. Elaborations of the concept of Exploitation

Twenty five years ago, anyone who wanted to talk about “exploitation” within the Marxist tradition adopted the labor theory of value as the essential idiom for doing so. Even when people were somewhat skeptical of the adequacy of the LTV as a general tool for the analysis of the dynamics of capitalist economies, it was viewed as providing the necessary tools for properly specifying exploitation. This is no longer the case. While the LTV may still be heuristically useful, the sociologically relevant concept of exploitation does not in any way depend upon it. In this session we will first review the logic of the labor theory of value and then examine two alternatives: John Roemer’s approach to exploitation based on a specific use of rational action models, and Aage Sorenson’s identification of exploitation with the concept of economic rent.

CORE READINGS:

- [23] Paul Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1947), chapter IV. “Surplus Value and Capitalism”, pp. 56-71
- [24] John Roemer, “New Directions in the Marxian Theory of Class and Exploitation”, *Politics & Society*, 11:3, 1981 pp.253-287
- [25] Aage Sorenson, “Toward a Sounder Basis for Class Analysis,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 105:16 (May 2000): 1523-58

SUGGESTED READINGS ON THE LTV:

- Erik Wright, “The Meaning of Accumulation”, pp.113-124, in *Class, Crisis and the State*, London: New Left Books, 1978)
- Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. I (any edition). Chapter 6. “The Sale and Purchase of Labor power”; and Chapter 7. “The Labor Process and the Valorization Process.”
- Marx, *Capital*, vol. I (Vintage edition, 1976)
- Chapter 6. The Sale and Purchase of Labor power. pp.270-280
- Chapter 7. The Labor Process and the Valorization Process. 283-306
- Chapter 8. Constant Capital and Variable Capital. 307-319
- Chapter 9. The Rate of Surplus Value. 320-329
- Chapter 10. The Working Day. 340-344,375-416.
- Chapter 11. The Rate and Mass of Surplus Value. 417-426
- Chapter 12. The Concept of Relative Surplus Value. 429-438
- Ian Steedman, et. al., *The Value Controversy*, (London: New Left Books, 1981)
- Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, “Structure and Practice in the Labor Theory of Value”, *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 12:4, 1983, pp.1-26.
- Ian Steedman, *Marx after Sraffa* (London: NLB, 1977), pp. 13-29
- Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, section 3.2, “The Labor Theory of Value”, pp.127-141
- Ben Fine and Laurence Harris, *Rereading Capital* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), c.2. “Value, Price and the Transformation Problem”, pp. 21-48. [This is an able restatement of the traditional position in light of the Sraffa critique].
- Ian Steedman, et. al. *The Value Controversy* (London: NLB/Verso, 1981). Especially the following essays:
- Erik Olin Wright, “The Value Controversy and Social Research”, pp.36-74.
- Geoff Hodgson, “Critique of Wright: 1. Labour and Profits”.pp.75-99
- Pradeep Bandyopadhyay, “Critique of Wright: 2. In Defense of a Post-Sraffa Approach”, pp. 100-129
- Erik Olin Wright, “Reconsiderations”, pp.130-162
- G.A. Cohen, “The Labour Theory of Value and the Concept of Exploitation”, pp.202-223.

- Bob Rowthorn, "Neo-Classicism, Neo-Ricardianism and Marxism", *New Left Review* #86, 1974.
- Anwar Shaikh, "Marx's Theory of Value and the Transformation Problem", in Swartz (ed), *The Subtle Analysis of Capitalism*, op.cit. pp.106-139.
- G.C. Harcourt, "The Theoretical and Social Significance of the Cambridge Controversies in the Theory of Capital", *ibid.* pp.285-303.
- Review of Radical Political Economics*, vol.14:2, Summer 1982, special issue on "Modern Approaches to the Theory of Value".
- Richard D. Wolff, Antonio Callari and Bruce Roberts, "A Marxian Alternative to the Tradition 'Transformation Problem'", *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 16:2-3, 1984, pp.115-136

SUGGESTED READINGS ON ROEMER'S APPROACH:

John Roemer, *Free to Lose* (Harvard University Press, 1988), chapters 2, 5 and 7.

