

Political & Economic Philosophy – PHI 6934
Grasping at Invisible Hands:
Critiquing Capitalism & The Drive for Recognition

Professor: Jon Rick
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Professor's Office Hours: Tuesday: 2-3:30 and By Appointment

Course Location/Times: Tuesday: Periods 5-6 (11:45am-1:40pm) MAT 0116 & via Zoom
Thursday: Period 6 (12:50pm-1:40pm) MAT 0116 & via Zoom

Course Website: <https://elearning.ufl.edu> (Canvas)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Ours is an age in which, for the right price, almost anything can be bought and sold. It is an age where the mechanism of the Market reigns supreme in organizing the production and distribution of nearly everything we might value (and, indeed, also much of what we don't). Ours is not merely a market economy but a *market society*: The principles of market exchange increasingly govern more and more of our social life, well beyond even the buying and selling of material goods. Living in a market society, like any society, has its benefits and burdens. The aim of this course is to interrogate the origins and value of living life on the open market - or, put alternatively, life organized within the political economic framework of Capitalism. These will be our governing, guiding questions: What exactly is a market society or Capitalist Political Economy? What are its commitments, constituents, and moral psychological underpinnings (for this latter question, we will focus primarily on the moral 'economy' of esteem)? What are moral successes and moral limitations of market capitalism? What alternatives are there to Market Capitalism? Our readings be primarily historical, focusing on the political economic writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Adam Smith, and Karl Marx. Some contemporary sources will also be considered as well.

REQUIRED READINGS:

All required readings for this course will be made available in a folder named 'Required Readings' (under 'Files') on our course's Canvas page.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & ASSIGNMENTS:

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|---|----------------|
| 1. Attendance & Participation | 25% |
| 2. Two Seminar Presentations on Required Readings | 20% (10% each) |
| 3. Short Prompted Paper | 15% |
| 4. Final Seminar Paper | 40% |

Grading Scale

A	4.0	94-100
A-	3.67	90-93
B+	3.33	87-89
B	3.0	84-86
B-	2.67	80-83
C+	2.33	77-79
C	2.0	74-76
C-	1.67	70-73
D+	1.33	67-69
D	1.0	64-66
D-	0.67	60-63
E	0.0	0-59

Attendance & Participation

Both regular attendance and participation are essential to any graduate seminar. We're here to discuss these works and workshop our ideas together. But, we're also here in a pandemic, and things can go pear-shaped at any moment (believe me, I know!). So, if you need to be absent from our weekly meetings, please just let me know as soon as you can.

Excused absences must be consistent with university policies in the Graduate Catalog (<http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=2020#attendance>) and require appropriate documentation. Additional information can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Course participation will be assessed in two ways: First, you are expected to come to class ready to discuss the required readings and to respond to class presentations. Second, you will be expected to submit bi-weekly discussion posts to our course's canvas page. These discussion posts will be short, and they will be comprised of three components: (a) A typed-out passage from the week's required reading; (b) A reflective analysis of the passage as it bears on its text of origin or our other required readings (200-word minimum/500-word maximum); & (c) A question you wish to pose to the class based on your analysis.

Seminar Presentations

Each seminar participant will be required to make two, in-class presentations on our required readings. Presentations should focus on some particular topic or set of related topics covered in the week's reading (*many of our readings will cover numerous topics*), but should also be attentive to the broader context

of the week's required readings. Each presentation should be accompanied by a handout of roughly 2-4 pages. Presentations should take approximately 20 minutes, and they should conclude with at least three questions for follow-up discussion. All class participants will be expected to respond to the presenter's questions in the follow-up discussion.

Short Paper

Each seminar participant who is taking the course for a grade will be responsible for writing a short response paper (~1000-1500 words) to a given prompt. Prompts will be distributed two weeks in advance of the due date of the paper, and this will occur prior to Spring Break. More specific instructions and details will follow. Papers will be submitted via Canvas.

Final Seminar Paper

Each seminar participant who is taking the course for a grade will be responsible for writing a 15-20 page (double-spaced, 12pt. font) paper. The topic of the paper will be open, but it *must* bear on our seminar topics, and it must discuss and cite at least two of our required readings. I will be consulting each of you on your topics and will be happy to discuss additional readings and sources. This paper will be due via canvas submission by 5pm on Friday, April 22nd.

