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Office Hours: Wednesday 3:00pm-5:00pm
Sidney Smith Hall, Room 3060

SII 199Y: METROMARXISM: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON URBAN STUDIES

Wednesday 10:00am-12:00pm UC 67

Course Description

Cities highlight the best and worst aspects of modern life and they reveal the starkest contradictions of our time. Cities, for example, produce the majority of the world's wealth and are engines of the global economy yet they also give rise to extreme forms of poverty and inequality. They are hubs of creativity, innovation, and ingenuity as well as social disorder, dysfunction, and environmental degradation. Cities foster transnational connections, diverse communities, and rich public lives but they also breed alienation, exclusion, and antagonism. They promise liberty, progress, and prosperity for all at the same time that they institutionalize systems of control, authoritarianism and violence. How do we make sense of this complex and ambivalent picture?

The course looks to the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels and to the materialist method of analysis they pioneered in order to understand these contradictions as inherent aspects of urban life under capitalism. In the first half of the course, we use the writings of Marx and Engels (as well as thinkers such as Henri Lefebvre, Guy Debord, Manuel Castells and David Harvey) in order to develop a conceptual framework for thinking about capitalist social and spatial relations. We then use this framework to trace the origin, growth, and development of the contemporary city and to clarify the relationships between urban economic functions, spatial structures, political configurations, and socio-cultural "ways of life." In the second half of the course, we delve more deeply into the workings of 21st century cities through a series of critical interventions. Each session will consider a different aspect of urban studies (colonialism, neoliberalism, nature, gender, creativity, militarization, and struggle) as an important window onto the city. These various perspectives will be explored drawing on empirical examples from around the world. Overall, the course considers the city as a crucial setting of social change as well as a key site of social theorizing. Throughout the class, we will consider the extent to which Marxism can help us to understand the forces that shape urban environments, provide us with critical tools to address urban problems, and enable us to build an alternative, more socially just forms of life.

Objectives

The objectives for student learning in this course can be roughly categorized into two main categories: knowledge and skills. At the end of the year, you should:

- Be familiar with some fundamental concepts in Marxist urban studies including capital, class, value, commodities, dialectics, uneven development, everyday life and the Right to the City.

- Have a thorough understanding of some of the main theoretical debates in Marxist urban studies and be familiar with empirical examples that manifest these debates.
- Have a better understanding of your own embeddedness within urban relations and your capacities for individual and collective action.
- Be able to critically read texts and analyze complex arguments about the social world.
- Be able to formulate compelling arguments and structure evidence in a logical fashion.
- Be able to effectively communicate ideas both verbally and in writing.

Requirements

Participation

It is assumed that students will attend every session—and arrive on time—unless a serious illness or emergency arises. Our classroom will be a safe academic environment where ideas are devised, debated, and deconstructed. Feel free to speak your mind on any and all of the issues that will arise during the course. I encourage you to participate even if you think that your views may be unpopular with other students. A university is an important place to debate difficult issues—and in doing so, to challenge others, to appreciate unfamiliar viewpoints, and to reflect upon and deepen one's own convictions. All students are encouraged to think out loud and to exchange ideas openly.

As a seminar, this course will be directed by and for students. It is essential that you take your role as active participant seriously. The success of the seminar is dependent on the group's ability to work together and, through intelligent discussion, develop an understanding of the material that you would not have come to on your own. A seminar is an ongoing and open conversation that unfolds through our shared collective engagements. The participants therefore carry the burden of responsibility for the quality of the discussion. Good discussions tend to occur when participants study texts closely in advance, listen actively, share their ideas and questions in response to the ideas and questions of others, and are generous and respectful to their peers and interlocutors.

Reading

The readings are the foundation of the course. Students should read all the required materials before class and be prepared—with notes and question—to discuss the major issues raised in the material. You will be asked to rely on various critical and interpretive skills to explore the theories and concepts presented. Students are also encouraged to suggest additional readings based on your interests and to circulate relevant texts (news articles, multimedia clips, event notices etc.) to each other throughout the course. Feel free to share these directly on Blackboard or to bring them to my attention for distribution in class.

Assignments

In order to successfully fulfill the requirements of the course, students must complete three Keyword Summaries (2 pages each), a Dérive Map, a mid-year Critical Reflection Essay (6-8 pages), and a major Research Project (resulting in a 15-20 page paper). Details of each assignment will be distributed in class.

Evaluation

The grade for the class will be determined as follows:

Participation	20%
Keyword Summary (x 3)	15%
Dérive Map	15%
Critical Reflection Essay	15%
Research Project	35%

Academic Policy:

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with accordingly. For further clarification and information, please see the University of Toronto's policy on Academic Integrity at <http://www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/resourcesforstudents.html>.