The following articles are critiques of the essay in the core reading by Roemer:

- Erik Olin Wright, "The Status of the Political in the Concept of Class Structure," chapter 3 in *Interrogating Inequality*
- Jon Elster, "Roemer vs. Roemer". *Politics & Society*, 11:3, 1981
- Adam Przeworski, "Exploitation, class conflict and socialism: the Ethical Materialism of John Roemer", Chapter 7 of *Capitalism and Social Democracy*
- John Roemer, "Reply", *Politics & Society*, 11:3, 1981

Other readings by Roemer:

- "Should Marxists be Interested in Exploitation?" *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 14:1 (1985), pp.30-65
- A General Theory of Exploitation and Class* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 1-25, 194-216, 233-289
- "Exploitation, Alternatives and Socialism", *The Economic Journal*, March, 1982.
- "Methodological Individualism and Deductive Marxism", *Theory and Society*, 11:4, 1982

Session 20. Rationality, solidarity and class struggle

In this session and the next we will focus on the problem of the formation of solidarity in a world of competitive individualism. Whatever else might be the case, for the working class to be able to exert effective class power either within capitalism or against capitalism, workers have to be able to form strong collective organizations, and this requires solving the problem of solidarity. In this first session we will look at the approach of Jon Elster to this problem. Elster sees the formation of solidarity within the working class as an example of the classic problem of collective action as understood within game theory: given that the benefits of class struggle are unlikely to be monopolized by the actual participants in the struggle, what prevents workers from being "free-riders", from avoiding the obvious costs of participation in struggle while reaping the benefits of successful struggles? This, he argues, is the heart of the problem of "solidarity". Elster's task is to explore the ways in which Marx dealt with these issues and to raise a series of problems based on an assessment of Marx's position. At the core of Elster's analysis is the claim that the formation of solidarity involves a transformation of the "game" in which workers attempt to build organization from a "prisoners dilemma" to an "assurance game", that is, from a game characterized by purely selfish preference orderings of individuals to one with "conditional altruist" preference orderings.

CORE READINGS:

- [17] Jon Elster, "Marxism, Functionalism and Game Theory", *Theory and Society*, 11:4, July, 1982, pp. 453-482
- [26] Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, chapter 6.2, "Class Consciousness", pp. 344-71 (suggested: 6.3, pp. 371-97)
- [27] Jon Elster, *Ulysses and the Sirens* (Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 18-28

SUGGESTED

Pam Oliver, Gerald Marwell and Ruy Teixeira, "The Theory of the Critical Mass", *American Journal of Sociology*, 1984

Session 21. The Dilemmas of Working Class Collective Action

Claus Offe, in his essay with Helmut Weisenthal, also operates within a broadly rational actor model of solidarity. He, however, is less concerned with the free rider problem as such than with the problem of the nature of the interests of class actors within struggle. In particular, he attempts to understand the specificity of the problem of class formation of the working class by way of a contrast within the logic of class formation within the bourgeoisie. Offe and Wiesenthal argue that there is a fundamental asymmetry in the logics by which these two classes are organized in capitalist society, and that this asymmetry helps to explain the particular trajectory of class formation/class struggle in such societies. This asymmetry stems from the different kinds of interests of workers and capitalists at stake in class struggles, the different requirements of leadership, hierarchy and organization to realize these interests, the problems of communication inherent in each of their class situations, and certain other issues.

CORE READING:

- [28] Claus Offe and Helmut Wiesenthal, "Two Logics of Collective Action: theoretical notes on social class and organizational form," in Maurice Zeitlin (ed), *Political Power and Social Theory*, vol. 1, 1980 (JAI Press, 1980), pp.67-116.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

John Bowman, "The Politics of the Market: economic competition and the organization of capitalists", *Political Power and Social Theory*, vol. 5, pp.34-88 (JAI Press, 1985)

IV. THE THEORY OF THE STATE AND POLITICS

Session 22. What is “Politics”? What is “the state”?

