

The Political Economy of Agrarian Change

Economics 797T-Fall 2021
Thursday 6:15 pm - Rm 309 Crotty

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Description

This course will mainly cover the political economy of rural change as societies transform from pre-industrial forms to more industrial. In addition, it will consider the state of agricultural class relations worldwide in the context of globalization and environmental challenges. During the course of the semester, we will compare the classical transition as described by Karl Marx in *Capital* to more contemporaneous changes occurring in the world. We shall also consider how these changes differ in countries that elected a socialist path of development as compared to a capitalist one. In examining this transition, we shall be particularly interested in examining issues of class differentiation, the various "modes of production" debates that took place worldwide, the relationship between productivity and size of holding, changes in the distribution of assets, the creation of wage labour, gender roles, institutional changes and the various ways that accumulation takes place. We shall also consider the role of the state in mid-wifing the transition and in trying to manage the tensions created by this process. The course will end by examining whether the classical agrarian question exists in a globalized world. The course will address the questions above by primarily examining a series of debates on the Agrarian question. We will start by reading the last section of Vol 1 of Capital on primitive accumulation. This will be followed by an examination of the transition from feudalism in Europe, including the classical works of Kautsky and Lenin on agriculture, followed by an examination of the Japanese transition. We will then turn to Mao's approach as an introduction to the question in the third world¹. This portion will include examining the Indian Modes of Production Debate, and the Debates in Latin America and Africa focusing on the "Nairobi Debates" in Africa. For the African component given both the state of Africa and the fact that it may not be as common in our

¹ as in the original sense of the term.

curriculum will devote a little more time to questions of transition and African economic history. We will use the last part of the class to look at issues of land reform today and prospects for rural development particularly in Asia and Africa, as well as the environmental challenges facing the world in the context of transition. This will begin with a discussion of the Griffin et al articles and the responses in the Journal of Agrarian Studies, followed by a critical review of the Lipton's book on land reform. While the class will attempt to cover all these questions the particular topics will depend on students' interests. We then look at possible alternative paths for rural transition today, in particularly critically evaluating whether cooperatives can be the basis of more egalitarian rural development, and the challenges of transition in the context of increased capital intensity and limited immigration. We end the semester with an examination of Marxism and ecology, with the aim of understanding the role of class in examining the environmental challenges faced by the world in the contemporary period.

Requirements

1. Term paper 60% of grade
2. Participation and 2–3-page weekly summaries (10 weeks) 20% of grade
3. Presentation- 20% of grade – Students will do at least one presentation in the semester – a second presentation may be shared.

The course is designed to assist students develop research questions in the area of agrarian change, If you are working on a prospectus in this area- a first draft of the prospectus plus a reduction in the number of weekly summaries may be substituted for some of the requirements. Please talk to the instructor to arrange this. By October 24th, you should have agreed upon the topic with the instructor.

READINGS

To the extent possible most of the readings will be available via Moodle, the Marxist Archive or other internet sites. I would recommend you purchase the Lipton Book as it is worth having if you are interested in the topic.

Highly recommended companion books:

For students with little PE background or in need of a refresher, I would recommend that both for the class and your permanent library you obtain a selection of the books below (some maybe available online or as ebooks). The Palgrave dictionary offers short articles (quick introductions) on concepts and individuals in Marxian Economics, as does the Bottomore Dictionary. Howard and King's History of Marxian Economics provides concise biographies and intellectual histories of all the major contributors to Marxian economics up to 1990. The Elgar Companion provides a more recent take on the major theoretical categories in Marxian economics. Because in Political Economy context is important in understanding the theory, M. Beaud's History of Capitalism is a good longer introduction to the history of capitalism.,

- Stephen Resnick and Richard Wolff (2013) Contending Economic Theories, MIT Press, Boston
- David Harvey (1982) The Limits to Capital, Basil Blackwell Publisher, Oxford.
- Ben Fine and Alfredo Saad-Filho (2010) Marx's Capital, Pluto Press, London
- M.C. Howard and J. E. King (1989) A History of Marxian Economics Vol 1 and 2
- M.C. Howard and J. E. King (1985) The Political Economy of Marx, New York University Press, New York.
- Ben Fine, Alfredo Saad-Filho and Marco Boffo (2013) The Elgar Companion to Marxist Economics, Edward Elgar, Northampton.
- John Eatwell, Murray Milgate and Peter Newman (1990) The New Palgrave Dictionary, Marxian Economics, W.W.W. Norton and Co. New York.
- Tom Bottomore, Laurence Harris, V.G. Kiernan and Ralph Miliband (1991), A Dictionary of Marxist Thought, Blackwell Publishers, London
- M. Beaud (2002) A History of Capitalism 1500-2000, Monthly Review Press, New York.

