

Theory and Philosophy Workshop
Contemporary Marxist Critique (Spring 2024)

Alfonso Gonzales Toribio

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Office Hours: TBD

This workshop meets bi-weekly Friday, 1-3 PM

Course Overview:

This course draws upon contemporary Marxist scholarship across a wide range of theoretical orientations—including value theory, Marxist geography, social reproduction theory, and degrowth. It situates Marxist analysis under the contemporary mode of neoliberal globalization to understand how capital accumulation affects the environment, ecology, geography, race, gender, colonial relations and society. We will be reading contemporary works (all published in the last five years) by Kōhei Saitō, Nancy Fraser, Soren Mau, Alberto Toscano and David Harvey, among others. The aim of this course is to introduce graduate-level students to contemporary Marxist approaches and debates that extend the classical theories of Marx and Engels to 21st-century problems. Ideally, students should learn how to apply Marxian theory to their MA and dissertation projects.

Assigned Textbooks:

- 1.) Saitō, Kōhei. *Marx in the Anthropocene : Towards the Idea of Degrowth Communism*. Cambridge ; Cambridge University Press, 2022.
- 2.) Fraser, Nancy. *Cannibal Capitalism : How Our System Is Devouring Democracy, Care, and the Planet -- and What We Can Do about It*. London: Verso, 2022.
- 3.) Harvey, David. *Rebel Cities : From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. Paperback ed. London: Verso, 2019.
- 4.) Mau, Soren. *Mute Compulsion: A Marxist Theory of the Economic Power of Capital*, London: Verso, 2023.
- 5.) Toscano, Alberto. *Late Fascism: Race, Capitalism and the Politics of Crisis*. London: Verso, 2023.

Participation (30 points/ 30%)

Students are required to participate in course discussions and are expected to attend all the course sessions. Participation will be evaluated based upon the student's contributions to workshop discussion. You will be asked to respond to the text at random, if it is obvious that you did not read the text you will be asked to leave the workshop.

Students taking this course for credit are expected to turn in a paper incorporating key aspects of Marxist theory into their dissertation projects.

Outline (30 points/ 30%)

In preparation for the final paper, each student will have to develop an outline. Each outline should contain a research question, argument, and proposed method. Moreover, there should be a theoretical section that discusses how Marxian and theory could illuminate aspects of their project. Outlines are due at the beginning of class on week 10.

Final Paper (40 points/ 40%)

Students will be required to submit a final paper that discusses how they could potentially use Marxian concepts to advance an aspect of their MA thesis or PhD dissertation. The final paper is due at the beginning of class during the last class session.

Tentative Reading Schedule and Session Plan

We will meet every other week on Fridays **starting on April 12**. The first session will take place on the second week of the beginning of Spring 2024 quarter.

4/12/24- Fraser, Nancy. *Cannibal Capitalism : How Our System Is Devouring Democracy, Care, and the Planet -- and What We Can Do about It*. London: Verso, 2022

4/26/24- Saitō, Kōhei. *Marx in the Anthropocene : Towards the Idea of Degrowth Communism*. Cambridge ; Cambridge University Press, 2022.

5/10/24- Harvey, David. *Rebel Cities : From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. Paperback ed. London: Verso, 2019.

5/24/24- Mau, Soren. *Mute Compulsion: A Marxist Theory of the Economic Power of Capital*, London: Verso, 2023.

6/7/24- Toscano, Alberto. *Late Fascism: Race, Capitalism and the Politics of Crisis*. London: Verso, 2023.