Many of the debates over the state and politics, both within Marxism and between Marxist and nonMarxist perspectives, are confused because the labels are being used to designate different phenomena, different concepts, different structures and processes. While it may seem somewhat scholastic to have a discussion centering entirely on what we mean by these terms, a sharp clarification of these issues is important. In particular in this session we will try to develop some basic understandings of four interconnected concepts that will reappear throughout this part of the course: politics, power, domination and the state. Somewhat schematically, I will argue for the following definitions:

Politics: practices through which social relations are reproduced and transformed.

Political Power: the capacities or resources used to reproduce and transform social relations.

Domination: a social relation within which political power is unequally distributed, i.e. where the capacities to reproduce and transform social relations are unequally distributed.

State: the most superordinate institutional site in which domination is exercised over a given territory.

BACKGROUND READING:

Tom Mayer, *Analytical Marxism*, chapter 6 “The State”

CORE READINGS:

Erik Wright, “Class and Politics”, chapter 5 in *Interrogating Inequality*

[29] Robert Alford and Roger Friedland, *The Powers of Theory: capitalism, the state and democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp.1-14, 408-426

[8b] Goran Therborn, *What Does the Ruling Class Do When It Rules?*, (London: Verso 1978) pp.129-138, 145-153

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Michael Mann, “Societies as Organized Power Networks,” Chapter 1 in *The Sources of Social Power* (Cambridge University Press, 1986) pp.1-33

Max Weber, “The Political Community”, *Economy and Society*, chapter 9 in volume II (University of California Press edition, 1978).

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (New York: McMillan, 1962), pp.129-133

Anthony Giddens, *Nation State and Violence* (Polity Press, 1986), pp 7-34

Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”, in Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971)

Alan Wolfe, “New Directions in the Marxist Theory of Politics”, *Politics & Society*, 4:2, 1974

Erik Olin Wright, “The Status of the Political in the Concept of Class Structure”, *Politics & Society*, 11:3, 1982.

Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, pp.399-408

Barry Hindess, “Classes and Politics in Marxist Theory,” in Littlejohn,(ed), *Power and the State*, (London:

Croom Helm, 1978)

Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel, *Marxism and Socialist Theory* (Boston: South End Press, 1981), chapter 3. "Politics and History."

Ernesto LaClau, "The Specificity of the Political", in LaClau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (London:NLB, 1977)

Michael Burawoy, "Between the Labor Process and the State: The Changing Face of Factory Regimes Under Advanced Capitalism", *The American Sociological Review*, 48:5, October 1983, revised as chapter 3 in Burawoy, *The Politics of Production*.

Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, especially part IX, "Barbarism and Civilization"

Steven Lukes, *Power: a Radical View* (London: McMillan, 1974)

Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory* (University of California Press, 1979), pp.85-94

Anthony Giddens, "Domination, Power and Exploitation: a analysis", chapter 2 in *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (University of California Press, 1981)

Nicos Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism* (NLB, 1978), pp35-62, 123-154.

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (Vintage, 1979)

Session 23. The State & Accumulation: functionality and contradiction

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the recent revitalization of Marxist theorizing on the state was in its early stages, the general consensus among Marxists was that the welfare state fundamentally functioned to reproduce and strengthen bourgeois domination. While there was considerable disagreement over what was the most salient function of the welfare state (coopting the working class, fragmenting subordinate classes, subsidizing the costs of reproducing capital, etc.) and an equal amount of debate over how to conceptualize the mechanisms for accomplishing these functions (instrumental manipulation by capitalists, structural determinations by the mode of production, derivation from the logic of capital, etc.), there was little disagreement over the status of the welfare state as essentially reproductive of capitalist rule.

Thirty years later the welfare state is under considerable attack throughout the capitalist world, and many of the former critics of those institutions find themselves defending the various apparatuses and programs of the welfare state. This quite dramatic transformation of the political context for theoretical work on the state has helped stimulate new views on the nature of the welfare state, the logic of bourgeois democracy and the relationship of classes to the state. There is now a much greater emphasis on the crisis-ridden character of the state, on its role in generating rather than simply containing contradictions.