Audio-Visual Supplements

In addition, there are a variety of good audiovisual materials that are a gentle introduction to the work of Marx and other political economist often presented alongside or against Marxian economics. I recommend that if you have little training in PE or want a quick refresher you watch the following documentaries.

- Peck, Raoul, The Young Marx, Amazon Video 2018
- BBC's Masters of Money 3 Episodes
 - Marx - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QdbyUy-DN80>
 - Keynes - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vCcyq-u2y_8
 - Hayek - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vx5s1h0BXw>

For an audiovisual outline of Capital Vol 1 through 3 or more broadly Marxian Economics, Deepankar Basu's videos for the online undergraduate Marxian Economics course at:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLi1Obd1n9j3jAgg2_5nTR6wxO21kOPsUe

and Stephen Resnick's version at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-w12bkm9g8o&list=PL8B2364D7C0D31D63>

and David Harvey's Lectures at:

<http://davidharvey.org/reading-capital/>

are worth watching. The latter inspired the book: A Companion to Capital, Verso Press (2010)

Useful Websites.

There are also a number of useful websites including:

- The Marxist Internet Archive that stores many classical manuscripts of Marxist writings
<https://www.marxists.org/>
- Economarx: <https://actuelmarx.parisnanterre.fr/economarx/bibmarxe.htm>
- The History of Economic Thought Website: <http://www.hetwebsite.net/het/>
- Bertell Ollmans What is Marxism site:
https://www.nyu.edu/projects/ollman/docs/what_is_marxism.php

Accommodations:

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements.

Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will result in a grade of zero for the assignment in question and will be addressed using the policies established at the University of Massachusetts.

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

- Cheating - intentional use or attempted use of trickery or deception in one's academic work
- Fabrication - intentional falsification and/or invention of any information or citation
- Plagiarism - knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own work
- Facilitating dishonesty - knowingly helping or attempting to help another commit an act of academic dishonesty

Note Please see the link to the University of Massachusetts official plagiarism policy on our Moodle course site, and see the instructor if you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism. The full university academic honesty policy can be found at:

<http://www.umass.edu/honesty/>

Bibliography

Because this class is designed to reflect students interest in the hope that it contributes towards assisting students in their dissertation preparation and writing – while ensuring that we cover the classics in the debates on agrarian change the schedule of classes and readings may evolve to reflect the students progress and interests. The readings listed in this area are provided to give students a very broad view of some of the issues in Agrarian change.

Classical Transition and Basic Theoretical Framework

- Banaji, Jairus. 2009. "Aristocracies, Peasantries and the Framing of the Early Middle Ages." *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 9(1), 59-91.
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- Polanyi, K. (1957). The great transformation. Boston, Beacon Press.
- Resnick, S. and R. Wolff (1979). "THE THEORY OF TRANSITIONAL CONJUNCTURES AND THE TRANSITION FROM FEUDALISM TO CAPITALISM IN WESTERN EUROPE." Review of Radical Political Economics 11(3): 3-22.
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Third World Transitions and Debates

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Proposed Schedule of Classes