Students are strongly advised to keep draft work and hard copies of their assignments until the marked assignments have been returned.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. Late submissions of any assignment will be penalized 5% for each 24 hours after the deadline. If you have extenuating circumstances that are affecting your ability to meet deadlines, please speak with me in office hours as soon as you can.

Other Resources

Accessibility

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

Writing

The University of Toronto offers many helpful resources and tools to aid students in academic writing. I strongly suggest that you familiarize yourself with the workshops, tutoring services and advice guides provided at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca>.

Readings

The following books are available for purchase at the U of T Bookstore. All other materials will be made available through Blackboard or the U of T library system.

- Robert C. Tucker (ed). 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. W. W. Norton & Company (Second Edition). ISBN-13: 978-0393090406
- Andrew Merrifield. 2002. *Metromarxism: A Marxist Tale of the City*. Routledge. ISBN-13: 978-0415933490
- Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (eds.). 2010. *The Blackwell City Reader*. Blackwell. ISBN-13: 978-1405189828
- China Mieville. 2010. *The City & The City*. Del Rey Reprint Edition. ISBN-13: 978-0345497529

- Mike Davis (ed.). *Evil Paradises: Dreamworlds of Neoliberalism*. New Press. 2008. ISBN-13: 978-1595583925
 - Rana Dasgupta. 2014. *Capital*. Penguin. ISBN-13: 978-1594204470
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Marx, Marxism and Urban Studies

Who was/is Marx?

Why study Marx today?

What did Marx have to say about urban studies?

September 10

The United Nations “World Urbanization Prospects [highlights]” 2014 Edition (available on Blackboard)

Sean McElwee “Believe it or Not: Karl Marx is Making a Comeback” *Salon*, June 22, 2014 (http://www.salon.com/2014/06/22/believe_it_or_not_karl_marx_is_making_a_comeback/)

September 17

Andrew Merrifield, *Metromarxism*, Introduction, chapters 1, 2

Frederich Engels, “The Great Towns” (in *The Blackwell City Reader*, chapter 1)

Basic Concepts in Marxist Thought

What is a materialist account of history?

How does capitalism work?

What is the relationship between labour, subjectivity and critical thought?

September 24

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party” (in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 469-500)

Karl Marx “Theses on Feuerbach” (in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 143-145)

October 1

Karl Marx, “Capital Volume I” (in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 294-364)

October 8

Karl Marx, “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844” (in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 70-81, 93-101)

George Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (available on Blackboard)

Keyword Assignment #1 to be turned in at the start of class

Modernity and Capitalist Urbanization

What is the relationship between capitalism and the city?

How does this relationship transform over the course of the 20th century?

How does the built environment influence economic and social relations and vice versa?

October 15

Henri Lefebvre "The Everyday and Everydayness" *Yale French Studies*, 73, 1987 (available on Blackboard)

Michel de Certeau "The Practice of Everyday Life" (in *The Blackwell Cities Reader*, chapter 11)
Andrew Merrifield, *Metromarxism*, chapter 4

October 22

Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, chapters 1-2 (available on Blackboard)

The Situationist International, "Unitary Urbanism," "Another City for Another Life,"
"Theory of the Dérive" (available on Blackboard)

Andrew Merrifield, *Metromarxism*, chapter 5

Keyword Assignment #2 to be turned in at the start of class

Tuesday October 29

In-class film: *Radiant City*

November 5

Manuel Castells *The City and the Grassroots*, Introduction (available on Blackboard)

Manuel Castells, "An Introduction to the Information Age" (in *The Blackwell City Reader*, chapter 4).

Andrew Merrifield, *Metromarxism*, chapter 6

Dérive Map to be turned in at the start of class

November 12

David Harvey "The Urban Process Under Capitalism: A Framework for Analysis" (in *The Blackwell City Reader*, chapter 3)

David Harvey and Colin Crouch "The End of Capitalism; Reforming Capitalism" Interview with Laurie Taylor on *Thinking Allowed*, BBC Radio 4, 14 April, 2014
(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04001kg>)

Andrew Merrifield, *Metromarxism*, chapter 7

November 19

China Mieville, *The City and the City*

November 26

Midterm review

Critical Reflection Essays to be posted on Blackboard by December 3rd at 5:00 pm

The (Post)colonial City

*Do modernization and urbanization look the same everywhere?
What is the relation between the capitalist metropole and the colony?
What challenges does the (post)colonial city present to a Marxist account of urbanization?*

January 7

Anthony D. King, "Urbanism, Colonialism and the World-economy" (in *The Blackwell City Reader*, chapter 40)