In this session we will examine some of the main themes in these discussions of the crisis of the state. In particular, we will examine two general conceptualizations of these crisis tendencies: the first, which emphasizes the contradictory character of the relationship between the *legitimation* and *accumulation* functions of the state, and the second, which emphasizes contradictions between the *form* of the state and tasks which it is called on to perform.

In legitimation vs accumulation argument, the welfare activities of the state expanded largely out of the need for the capitalist state to create legitimacy (either for itself or for capitalism) among subordinate groups/classes. This expansion was possible so long as such policies did not conflict with the requirements of capital accumulation. Eventually, however, the expansion of welfare spending began to undermine accumulation itself for various reasons -- it was a drain on surplus value because it was unproductive; it reduced the effectiveness of the reserve army of labor and thus resulted in a lowering of the rate of exploitation; it directly raised the value of labor power by transferring income to the working class (raising the "social wage"). The result, then, is a particular kind of economic crisis -- "stagflation" -- combined with a particular kind of political crisis -- initially a fiscal crisis of

the state, followed by a concerted assault on welfare state programs.

While the central theme of most analyses of tendencies toward state crisis in advanced capitalist welfare states is some sort of version of the legitimation/accumulation contradiction, there is a second line of thought that has emerged which focuses more on the internal organization of state apparatuses -- what Therborn calls their "administrative technologies" -- and the tasks required of those apparatuses. In this case, instead of there being a contradiction *between two functions* of the state, there is a contradiction *between its form and its functions*. The implication of this perspective is that the resolution of the crisis requires more than just a change of state *policies* -- elimination or reduction of programs, changes in emphases among types of state spending, etc. -- but a *structural reorganization* of the apparatuses as well.

BACKGROUND READINGS:

Erik Olin Wright, *Class, Crisis and the State*, chapter 3, "Historical Transformations of Capitalist Crisis Tendencies"

CORE READINGS:

- [30] Claus Offe, "The Capitalist State and the Problem of Policy Formation", in Leon Lindberg (ed), *Stress and Contradiction in Contemporary Capitalism* (D.C. Heath, 1975) pp. 125-144
- [31] Claus Offe, "The Crisis of Crisis Management: elements of a political Crisis Theory", in Claus Offe, *Contradictions of the Welfare State* (London: Hutchinson, 1984) pp. 35-61

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Ian Gough, *The Political Economy of the Welfare State*, chapter 6. "The Welfare State and the Capitalist Economy" and chapter 7. "The Welfare State and the Crisis", pp.102-152
- James O'Connor, *The Fiscal Crisis of the State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973), pp.5-12, 40-64, 97-178, 221-260
- Sam Bowles and Herb Gintis, "The Crisis of Capital and the Crisis of Liberal Democracy: the case of the United States", *Politics & Society*, vol.11:1,1982, pp. 51-94.
- Alan Wolfe, "The Legitimation Crisis of the State", *The Limits of Legitimacy* (New York: Basic Books, 1977)
- Claus Offe, "Competitive Party Democracy and the Keynesian Welfare State", *Policy Sciences*, 15, 1983, pp.225-246. reprinted in Offe, *Contradictions in the Welfare State*, op.cit.
- Sam Bowles, "Have Capitalism and Democracy come to a Parting of the Ways?" in U.R.P.E., *Capitalism in Crisis* (URPE, 1978)
- Jurgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston: Beacon, 1975)
- Stephen Skorownek, "National Railroad Regulation and the Problem of State Building: interests and institutions in late nineteenth century America", *Politics & Society*, 10:3, 1981
- David Abraham, "State and Classes in Weimar Germany," *Politics & Society*, 7:3, 1977

Session 24. The State and the Working Class: Democratic Capitalism and Social Stability

In a famous passage from *Class Struggles in France* Marx portrayed the linkage of democracy and capitalism as an intensely contradictory couplet:

