

PHIL 325  
Instructor: Dr. Kurt Brandhorst

Office: Robinson B 458

Office Hours: Tue: 3:00-4:00 and  
Wed: 3:00-4:00  
or by appointment

Email: [kbrandho@gmu.edu](mailto:kbrandho@gmu.edu)

**Where to find information about this course:** all course information including the syllabus, assignments, and any additional announcements or changes to the schedule will be posted on the Blackboard site for this course.

**You should also check your GMU email regularly for class announcements.**

**Department webpage:** <http://philosophy.gmu.edu/>

**Guide for Writing in Philosophy:** <http://philosophy.gmu.edu/undergraduate/writing-standards>

## COURSE SYLLABUS

This course examines the development of Marxian philosophy from the early post-Hegelian texts to the later economic texts. We will chart this path with key Marxian concepts such as alienation, ideology, and materialism. We will also examine the development of Marx's philosophical methodology out of Hegelian dialectic, Feuerbachian humanism and Kantian critique.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

There is ONE text you should acquire for the course:

Marx, Karl, *Selected Writings*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, D. McLellan (ed), Oxford University Press, 2000  
**ISBN-10:** 0198782659

I may post additional short texts to Blackboard as the semester progresses.

## Course Reading Expectations

The schedule of readings is given below. I will expect you to have done the set reading before the relevant class. This means reading through the set text or texts *at least* once; going back and re-reading either the whole text, or the passages that seem especially important/difficult/puzzling/interesting to you; and writing down your thoughts and questions on the text (I recommend keeping a notebook just for your reading notes for this course that you can bring to class as a reminder of what you want to ask or comment on).

If you don't have questions, you're not reading properly! If you do the reading in advance, you will get a lot more out of classes, because you will have a lot more to put in.

## **Questions and Problems:**

If you have a question about the course, or a problem with a class or assignment, please do one or more of the following:

- ask in class (often others will have the same question/concern, so this will help everyone)
- email me with a question or query: [kbrandho@gmu.edu](mailto:kbrandho@gmu.edu)
- come and see me in my open office hours or email me for an appointment

I will respond to emails as soon as I reasonably can, though as a general rule I will not answer emails in the late evening or between Saturday morning and Sunday evening. This means you need to plan ahead – *please don't leave questions about assignments or reading until the last minute!*

## COURSEWORK AND GRADING

Basic breakdown:

1. Attendance:	0%
2. Participation:	5%
3. 2 Worksheets	10% each
4. Response Paper	15%
5. Analysis of <i>Communist Manifesto</i>	15%
6. Final Paper	25%
7. Final Exam	20%

### 1) Attendance:

There are no points for showing up. However, showing up has value for all other aspects of assessment and you should not expect to do well on the course if you miss classes. **In addition, points can be lost for not showing up:** we only have 28 class meetings on the material of the course; every absence after the second will result in a 10% penalty in the participation grade. Hence 12 absences would result in a 100% reduction of the participation grade. Regarding the penalty, extenuating circumstances will be considered in line with University policies but cannot make up for the effect that an absence has in understanding the material.

### 2) Participation:

Class discussion is an essential feature of the course and I will regularly invite participation. Please come prepared to discuss the material as assigned and be ready to take part in classroom activities. This means both reading and thinking about the texts in advance of the class meeting. Participation is distinct from both presence and mere talk. Additional tasks such as quizzes or Discussion Board fora may be assigned.

### 3) Worksheets:

There will be two comprehension worksheets assigned during the semester. The first will deal with material up to but not including the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*; the second will focus on "Wage-Labour and Capital". These worksheets will involve 5-6 short answer questions to be completed outside class. Answers are expected to be text-based and explicative.

### 4) Response Paper:

The first writing assignment will be a response paper to a specific, assigned theme from the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. The paper should be 5-6 pages in length.

### 5) *Communist Manifesto* Analysis:

The second written assignment will focus on the relation between the *Communist Manifesto* and *The German Ideology*. In this assignment you will be asked to elucidate specific claims from the *Manifesto* in terms of the earlier work.