Date	Topic and Readings	Presenter
September 2nd..	Introduction	Mwangi
September 9 th .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marx – The secret of Primitive accumulation. Chapters 26-33 Vol 1. https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch26.htm https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch27.htm https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch28.htm https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch29.htm https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch30.htm https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch31.htm https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch32.htm https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch33.htm <p>Jean Batou (2015). Accumulation by Dispossession and Anti-Capitalist Struggles: A Long Historical Perspective. Science & Society: Vol. 79, No. 1, pp. 11-37.</p>	
September 16 th ..	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kautsky – The Agrarian Question- Chapters 1-3, 5-6, 8, 12, 15-16 Kautsky – The Class Struggle Erfurt Program – Chapter 1 Lenin "Review of Die Agrarfrage" "Capitalism in Agriculture (Kautsky's book and Mr. Bulgakov's article) Collected works vol 4 Marx – 18th. Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte Engels – On the Peasant Question in France and Germany 	
September 23 rd ..	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lenin: Development of Capitalism in Russia – Chapters 2-3 Also see <i>Agrarian Questions in Russia towards the Close of 19th Century and Agrarian Program of Social Democracy</i> Luxemburg-Chapter 27-29 Transition in China Mao – Analysis of Rural Classes 	
September 30 th .	<p>Terms of Trade Debates and Transition (Mitra)</p> <p><i>Please have an abstract of your proposed paper ready.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	
October 7 th .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marx- Pre Capitalist Social formations Asiatic Modes Japan- Morishima <p>Agrarian Transition in the USA</p>	
October 14 th ...	<p><u>Indian Modes of Production Debate</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thorner, A. (1982). "Semi-Feudalism or Capitalism? Contemporary Debate on Classes and Modes of Production in India." <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i> 17(49): 1961-1968. Thorner, A. (1982). "Semi-Feudalism or Capitalism? Contemporary Debate on Classes and Modes of Production in India." <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i> 17(51): 2061-2066. Thorner, A. (1982). "Semi-Feudalism or Capitalism? Contemporary Debate on Classes and Modes of Production in India." <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i> 17(50): 1993-1999. Harriss, John. 2013. "Does 'Landlordism' Still Matter? Reflections on Agrarian Change in India." <i>Journal of Agrarian Change</i>, 13(3), 351-64. Lerche, Jens. 2013. "The Agrarian Question in Neoliberal India: Agrarian Transition Bypassed?" <i>Journal of Agrarian Change</i>, 13(3), 382-404. Alavi, Hamza, (1976) The Rural Elite and Agricultural Development in India, <i>Pakistan Economic and Social Review</i>, Vol 14 No 1/4 	i
October 21 st ..	<p><u>Latin America – The Agrarian Question</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Dejanvry) Assies, Willem. 2008. "Land Tenure and Tenure Regimes in Mexico: An Overview." <i>Journal of Agrarian Change</i>, 8(1), 33-63. Bellisario, Antonio. 2007. "The Chilean Agrarian Transformation: Agrarian Reform and Capitalist 'Partial' Counter-Agrarian Reform, 1964–1980." <i>Journal of Agrarian Change</i>, 7(1), 1-34. Bellisario, Antonio. 2007. "The Chilean Agrarian Transformation: Agrarian Reform and Capitalist 'Partial' Counter-Agrarian Reform, 1964–1980." <i>Journal of Agrarian Change</i>, 7(2), 145-82. <p><i>Please have a full proposal of paper including outline and annotated bibliography.</i></p>	

Date	Topic and Readings	Presenter
October 29 th .	<p><u>Late Colonialism and The Colonial Economy in Africa</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rodney – The Colonial Economy Philippe Beaujard “The Indian Ocean in Eurasian and African World-Systems before the Sixteenth Century.” <i>Journal of World History</i> 4 (2005): 411-65 Lydon, Ghislaine. <i>On Trans-Saharan Trails: Islamic Law, Trade Networks, and Cross-Cultural Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Western Africa</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 1 “‘Making History’ Across the African Divide,” Chapter 2 “Trans-Saharan Trade in the <i>Longue Durée</i>”. Excerpts from The Hungry Empire 	Mwangi
November 4 th .	<p><u>The Nairobi Debates and Land Reform in Africa</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Githinji and Cullenberg (2003) Githinji and Mersha (2006) The Gordian Knot Scones (2010) Land Reform in Zimbabwe Njonjo (1978) The Africanization of the White Highlands Bernstein, Henry. 2013. "Commercial Agriculture in South Africa since 1994: . O'Laughlin, Bridget; Henry Bernstein; Ben Cousins and Pauline E. Peters. 2013. "Introduction: Agrarian Change in South Africa 	
November 11 th .	<u>Veterans Day - No Classes</u>	
November 18 th .	<p><u>Land Redistribution and Poverty –The GKI intervention</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Griffin, K., A. R. Khan, et al. (2002). "Poverty and the distribution of land." <i>Journal of Agrarian Change</i> 2(3): 279-330 Output efficiency and growth: Beyond IR –Chapter 2 -Lipton Paul and Githinji (2016) Small Farms, Smaller Plots.- <i>Journal of Peasant Studies</i>. Responses - <i>Journal of Agrarian Change</i> 4(1/2): 17-44. (To be discussed by all as responses) <p><u>Questioning Market led Reform</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Borras, S. M. (2003). "Questioning Market-Led Agrarian Reform: Experiences from Brazil, Colombia and South Africa." <i>Journal of Agrarian Change</i> 3(3): 367-394 Bernstein, H. (2004). "'Changing before our very eyes': agrarian questions and the politics of land in capitalism today." <i>Journal of Agrarian Change</i> 4(1/2): 190-225. Borras Jr, S. M. (2003). "Questioning the Pro-Market Critique of State-Led Agrarian Reforms." <i>European Journal of Development Research</i> 15(2): 109-132. Akram-Lodhi, H. "Land, markets and neoliberal enclosure: an agrarian political economy perspective." <i>Third World Quarterly</i> 28(8): 	