The comprehensive contradiction of this constitution, however, consists in the following: the classes whose social slavery the constitution is to perpetuate, proletariat, peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, it puts into the possession of political power through universal suffrage. And from the class whose old social power it sanctions, the bourgeoisie, it withdraws the political guarantees of this power. It forces the political rule of the bourgeoisie into democratic conditions, which at every moment help the hostile classes to victory and jeopardize the very foundations of bourgeois society. (Marx/Engels, *Selected Works in Three Volumes*, vol.I, Moscow, pp.235-6)

Lenin, writing some sixty years later in *The State and Revolution*, claimed that parliamentary democracy was the “best possible shell” for the perpetuation of bourgeois rule. Can these two positions be reconciled? Do they reflect distinct theoretical stances towards the problem of “bourgeois democracy” or do they simply reflect the changing conditions of bourgeois rule from the mid-19th century to the twentieth century?

These issues are hardly simply questions of textual interpretation: the debate over the class character of parliamentary democracy remains at the very heart of both theoretical and political debates over the state on the left today. Can the state be “used” by different classes in the pursuit of their class interests, or does the state have a monolithic class character? Does the parliamentary form of the capitalist state contain within itself contradictory principles? Particularly since the “problem of democracy” has become such a central political concern given the history of “actually existing socialist” states, the answers to such questions are of fundamental importance.

In this session we will look at how capitalist democracies work, how they structure class struggle in such a way that they simultaneously contribute to social reproduction and open opportunities for potentially explosive social changes. Particular attention will be paid to the dynamics of electoral competition and the ways in which this shapes the possibilities of radical objectives.

CORE READINGS:

Adam Przeworski, *Capitalism & Social Democracy*, chapter 1 and chapter 3, pp.7-46, 99-132.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, *On Democracy* (Penguin, 1983). especially, Chapter 3, “Structure”, pp.47-87

Bob Jessop, “Capitalism and Democracy: the Best Possible Shell?”, in Littlejohn, et. al. (eds) *Power and the State* (London: Croom Helm, 1978).

Perry Anderson, “The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci”, *New Left Review* #100, 1977.

Goran Therborn, “The Rule of Capital and the Rise of Democracy”, *New Left Review* #103, May-June 1977.

Bob Jessop, “The Political Indeterminacy of Democracy”, in Alan Hunt (ed) *Marxism and Democracy*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1980), pp. 55-80.

Erik Olin Wright, *Class, Crisis and the State*, (London: NLB, 1978), chapter 4. “Bureaucracy and the State”

Barry Hindess, “Marxism and Parliamentary Democracy” in Hunt, op.cit., pp.21-54

Barry Hindess, “Democracy and the Limitations of Parliamentary Democracy in Britain,” *Politics & Power*, #1 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980).

Bob Jessop, “Parliamentary Democracy: the limitations of Hindess”, *Politics & Power* #2, 1980.

Barrington Moore, Jr. *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).

Andrew Levine, *Liberal Democracy: a critique of its theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981)

V. IDEOLOGY AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Session 25. Mystification: ideology as false consciousness

This is perhaps the most common usage of the term ideology. Ideology is a set of distorted ideas about the world. Used in this way, ideology is implicitly contrasted to “science”, cognitively undistorted (or at least less pervasively distorted) knowledge of the world.

Ideology understood as mystification has played a particularly important role in Marxist discussions. (Marx's concept of “commodity fetishism” and Lukacs' concept of “reification” are two important examples of this usage.) Ideology is seen as preventing workers from understanding the nature of their oppression and the possibilities of its transformation. The absence of effective struggle for socialism, then, is at least in part explained by the pervasiveness of these cognitive distortions.

We will analyze ideology as false consciousness in terms of several interconnected issues:

- (a). The distinction between distortions of what exists and distortions of conceptions of alternatives to what exists;
- (b). The problem of the *source* of mystification -- “propaganda” or “common sense” (lived experience);
- (c). The relationship between cognitive distortions (mystifications within consciousness) and unconscious aspects subjectivity.
- (d). The problem of functionalism within the theory of mystification: are mystifications always functional for the reproduction of capitalism? Does mystification distort the perceptions of interests of the bourgeoisie as well, perhaps in ways which reduces their ability to manage capitalism?
- (e) The problem of “objective” interests.

