

Philosophy V3353
Spring 2010
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TuTh: 9:10-10:25

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Office Hours: W, Th: 2-3 (& by appointment)

EUROPEAN SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

A historical survey of European social philosophy from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, with special attention to theories of capitalism and the normative concepts (freedom, alienation, human flourishing) that inform them. A further topic is the relation between civil society and the state.
Prerequisite (recommended): one prior course in the Philosophy Department

Required Texts

- Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (Modern Library) (WN)
G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge) (PhR)
[or: *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford)]
Karl Marx, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker, 2nd ed. (Norton) (MER)
Friedrich Engels, "The Principles of Communism" (handout)
Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Dover) (PESC)

Recommended Texts

- Frederick Neuhouser, *Actualizing Freedom: Foundations of Hegel's Social Theory* (Harvard)
Allen Wood, *Karl Marx* (Routledge)
(A more extensive bibliography of secondary literature will be handed out later in class.)

Schedule of Class Meetings

Jan. 19 Introductory session: What is capitalism?

Smith: National wealth and the nature of "commercial society"

[Required background reading: Editor's Introduction, WN, xv-xx]

Jan. 21, 26 Division of labor, Money, Price: WN, Bk. I, Chs. 1-4, 5 (33-43)
[Also: "Introduction and Plan of Work" (xxiii-xxvi)]

Jan. 28 &
Feb. 2 Price (cont'd), Wages, Rate of profit: WN, Bk. I, Chs. 6-7, 8 (73-84, 89-99), 9

4 Classes and their interests: WN, Bk. I, Ch. 11 (284-8)
[Also: In defense of "free labor": WN, Bk. I, Ch. 10 (114-15, 136-43)
Historical origins of capitalism: WN, Bk. III, Chs. 3, 4 (439-48)]

Hegel: "Civil society" and the state

Feb. 9 Ethical Life (*Sittlichkeit*): Intro. to Hegel's Social Theory: PhR, §§ 142-57

[Also: Neuhouser, Chs. 1, 3, 4, 5]

11, 16 Needs, labor, and classes ("estates"): PhR, §§ 182-210

18, 23 Problems of civil society; the state: PhR, §§ 230-56, 260-1, 264, 298-315

25 **MIDTERM EXAM** (in class)

Marx (I): Human rights, freedom, political ideology (critique of Hegel)

Mar. 2, 4 "On the Jewish Question": MER, 26-46
 [Also: MER, 439-41 (later comments on freedom from *Capital*, vol. 3)
 Excerpt from "The German Ideology;" MER, 197-200]
 [Optional: "Contrib. to the Critique of Hegel's *Phil. of Right*:
 Intro.;" MER, 53-65
 Excerpt from "The King of Prussia & Social Reform;" MER, 130-32]

Marx (II): Alienation

Mar. 9, 11 1844 Manuscripts: "Alienated Labor": MER, 70-81, 133-5
 [Also: Excerpt from "The German Ideology": MER, 155-66 , 190-3,
 197-200]

23 Later excerpts on alienation: MER, 292-3, 388-404, 407-11, 439-41

Marx (III): Historical materialism

Mar. 25, 30 Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*:
 MER, 3-6
 [Also: Excerpt from "The German Ideology": MER, 193-97]
 [Optional: Excerpts from "The German Ideology": MER, 148-75]

Marx (IV): Laws of capitalist production (*Capital*)

Apr. 1 Marx's idea of economic science; commodities and exchange: MER,
 294-8, 302-12 & *Capital*, vol. 1, Ch. 2 (on
 reserve)

6 Circulation of commodities; definition of 'capital': MER, 329-36
 [MER, 319-29 covers commodity fetishism, an interesting topic we
 won't have time to discuss.]

8 Sale of labor-power; surplus value and exploitation: MER, 336-361
 [Also: The historical origins of capitalism: MER, 431-6]

13 Work and the working day in capitalism; machinery & modern industry:
 MER, 344-84, 404-7, 417-19

15 The general law and historical tendency of capitalist accumulation:
 MER, 419-31, 436-8
 [Also: Excerpt from *Grundrisse*; MER, 291-2]

Marx (V): Proletarian revolution and transition to capitalism

Apr. 20 "The Communist Manifesto" MER, 469-500
 [Also: Engels, "The Principles of Communism"
 Excerpt from "The German Ideology": MER, 192-97 (re-read)
 Excerpt from the *Grundrisse*: MER, 291-2
 Excerpt from *Capital*, vol. 3: MER, 439-41 (re-read)]

Weber: Protestantism and the origins of modern capitalism

Apr. 22 Modern capitalism: its "spirit" and the problem of its origin:
 PESC, Introduction, Chs. I-II

27, 29 Protestant asceticism and the rise of modern capitalism:
 PESC, Chs. III (79-81, 89-92); IV (98-120, 153-4); V
 (166-83)

Course Requirements

- Attendance of all class meetings
- One in-class midterm exam, **February 25**
- One final exam
- Two papers, 7-8 pages each, due **March 10** and **April 30**

Final grades will be determined as follows:

- 1/2 Papers
- 1/6 Midterm
- 1/3 Final Exam

A passing grade on each paper and exam is required to pass the course.

Irregular attendance can influence final grades (negatively) in borderline cases.

The penalty for plagiarism will be failure of the course in all cases. If you are in any doubt as to what constitutes the illegitimate use of another person's work, don't hesitate to consult me.

E-mail: You may contact me by e-mail when you have a question that can be answered in a sentence or two (e.g., about course requirements or to set up an appointment). E-mail is a great convenience, but it can't replace philosophical conversation in person. When you have philosophical questions, please come to my office hours or make an appointment with me. **Do not send me copies of your papers as e-mail attachments. Only hard (paper) copies will be accepted.**

A note on grades: In recent years some students seem to have acquired the belief that merely turning in the required course work assures them a grade of B. In this course I consciously attempt to break with the current trend of rampant grade inflation. This means that I use the full range of the grading scale, A to F. B's are reserved for good work; merely satisfactory work receives a C. Since A designates excellence ("standing out"), it's unlikely that, say, 40% of the class will receive a final grade of A. On the other hand, I don't curve grades, so if half the class does excellent work, half the class will receive an A.

All assignments in this class are to be completed in accordance with the **Barnard Honor Code**. Columbia students commit themselves to the Honor Code upon registering for a Barnard course. The code says, in part: "We consider it dishonest to ask for, give, or receive help in examinations or quizzes, to use any papers or books not authorized by the instructor in examinations, or to present . . . written work that is not entirely our own, unless otherwise approved by the instructor."

The penalty for **plagiarism** will be failure of the course in all cases. If you are in any doubt as to what constitutes the illegitimate use of another person's work, don't hesitate to consult me.

Students who need disability-related accommodations should both see me and stop by the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible.