Course Description and Objectives

This seminar is the beginning of the year long STEPC Junior Seminar sequence. Junior II focuses on major currents and applications of political, social, and economic theories and the historical circumstances that gave rise to these theories up to the 19th Century. Through the reading and discussion of key foundational Eurocentric texts and some postcolonial non-Western contemporaries from the 16th century on, we will be able to recognize the driving forces behind the production of modernity as a Western *episteme* (the way we organize and learn the world today). We will pay particular attention to the complex ways in which these political, social, and cultural practices and philosophies relate to the contradictions and pitfalls of modernity. We will explore questions of decolonization of social theory and liberation of the political imagination. We will study some of the politico-philosophical-experiential foundations of liberal, radical, and anti-colonial worldviews paying attention to the ways in which ideologies and consciousness are constructed in historical contexts, and then contested through social movements (i.e. colonization vs. French and Haitian Revolutions; the rise of modern-colonial-capitalist-patriarchal systems and various forms of pre-20th century resistance). As this is an interdisciplinary class, we will be bringing in analytic tools from various disciplines—i.e. economy, sociology, anthropology, political science, history, cultural studies, literature—but always paying attention to the historical construction and reception of ideas.

The objectives of this course are to prepare students:

1. To read primary texts while fostering a broad critical understanding of historical grounded texts and their persistence in contemporary case studies;
2. To know the main authors, intellectual and cultural lineages, and the relation of theory to historical contexts as both causal and consequential;
3. To relate learned abstract concepts to governmental policies, and their reformulations in resistant social actions;
4. To develop an awareness of key social theories and movements, and critically identify them in your personal experiences, memories, epistemologies, politics;
5. And to incorporate reflection and research on these topics to your independent learning

The European tradition of social thought and political economy can be traced to early modern times although it has influenced later modern formations from the emergence of nations to the development of human rights to the rethinking of the world in our days, and makes one question if we can have a different theoretical framework to conceive the world and future political constructions. Concepts such as the individual, natural rights, civil rights, democracy, the state, the nation, are all rooted indistinctly with the incipience and development of liberal economies, capitalism, and globalization ranging from slavery to
the development of the press as global trades. Therefore, our contemporary political structures are intimately related to our economic configurations and in our contemporary global economy, the imagining of a government outside of the scaffold of a liberal bourgeois democracy is a significant challenge.

The readings in this course will provide an important background to understand our societies today and will empower students with enough critical tools to break down thought as rooted in historical contexts and their implications in society, hoping to enable students to contest Eurocentric theories while learning (sub) alternative models.

Students' behavior and responsibilities

I expect a lot from you and you should expect a lot from yourselves. You will have to come to class having read and prepared questions for discussion directly related to the text. This course is an advanced university course; it requires much reading, but mainly thinking and analysis. Talking about what you think will NOT pass you! The reading of the material is necessary for any real discussion. Critical discussions are necessary for any real significant learning. Each class students must prepare discussion questions and definitions of the major concepts from the reading. In addition, you should include reflections on historical, conceptual, and autobiographical ideas. This journal will serve as a terminology database, and it will help you understand how concepts change with time, and how previous arguments enable the formation of new ones, and it will enrich your reading of any text. If you do not come prepared to class, you will be counted as absent. Otherwise, you will not be able to contribute to class discussion, and our goal is to build a learning community where students work as learners and teachers, where theory is accessible, expandable, and practical for students’ own aspirations for social change and praxis. For this reason, you will have learning partners to share your ideas and writings and peer edit your final work.

All readings and a copy of this syllabus are updated in SPARK, or else they are to be bought in Food for Thoughts in downtown Amherst. It is very important that you are able to use SPARK to access required course readings. If you are unsure about how to use SPARK or are encountering problems, please visit the SPARK help section on the OIT webpage: (http://www.oit.umass.edu/spark/students/index.html). If you are still unable to use SPARK please contact me immediately.

Attendance will affect your participation. This is not an online course, and therefore your presence and punctuality are required. I will accept only THREE (3) unexcused absences. Every absence after that will lower your final grade by a third of a letter. Also, every THREE (3) tardies will count as ONE (1) unexcused absence. All excused absences MUST be accompanied by proper documentation (doctor’s note, obituary, athletic department letters, etc).

You will be evaluated in the course based on the quality and care of your written work combined with your attendance and participation. Your grades will not be based on your beliefs or whether you agree with the perspectives presented in class. Below is a general guide of the assignments.
Co-facilitation of a class session: As part of our commitment to a participatory classroom each student is expected to co-facilitate part of one (1) class session. A sign-up sheet will be passed around the first week of the semester so that everyone can sign-up. This is not a formal lecture. The student should prepare to present for *five minutes* and lead the class in meaningful discussion on the session topic. The presentation should include *overarching discussion questions* and some points of synthesis from other readings or your own interests/research. For example, you might want to provide some quotes or note some themes that strike you and that you would like the group to discuss. The format of the presentation is open to the student. Creativity and interactive presentations are encouraged and additional resources can be used as necessary. On the day of your presentation please arrive early to write your questions/quotes on the board or come prepared with handouts etc.

**Reading response papers:** Write four (4) reading response papers. You are expected to turn the first one on Thursday 09/22, the second one on 10/20, the third one on 11/22, and the fourth one on 12/8. No late response papers accepted. The reading response paper should be 3 pages long, critical pieces containing your reactions to issues raised from the readings. The purpose of the reading response papers is to help you understand the main argument of the text and develop your criticisms of it. In your paper, write about the main arguments presented and one or two themes that strike you as interesting or challenging. An exemplary outline might address any of the following:

- a) What are the major themes and issues discussed in the readings?
- b) Do you agree with the main arguments presented and why?
- c) What are the weaker points in the various arguments? What would make them stronger?
- d) Were you surprised by any of the issues raised by the readings?
- e) What was the single most interesting thing you read and why?
- f) What questions came up for you and why?

**Analytical Papers:** Write two (2) papers that analyze and compare at least three of the texts from the syllabus. The due date for paper #1 is 10/27, and for paper #2 it is 12/13. These papers should be 5-7 pages and show your ability to analyze texts, support your arguments textually, and make broader connections with other texts and themes of the course. You should demonstrate clear ideas and present your own thoughts and original analysis. You should choose a manageable theme that corresponds to your interests. You should cite multiple sources including at least three from the course. You are encouraged to use outside sources of your own as well.

**Grading Criteria**

Attendance and Participation 15%, Co-facilitating a class session 5%, reading response papers 5% each, Analytical papers 30% each.

A 94-100 points, A- 93-90 points, B+ 87-89 points, B 84-86 points, B- 80-83 points, C+ 77-79 points, C 74-76 points, C- 68-73 points, D+ 64-67 points, D 60-63 points, and F below 60 points. The minimal grade to approve the course is C+.

Remember that I care much more about your learning than about your publication potential!!! So, just do your best and find an engaging topic that is comparative in nature and relevant for issues today. For
research guidelines visit http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/EngPaper/ and please remember that plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Please visit the UMASS Amherst Writing Program Student Plagiarism Policy at www.writingprogram.hfa.umass.edu/student_resources/plagiarism_policy.asp and be aware that you will get an F for the class if plagiarism occurs.

Students with Disabilities and Special Needs
Every student learns in a different way. Non-mainstream ways of learning may be labeled as “disabilities”. If you require any accommodations that can be provided in partnership with Disability Services, and/or if you have a physical, psychological, emotional, or learning disability that makes it difficult for you to participate in class or carry out the work as outlined for this course, please contact me via email during the first two weeks of the course (no later than Tuesday, September 16th) so we can make appropriate arrangements.

I will not put rigid percentages on the assignments as people have different strengths and weaknesses, and I will measure your performance according to our goals and the learning that takes place in each student. I look forward to learning together and I hope you enjoy the class as much as I will!!!

Required Course Readings
The three books required for the course and are available at Food for Thought Books, 106 N. Pleasant Street, Amherst. You can also find them at the library or via interlibrary loan. They are as follows:
C.L.R. James, The Black Jacobins (Vintage Press, 2nd edition)

Additional required course readings are available on SPARK. Please see above section on SPARK for more information. Readings are subject to change and additional readings may be assigned.