This final issue -- the problem of objective interests -- is particularly problematic. The distinction between “objective” and “subjective” interests is deeply implicated in the Marxist theory of ideology since whenever expressions like “false consciousness” and “mystification” are used there is the implication that ideology in one way or another masks the true interests of actors.

The concept of objective class interests has had a troubled career in Marxism. On the one hand, claims that a specific policy or strategy are “in the *objective* interests of the working class” have served as justifications for antidemocratic, elitist forms of politics in which leadership pays little attention to the subjective preferences of workers. Because of this latent elitist implication, many Marxists reject the concept of “objective” interests altogether. On the other hand, in the absence of a theory of objective interests, socialism becomes simply one value-preference among others. It may be morally desirable according to a particular value system, but it has no privileged status as being in the “objective interests” of the working class. The rejection of the objectivity of interests thus has a tendency to lead to a kind of moral and political relativism and accordingly blunts the critical edge of analyses of ideology.

CORE READINGS:

Marx, *Capital*, vol.I (any edition), chapter 1, section 4, “Commodity Fetishism”

G.A.Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), chapter V. “Fetishism”, pp. 115-133

[32] Raymond Geuss, *The Idea of Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), chapter 2, “Interests”, pp.45-54.

[33] Michael Rosen, *On Voluntary Servitude: false consciousness and the theory of ideology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp.1-3, 9-11, 30-53

SUGGESTED READINGS;

Terry Eagleton, *Ideology*, pp.70-91

Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, section 2.3.2., “Fetishism”, pp.95-99

Ted Benton, “Objective Interests and the Sociology of Power”, *Sociology*, 15:2, 1981, pp.161-184.

Issac Balbus, “The Concept of Interest in Pluralist and Marxist Analysis”, *Politics & Society*, February, 1971

William Connolly, “On Interests in Politics,” *Politics & Society*, 2:4, 1972, pp.459-77.

George Lukacs, “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat”, in *History and Class Consciousness*

Gareth Stedman Jones “The Marxism of the Young Lukacs”, in *Western Marxism: a Critical Reader* (NLB, 1977)

Jorge Larraín, *The Concept of Ideology*, c.6, “Science and Ideology”, pp.172-212

Steven Lukes, *Power: a radical view* (London: McMillan, 1976)

Session 26. Ideological Hegemony and Legitimation

In this lecture we will explore two inter-related concepts that often play a central role in discussions of ideology: *legitimation* and *hegemony*.

Ideology as legitimation is undoubtedly the most frequent usage of “ideology” among non Marxists, where ideology is usually understood as an “ism”, but such usage is found often enough in Marxist discussions as well. In this usage ideology consists of a systematic set of normatively integrated beliefs about what is good and bad, desirable and undesirable. Max Weber's work on forms of legitimacy (legitimate authority) and generalized world views (eg.Puritanism) revolve primarily around this notion of ideology (although he does not use the term in this context). Marxist discussions of legitimation, particularly as it relates to the state, also center on ideology as a normative system.

Ideological Hegemony is perhaps the least familiar usage of the concept of ideology. Many times, in fact, the term is used interchangeably with expressions like “ideological domination”, and the specificity of hegemonic ideology is lost. Most broadly understood, hegemony constitutes the capacity of a class to systematically tie the interests of other classes to the realization of its own interests. Such a capacity is bound up with the leadership role played by the hegemonic class, a leadership which is at once economic, political, cultural and moral (as Gramsci was fond of saying). Ideological hegemony, then, is the ideological aspect of this capacity, of this linking together of the interests of subordinate classes to those of the dominant class. Hegemony understood in this way, it should be noted, is not simple mystification. The leadership capacity is objectively grounded and the coordination of interests is based on real compromises/sacrifices rather than just propaganda. Hegemony may underwrite mystifications -- such as the belief in the unchangeability of the social order -- but hegemony itself is based on the actual capacity to provide such direction to the society as a whole.

At the ideological level, as Chantal Mouffe argues following Gramsci, such hegemony depends upon the extent to which the ruling class is able to incorporate into its own ideology pivotal elements of popular ideologies which are then reorganized and combined in such a way as to reinforce the position of dominance of the ruling class.