## 6) Final Paper

The final paper on the development of Marx's economic theory out of his philosophical foundation will be approximately 9 pages and involve a component of peer review. The paper will focus on the later work (especially *Capital*) and explore themes we have covered in the course as they arise in that work. Work with secondary and interpretive texts will be expected. Suggested topics will be made available later in the course.

**NB: I will answer content and formal questions about papers in advance of the due date but under normal circumstances I will not read drafts of papers --- this is a matter of volume and fairness; I may, however, propose to you as an individual that you should submit a draft. My office hours (see above) are a good time to meet to discuss your ideas and pose questions.**

## 7) Final Exam

There will be a partially seen comprehensive final exam on **December 19<sup>th</sup>**. Information about the form and details of the exam will be announced later in the term.

## \*) Plagiarism

This is a major violation of trust and academic integrity. Do not present others' work as your own. Passive Plagiarism (failing to cite sources) is as bad as Active Plagiarism (downloading an essay off the internet). **For acceptable citation models, see Purdue University Online Writing Lab (Purdue OWL), "Research and Citation":** <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>

Also, work submitted for this course must be uniquely created for this course. If I suspect plagiarism I will inform you and the university administration in writing. **NB: I reserve the right to conduct an oral examination on any piece of work.**

**The Honor Code:** "All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at [academicintegrity.gmu.edu](http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu). All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review."

## Commitment to Diversity

In keeping with the general ethos of the University, this class seeks to create a learning environment that fosters respect for people across differences. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including gender expression and identity, race, economic status, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age and ability. We encourage all members of the learning environment to engage with the material personally, but to also be open to exploring and learning from experiences different than their own.

**NB** This does not mean not being critical: respecting others' views means taking them seriously, and taking them seriously means thinking about their strengths and weaknesses, asking questions, and offering constructive criticisms or alternative viewpoints where appropriate. It also means thinking about where the views of others challenge our own, and being open to what they have to teach us. Valuing diversity is not just an attitude – it is a matter of developing an active practice. Amongst other things, this practice involves:

- learning to listen to other perspectives;
- being open to criticism of one's own views;
- being willing to evaluate different positions while being unsure where one stands;
- having good reasons for one's views, but being willing to change one's mind;
- not rushing to judgment;
- basing critical comments or questions on as good an understanding of another person (or text or theory) as one can manage;
- *and* being willing to accept that there will always be things one cannot see or understand;

- learning to express criticisms and differences of opinion in ways that are not personal or hurtful and that leave space for other voices.

Never be afraid to ask a question or to risk saying something that might be wrong – that is how we learn. But equally, never be afraid to listen to the questions and answers of others, and to let their views challenge and change how you think.

### Submitting Written Work

All written assignments must be submitted on the Blackboard site for this course by the relevant deadline (see course schedule below). There will be a clearly marked section on Blackboard for each assignment.

One paper copy must also be handed in at class or to the PHIL 327 course essay box in the Philosophy Office (Robinson B 465) during office hours (9am-4pm, weekdays). Papers will be read and graded in batches. In order to be considered part of the first batch, the paper copy should normally be handed in by 4pm on the day of the deadline.

Please note:

- The **date of submission** will be taken from when you upload the work on Blackboard. If there is a system problem that means you can't upload the work, email me and let me know.
- Once a paper copy is submitted, you can expect feedback/comments and notice of your grade. For paper copies submitted on the due date, I make every effort to mark and return this work within 2 weeks. Paper copies submitted after the due date but before the end of the semester go to the end of the grading queue (note that I have 4 classes this semester) and will be returned as soon as possible. If no paper copy is submitted by the end of the semester a grade will still be entered but you will not get feedback/comments on your work.

Extensions can be arranged in exceptional circumstances if you have a good reason for submitting work late but you must let me know (by email is fine). Extensions cannot be given beyond the last day of the exam period. **Whenever possible it is much better to try to arrange an extension with me in advance.** This will make things less stressful for all concerned: you will be able to plan your assignments more effectively; I will be able to plan my grading and give better (less rushed) feedback.

### COURSE OUTLINE

NB: The reading schedule is subject to change

#### WEEK ONE

Reading: Course Syllabus

Aug 29: INTRODUCTION

Aug 31: Hegel

#### WEEK TWO

Reading: "On the Jewish Question" – Part I (pp. 46-64)

Sep 5: Rights and Liberalism

Sep 7: Religious, Social and Political

### WEEK THREE

Reading: *Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction* (pp. 71-82)

"Critical Remarks on the Article: 'The King of Prussia and Social Reform'" (pp. 134-137)

Sep 12: The Problem with Hegel

Sep 14: Civil Society and Political Revolution

**Worksheet 1 Assigned**

### WEEK FOUR

Reading: *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (pp. 83-120)

Sep 19: Alienation, Economics and Hegel

**Worksheet 1 Due**

Sep 21: Private Property and Alienation

### WEEK FIVE

Reading: *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (pp. 83-120)

"On James Mill" (pp. 124-133)

"Theses on Feuerbach" (pp. 171-173)

Sep 26: Money, Character and Socialism

**Paper 1 Assigned**

Sep 28: Overcoming Feuerbach

### WEEK SIX

Reading: *The German Ideology* (pp. 175-208)

Oct 3: Ideology

Oct 5: Historical Materialism

**Paper 1 Due**

### WEEK SEVEN

Reading: *The German Ideology* (pp. 175-208)

Oct 10: **NO CLASS**

Oct 12: Communism: A First Look

### WEEK EIGHT

Reading: *The Communist Manifesto*, Parts I & II (pp. 245-262)

"Wage-Labour and Capital" (pp. 273-293)

Oct 17: *The Communist Manifesto*

**Paper 2 Analysis Assigned**

Oct 19: Labour as Commodity

#### WEEK NINE

Reading: "Wage-Labour and Capital" (pp. 273-293)  
*Grundrisse* (pp. 379-396)

Oct 24: Labour Economics

**Paper 2 Due**

**Worksheet 2 Assigned**

Oct 26: Critique of Political Economy

Oct 27: **Worksheet 2 Due**

#### WEEK TEN

Reading: *Grundrisse* (pp. 379-422)

Oct 31: Capitalism and Valorization

Nov 2: Communism and Freedom

#### WEEK ELEVEN

Reading: Letters 1858-1868 (pp.562-567)

*Capital I*, 'From the Prefaces' (pp.452-458)

*Capital I*, 'Commodities: Use-Value and Exchange Value' (pp. 458-472)

Nov 7: Introducing *Capital*

Nov 9: Commodities

#### WEEK TWELVE

Reading: *Capital I*, 'Commodity Fetishism' (pp. 472-480)

*Capital I*, 'Exchange and Money' (pp. 481-482)

*Capital I*, 'The General Formula for Capital' (pp. 482-488)

Nov 14: Fetishism, Ideology and Alienation

Nov 16 Capital

#### WEEK THIRTEEN

Reading: *Capital I*, 'The Sale of Labour-Power' (pp. 488-492)

*Capital I*, 'The Production of Surplus Value' (pp. 492-508)

Nov 21: Surplus Value

Nov 23: **NO CLASS**

#### WEEK FOURTEEN

Reading: *Capital I*, 'The Production of Surplus Value' (pp. 492-508)

"Results of the Immediate Process of Production" (pp. 547-561)

Nov 28: Surplus Value (continued)

Nov 30: The Results of Political Economy

WEEK FIFTEEN

Reading: The Whole Book, (pp. see above)  
Peers' Draft Papers

Dec 4: **Draft of Final Paper Due**

Dec 5: Review

Dec 7: Peer Group Work

**FINAL PAPER DUE: MONDAY DEC 11<sup>TH</sup>**

**FINAL EXAM: TUESDAY DEC 19<sup>TH</sup>**