Date	Topic and Readings	Presenter
<p>November 23rd.</p> <p>NOTE THIS IS A TUESDAY NOT A THURSDAY.</p>	<p><u>A Peasant/Small Holder Path to Development – Reimagining Cooperatives and Transition</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Marx, Critique of Gotha Program ○ Jossa, Bruno. 2014. "Marx, Lenin and the Cooperative Movement." <i>Review of Political Economy</i>, 26(2), 282-302. ○ Chakrabarti, Anjan and Anup Kumar Dhar. 2008. "Development, Capitalism, and Socialism: A Marxian Encounter with Rabindranath Tagore's Ideas on the Cooperative Principle." <i>Rethinking Marxism</i>, 20(3), 487-99. ○ Cheney, George. 2001. "Mondragon Cooperatives." <i>Social Policy</i>, 32(2), 4-9 ○ Marcuse, Peter. 2015. Cooperatives On the Path to Socialism? <i>Monthly Review: An Independent Socialist Magazine</i> 66 (9): 31-38. ○ Harnecker, C. P. (Ed.). (2012). <i>Cooperatives and Socialism: A view from Cuba</i>. Palgrave Macmillan. Introductions and Chapters 1,2,3, 4,5,6,7,12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jesús Cruz Reyes and Camila Piñeiro Harnecker (2013) An introduction to cooperatives, ▪ Julio C. Gambina y Gabriela Roffinelli (2013) The construction of alternatives beyond capital, ▪ Humberto Miranda Lorenzo (2013) Cooperativism and self-management in the perspectives of Marx, Engels and Lenin, ▪ Iñaki Gil de San Vicente (2013) Socialist cooperativism and human liberation: Lenin's legacy, ▪ Helen Yaffe (2013) Che Guevara: cooperatives and the political economy of the socialist transition, ▪ Henrique T. Novaes (2013). The basis for self-managed socialism: the contribution of István Mészáros ▪ Larraitz Altuna Gabilondo, Aitzol Loyola Idiakez and Eneritz Pagalday Tricio (2013). Mondragón: the dilemmas of a mature cooperativism, ▪ Armando Nova González (2013) Cuban agricultural cooperatives from 1959 to the present, ○ Zhun Xu – Socialist Legacy in Rural China 	<p>Will/Mwangi</p>
<p>December 2ND..</p>	<p><u>Marxism and the Environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O'Connor J.. 1988. Capitalism, nature, socialism: a theoretical introduction, Capitalism, Nature, Socialism, vol. 1, no. 1 • O'Connor J.. 1997. Natural Causes: Essays in Ecological Marxism, New York, Guilford (selections). • Harvey, David. "The Nature of Environment" in Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference, 1996. • B. Sandler. 1994. Grow or die: Marxist theories of capitalism and the environment, Rethinking Marxism, vol. 7, no. 2. • Foster J. 2013. Marx and the rift in the universal metabolism of nature, Monthly Review, vol. 65, no. 7. • Moore, Jason. 2015. Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital. London: Verso (Chapter 1). • Walker, Richard 2016. "Value and Nature: Rethinking Capitalist Exploitation and Expansion", Capitalism Nature Socialism. • Gĩthĩnji, Mwangi wa and Charles Perrings "Social and Ecological Sustainability in the Use of Biotic Resources in Sub-Saharan Africa," Ambio, Volume 22 No. 2-3, May 1993, pp.110-116. Pre-publication unabridged version 	