Ananya Roy, "The 21st-century metropolis: new geographies of theory" *Regional Studies* 43.6, 2009 (available on Blackboard)

John Lancaster, "Next Stop, Squalor" *Smithsonian Magazine*, March 2007
(<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/next-stop-squalor-148390665/?no-ist>)

The Neoliberal City

*What is neoliberalism?
How does neoliberal urbanization compare to that of the Keynesian-Fordist era?
How does urban inequality express itself in the contemporary world?
What are the effects of the marketization of everyday life?*

January 14

Doreen Massey, "Vocabularies of the Economy" *Kilburn Manifesto*, July 2013 (available on Blackboard)

Evil Paradises, "Introduction" and chapters 3, 5, 7, 8

January 21

Rana Dasgupta, *Capital*

The Natural City

*How are natural resources inserted into and created by capitalist systems?
How do urban and rural spaces interact?
What are the ecological constraints on urban growth?*

January 28

Erik Swyngedouw and Maria Kaika, "The Environment of the City...or the Urbanization of Nature" in *Blackwell Companion to the City* (available on Blackboard)

John Rennie Short "The City and Nature" in *Urban Theory a Critical Assessment* (available on Blackboard)

David Suzuki "Future Cities" *Suzuki Diaries*, CBC television, Jul 20, 2014
(<http://www.cbc.ca/natureofthings/episodes/suzuki-diaries-future-city>)

Research Project Proposal to be turned in at the start of class

The Gendered City

*How do gender and sexual relations structure cities and vice versa?
What does a feminist perspective contribute to Marxist accounts of the city?
How can we build gender-inclusive and non-heteronormative urban space?*

February 4

Sophie Watson, "City A/Genders" (in *The Blackwell City Reader*, chapter 26).
Dolores Hayden, "What would a non-sexist city be like? Speculations on housing, urban design, and human work" *Signs*, 5(3), 1980 (available on Blackboard)
Anne-Marie Bouthilette, "Queer and Gendered Housing: A Tale of Two Neighborhoods in Vancouver" in *Queers in Space* (available on Blackboard)

The Creative City

*How can "culture" lead urban regeneration?
Who benefits from creative city policies?
How do cities compete for talent, residents and investment?*

February 11

Richard Florida, "The Rise of the Creative Class" *Washington Monthly*, May 2002
(<http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2001/0205.florida.html>)
Philipp Oehmke "Squatters take on the Creative Class: Who Has the Right to Shape the City?" *Der Spiegel*, January 7 2010
(<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/squatters-take-on-the-creative-class-who-has-the-right-to-shape-the-city-a-670600.html>)
Ross, Andrew. "The New Geography of Work Power to the Precarious?" *Theory, Culture & Society* 25.7-8 (2008): 31-49.

Keyword Assignment #3 to be turned in at the start of class

February 18: READING WEEK: NO CLASS

The Militarized City

*How do discourses of security play out in contemporary cities?
What kinds of urban subjects are policed and surveilled?
Is there any meaningful distinction today between military and police tactics?*

February 25

Stephen Graham, "Introduction: Target Intercept" in *Cities Under Siege* (available on Blackboard)
Dennis Rodgers, "Nueva Managua" (in *Evil Paradises* chapter 9)
Allessandra Renzi and Greg Elmer, *Infrastructure Critical: Sacrifice at Toronto's G8/G20 Summit*, pp. 9-24, 43-70 (available on Blackboard)

Research Project First Draft to be workshopped in class

The Rebel City

What is the relationship between urbanization and the creation of radical political subjects?

Is the metropolis the factory of the 21st century? If so, who constitutes the working class?

Whose city is it really?

March 4

David Harvey, John Brissenden and Ed Lewis, "Urban Revolution: An interview with David Harvey [Part 1 & Part 2]" *New Left Project*, May 28 2012 (available on Blackboard)

Peter Marcuse, "Critical Planning and other Thoughts," Blog posts #1-5 on Occupy Wall Street (available on Blackboard)

Michael Kimmelman, "In Protest, the Power of Place" *New York Times*, October 16, 2011 (http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/16/sunday-review/wall-street-protest-shows-power-of-place.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)

Teresa Caldeira, "Sao Paulo: The City and it's Protests" *kafila.org*, July 5, 2013

(<http://kafila.org/2013/07/05/sao-paulo-the-city-and-its-protests-teresa-caldeira/>)

March 11

Presentations of Research Projects

March 18

Presentation of Research Projects

March 25

In-class film: *Ekumenopolis*

April 1

Final review

Research Project Final Draft to be turned in at the start of class