What, then, is the relationship between “hegemony” and “legitimation”? Do the two necessarily go together? Can one have hegemony without legitimation or legitimation without hegemony? These are some of the issues we will engage in this session.

CORE READING:

- [34] Chantal Mouffe, "Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci", in *Gramsci & Marxist Theory* (ed. by Mouffe, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 168-204
- [35] Jurgen Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, pp.183-188
- [36] Nicholas Abercrombie, Stephen Hill and Bryan Turner, *The Dominant Ideology Thesis* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980), pp.7-29, 156-180
- Göran Therborn, *The Power of Ideology and the Ideology of Power*, pp.93-112

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Ellen Meiksins Woods, *The Retreat from Class* (London: Verso, 1986), chapter 4, "The Autonomization of Ideology and Politics", pp.47-76
- John Rawls, *Theory of Justice* (Harvard University Press, 1971), section 29
- Ernesto LaClau, "Towards a Theory of Populism", in *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, (London: NLB, 1977), pp.143-199
- Ernesto LaClau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: NLB/Verso, 1984)
- Antonio Gramsci, "The Intellectuals," "The Modern Prince," "The State and Civil Society" in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (International Pub., 1971)
- Perry Anderson, "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci" *New Left Review* #100, 1977
- Walter Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution: Gramsci's Political and Cultural Theory* (U. of California Press, 1980)
- Max Weber, "The Types of Authority and Imperative Coordination" *Economy and Society*, vol.I. reprinted in Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (ed by T.Parsons, New York: Free Press, 1947). pp.324-362
- Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, Part 1, Chapter 1, section b. "Concerning the production of consciousness"
- Jurgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, Part III. "On the Logic of Legitimation Problems", pp.95-143
- Jurgen Habermas, "Historical Materialism and the Development of Normative Structures" in Habermas, *Communication and the evolution of society*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979)

Session 27. Ideology and Exploitation: the Problem of Consent

If the distinction between labor power and labor provided the conceptual breakthrough which enabled Marx to develop the theory of surplus value and exploitation, the analysis of the labor process provided him with the concrete empirical focus analyzing the distinctive dynamics of exploitation in capitalism. Workers sell their labor power on the labor market to the capitalist; they perform actual labor within the labor process. The possibility of surplus value -- the process of exploitation -- depends upon the capacity of capitalists to force workers to work sufficiently long and hard within the labor process. This, then, is the focus of Marx's analysis of the labor process: how technological change and reorganizations of the process of work enable the capitalist to increase the amount of surplus labor (value) created by workers within the labor process.

In the last two decades, beginning with the seminal contribution of Harry Braverman, a great deal of empirical and theoretical work has been done on the labor process, with particular attention to the ways in which

capitalists contend with the problem of actually getting workers to perform surplus labor. In this session we will focus on one particular issue within these discussions: how important is the *active consent* of workers to their own exploitation? Is exploitation fundamentally a coercive practice in which workers are continually forced to exert effort, or is there a set of ideological processes involved which elicit the active collusion of workers in their own exploitation?

These questions have been posed recently in a particularly useful way in a debate sparked by Sam Bowles and Herbert Gintis's work on what they call "contested exchange". Their arguments were initially addressed primarily to neoclassical economists with the objective of demonstrating how the surveillance and social control costs of capitalism were a deep inefficiency built into capitalist property relations, but the issues they raise have critical implications for the role of ideology within the process of exploitation as well.

BACKGROUND READING:

Harry Braverman. *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York: MR Press, 1973). pp. 3-139.

CORE READINGS:

[37] Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, "Contested Exchange: New Microfoundations for the Political Economy of Capitalism," *Politics & Society*, June 1990, 165-222

Michael Burawoy and Erik Olin Wright, "Coercion and Consent in Contested Exchange", chapter 6 in *Interrogating Inequality*

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Sam Bowles, "The Production Process in a Competitive Economy: Walrasian, Neo-Hobbesian and Marxian Models", *American Economic Review* (75:1, March 1985), pp.16-36.