HONOR CODE & PLAGIARISM POLICY

Most instances of academic dishonesty can be avoided by thoroughly citing the resources you have used to help you understand the topic on which you're writing. **If you have read something that helped you understand the material, cite it!** Failure to cite sources is the most common (and easily avoidable) academic offence. Detailed citation instructions will be provided with your paper assignment prompts.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states:

“We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of “E” for the course. Plagiarism is defined in the University of Florida's Student Honor Code as follows:

“A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. b. Submitting a document or

assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.”

Students found guilty of academic misconduct will be prosecuted in accordance with the procedures specified in the UF honesty policy.

IMPORTANT CAMPUS & ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Health and Wellness U Matter, We Care

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392- 1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS) Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575

University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies

E-learning Technical Support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to

Learningsupport@ufl.edu. <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

Library Support <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>

Writing Studio 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

EMAIL POLICY

(1) If you need some practical information about the course you should **look at most recently updated syllabus or on the website**. Emails requesting information which is available on the most recently updated syllabus or on the website will not be answered.

(2) If you want to discuss a substantive philosophical question you should bring it up in class or come to office hours. I will not be able to respond to in-depth, substantive questions about the readings or assignments over email. However, I am *more* than happy to discuss substantive questions of these sorts in office hours. So, please come and see me! I will be happy to address short, logistical, non-substantive questions over email.

If, after reading (1) & (2) you still think you should email me, you are welcome to do so at the 'ufl' address listed at the top of this syllabus. Please use your 'ufl' address.

Emails received after 5pm may not be responded to until after 9am the following day.

COURSE EVALUATION PROCESS

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

CLASS & READING SCHEDULE:

- *This Schedule is Tentative & Subject to Revision – Updates will be made on the course's canvas page. Please read all announcements.*

1. Wednesday, January 5 – Introduction & Overview

Course Overview
Presentation Signups

2. Wednesday, January 12 – Rousseau's Pessimistic Moral Psychology

Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *2nd Discourse*: Part I (and notes)

3. Wednesday, January 19 – Rousseau's Pessimistic Vision of Commercial Society

Jean-Jacques Rousseau – *2nd Discourse*: Part II (and notes)

4. Wednesday, January 26 – Smith's Optimistic Moral Psychology – Sentiments & Sympathy

Adam Smith – *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*: Part I

5. Wednesday, February 2 – Smith's Optimistic Moral Psychology – Impartial Spectator & Recognition

Adam Smith – *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*: Part III & Part VI (Section iii)

6. Wednesday, February 9 – Smith on the Constituents of Commercial Society

Adam Smith – *The Wealth of Nations*: Book I: Chps. I-III (entire); Chp. IV (para. 1-4, 13-18);
Chp. V (para. 1-22); Chps. VI-VII (entire); Chp. VIII (para. 1-27, 35-40);
Chp. IX (para. 1-4, 13-24); Chp. X (para. 1-52); Chp. XI (para. 1-9)

7. Wednesday, February 16 – Smith on Capital, Labor, & *Laissez-Faire*

Adam Smith – *The Wealth of Nations*: Book II: Intro & Chps. 1 & 3
Book IV: Intro & Chp. 2

8. Wednesday, February 23 – Smith on Market Regulation & the Limits of *Laissez-Faire*

Adam Smith – *The Wealth of Nations*: Book II: Chp. 2
Book V: Chp. 1, Part 3, Art. 2 (para. 1-9, 45-61)

9. Wednesday, March 2 – Marx on Estranged Labor, Commodities, & Commodity Fetishism

Karl Marx – “Estranged Labour,” *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*
Karl Marx – “The Commodity,” Chp.1 of *Capital Vol. 1*

10. Wednesday, March 9 – Spring Break

No Class

11. Wednesday, March 16 – Marx on Capitalist Exploitation & Surplus-Value

Karl Marx – *Wage Labour and Capital*
Karl Marx – “The Production of Absolute Surplus-Value,” *Capital Vol. 1* (selections TBD)

12. Wednesday, March 23 – Marx on Labor & Technology

Karl Marx – *Capital Vol. 1* (selections TBD)

13. Wednesday, March 30 – Marx & Engels on the Inefficiencies of Capitalism & the Shape of Post-Capitalist Communism

Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels – *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*
Karl Marx – *The Critique of the Gotha Program*

14. Wednesday, April 6

Thorstein Veblen – *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (excerpts TBD)

15. Wednesday, April 13

Elizabeth Anderson – “When the Market Was ‘Left’” & “Private Government,” *Private Government*

16. Wednesday, April 20

Vanessa Wills – “What Could Mean to Say, ‘Capitalism Causes Sexism and Racism?’”