Reading Schedule

W 1
Tuesday 09/06: Introduction: Primitive Accumulation
Thursday 09/08: Unthinking Eurocentrism
Elia Shohat and Robert Stam, “From Eurocentrism to Polycentrism” from Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media (p.13-54)

W 2
Tuesday 09/13: The Sexual Division of Labor
Maria Mies, selections from Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labor, Ch. 2 (p. 44-73)
Thursday 09/15: Women and the Accumulation of Labor
Silvia Federici, “The Accumulation of Labor and the Degradation of Women” from Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body, and Primitive Accumulation (p. 61-132)

W 3
Tuesday 09/20: The Sovereign State
Thomas Hobbes, selections from Leviathan
Thursday 09/22: Constitutional Government
John Locke, Second Treatise of Government
*Reading Response #1 due*

W 4
Tuesday 09/27: Enlightenment and Democracy
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, selections from The Social Contract
Declaration of Independence/Declaration of the Rights of Man & Citizen
Thursday 09/29: Enlightenment and Slavery
Immanuel Kant, “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?” (p. 58-64)
Laurent Dubois, “An enslaved Enlightenment: rethinking the intellectual history of the French Atlantic” (p. 1-14)

W 5
Tuesday 10/04: The Racial Contract
Charles W. Mills, The Racial Contract, Ch. 1 (p. 9-40)
Ruth Frankenberg, “The Mirage of an Unmarked Whiteness” from The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness. (p. 72-96)
Thursday 10/06: Marx’s Historical Materialism
Karl Marx, The Communist Manifesto (p. 3-77, this includes Hobsbawn’s intro.)

W 6
**Tuesday 10/11 – NO CLASS – Monday Class scheduled will be followed**
Thursday 10/13: Marx’s Alienation
Karl Marx, “Wage Labour and Capital” (p. 203-217, in Tucker)
Karl Marx, “The Method of Political Economy,” from The Grundrisse (p. 100-108)

W 7
Tuesday 10/18: Pop Marx
Karl Marx, Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (p. 3-6, in ed. Tucker)
Thursday 10/20: More on Marx and Labor
Karl Marx, “On Estranged Labor,” from the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 (p. 70-81, in Marx & Engels Reader, ed. Tucker)
Karl Marx, Theses on Feuerbach (p. 143-145, in Tucker)
* Analytical Paper #1 due (Midterm)*

W 8
Tuesday 10/25: The Marxian Critique
Francis Wheen, Marx’s Das Kapital (p. 1-121)
You can buy this book in Food for thought
Thursday 10/27: Discussion on Marx and Modernity
Stuart Hall, “The problem with ideology: Marxism without promises”
Wrap-up Marx.
*Reading Response #2 due*

W 9
Tuesday 11/01: The Coloniality of Power
Aníbal Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America” (p. 533-580)
Thursday 11/03: Heterosexuality and Modernity (and midterm review class discussion)
Maria Lugones, “Heterosexuality and the Modern/Colonial Gender Order” (p. 1-24)

W 10
Tuesday 11/08: The Haitian Revolution Part 1
C.L.R. James, The Black Jacobins
Book available in Food for Thought
Thursday 11/10: Part 2
C.L.R. James, The Black Jacobins
W 11
Tuesday 11/15: Part 3
C.L.R. James, The Black Jacobins

Thursday 11/17: Part 4
C.L.R. James, The Black Jacobins

W 12
Tuesday 11/22: Nietzsche’s Critique of Modernity
Friedrich Nietzsche, selections from, Beyond Good and Evil
*Reading Response #3 due*

Thursday 11/22: No class

W 13
Tuesday 11/29: Nation, Modernity, Empire
Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, Introduction (p. 1-7)
Eric Hobsbawn, “Age of Empire” from Age of Empire

Thursday 12/01: Imperialism & Conquest
Andrea Smith, Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide, Ch. 1 (p. 7-33)

W 14
Tuesday 12/06: Imperialism & Conquest
Dipesh Chakravarti, “Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference” (p. 3-23)

Thursday 12/08: Imperialism & Empire
Agustin Lao-Montes, “Reconfigurations of Empire in a World-Hegemonic Transition: The 1898 Spanish-Cuban-American-Filipino War” (p. 209-240)
*Reading Response #4 due*

W 15
Thursday 12/15: *Analytical Paper #2 due at STPEC office by noon*
Bibliography

Chakrabarti, Dipesh. "Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference" (p. 3-23) Cugoano, Ottobah. Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery
Frankenberg, Ruth. "The Mirage of an Unmarked Whiteness" from The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness. (p. 72-96)
Hobbes, Thomas. Leviathan.
——. The Age of Empire. New York: Vintage Books,
Lugones, Maria. "Heterosexuality and the Modern/Colonial Gender Order" (p. 1-24)
McClymont, Ann. Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality on the Colonial Contest
Mills, Charles W. The Racial Contract, Ch. 1 (p. 9-40)
Nietzsche, Friedrich. Beyond Good and Evil.