Michael Burawoy, *The Politics of Production* (London: NLB/Verso, 1985)

Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1: Chapter 7, part 1. The Labor Process; Chapter 13. Cooperation; Chapter 14. The Division of Labor in Manufacture. Chapter 15. Machinery and Large Scale Industry. Chapter 16. Absolute and Relative Surplus Value.

Session 28. Explaining Consciousness: Micro-foundations for the Theory of Consciousness

In many analyses of ideology, the actual process by which ideologies are formed in the subjectivity of individuals and become part of their consciousness is left unspecified. The cognitive processes involved are usually treated as a black box, and when some reference to the formation of consciousness is made, rarely do arguments go beyond rather vague and typically unsophisticated notions of inculcation and indoctrination.

Clearly if we are to fully understand the nature of ideology as a social process, and particularly if we wish to combat ideologies which restrict the horizons of radical social change, we must do better than this. In this session we will begin to explore some of the ingredients in the problem of the formation of individual consciousness. In particular, we will examine some of the possible mechanisms involved in the individual-level formation and transformation of preferences and beliefs, since these are of such importance in the general problem of consciousness and ideology.

CORE READINGS:

[38] Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, chapter 8, "Ideologies", pp. 458-510.

Göran Therborn, *The Power of Ideology and the Ideology of Power* (NLB/Verso, 1980), pp.31-49

SUGGESTED READINGS

Thomas Piketty, "Social Mobility and Redistributive Politics" *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, August, 1995, pp.551-584

Jon Elster, *Sour Grapes* (Cambridge University Press, 1983)

Raymond Boudon, *The Analysis of Ideology* (London: Polity Press, 1989), chapter 6, "Ideology, social position and dispositions", pp.94-115

VI. TRANSFORMING/TRANSCENDING CAPITALISM

Session 29. Alternative Scenarios for Radically Transforming Capitalism

Throughout most of this course we have focused on the analysis and critique of capitalism. We have spent relatively little time thinking about the nature of alternatives or about the strategic problem of how to get there from here. In this final session of the course we will explore the broad alternative scenarios for radically transforming capitalism that have at different times and places figured in anti-capitalist struggles. Three strategic conceptions seem especially important:

- (1) *Revolutionary rupture*: The traditional Leninist position sees the capitalist state as so pervasively bourgeois in its fundamental character that it cannot not in any serious way be used in the construction of socialist society. It must be “smashed” in its totality. This smashing is viewed as feasible because the underlying contradictions of capitalism render capitalism a relatively fragile social order and the state, ultimately, a vulnerable apparatus of reproduction.
- (2) *Social Democratic Reformism*. The traditional social democratic view sees the state as essentially flexible, if not strictly neutral, and therefore a suitable vehicle for socialist reforms. Socialism can be introduced through a long sequence of relatively incremental changes in the “rules of the game” of capitalism which, cumulatively, amount of a change in the nature of the game itself.
- (3) *Nonreformist reforms*. While the capitalist state needs ultimately to be fundamentally transformed in order to accomplish a socialist transformation, nevertheless because of its internal contradictions and lack of unity in capitalism, it can still be used as instrumentally in the long term strategy for social transformation. The term coined to capture this idea in the 1970s was “nonreformist reforms”: *reforms* insofar as they were achievable within the limits of possibility of existing institutions, *nonreformist* in so far as they expanded those limits of possibility for future change. At its core this strategic vision involves struggles to deepen and broaden democracy with a goal of creating spaces within capitalism within which prefigurative forms of alternatives to capitalism can develop.

CORE READING:

[39] Erik Olin Wright, “Socialist Strategies and the State”, chapter 5, *Class, Crisis and the State*. pp.226-252

SUGGESTED READINGS:

John Stephens, *The Transition from Capitalism to Socialism*, chapters 2,3,6
Martin Carnoy, “The State, Democracy and the Transition to Socialism”, chapter VI in *The State*
Norberto Bobbio, “Are there Alternatives to Representative Democracy?”, *Telos*, #35, 1978.