

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

Political Science 771: Seminar in Political Theory  
Tu 5:30-8:20 p.m., WRI B224

Spring 2008  
Professor Fott

Office: WRI B217; 895-4187  
Office hours: Tue. 2:30-3:30 p.m., Wed. and Thu. 2:30-4:30 p.m., or by appointment  
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We will study the political ethics of capitalism. Capitalism emerged victorious from the Cold War and today has no other large-scale challenger than the Chinese system—which itself incorporates some economic competition. Yet complaints about globalization abound. Does capitalism merit our full support? In order to answer that question we need to know the intellectual roots of capitalism. We will focus on the most famous advocate of market-oriented economics, Adam Smith; a partial supporter, John Stuart Mill; and the most profound critic, Karl Marx.

**Required Readings:**

The following books have been ordered for purchase:

Adam Smith. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Liberty Fund, 1982.  
Adam Smith. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. 2 vols. Liberty Fund, 1981.  
John Stuart Mill. *“On Liberty” and Other Essays*. Oxford Univ. Press, 1998.  
John Stuart Mill. *Principles of Political Economy*. Oxford Univ. Press, 1994.  
Robert C. Tucker, ed. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. 2nd ed. Norton, 1978.

**Schedule of Topics:**

January 22	Introduction
January 29	Aristotle, <i>The Politics</i> , bk. 1, chaps. 1-3, 8-11; Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> , chaps. 2, 5; Rousseau, <i>Discourse on Political Economy</i> (all on electronic reserve at library)
February 5	Smith, <i>Theory of Moral Sentiments</i> , pp. 1-108 (skip editors' introduction)
February 12	Smith, <i>Theory of Moral Sentiments</i> , pp. 109-93, 200-211
February 19	Smith, <i>Theory of Moral Sentiments</i> , pp. 218-37, 266-314
February 26	Smith, <i>Wealth of Nations</i> , vol. 1, pp. 1-115 (skip editors' introduction)
March 4	Smith, <i>Wealth of Nations</i> , vol. 1, pp. 116-62, 264-75, 376-427; <b>short paper due</b>
March 11	Smith, <i>Wealth of Nations</i> , vol. 1, pp. 428-72, vol. 2, pp. 556-641; guest lecture by Prof. Clifford Orwin (Univ. of Toronto) on compassion
March 18	No class (spring recess)
March 25	Smith, <i>Wealth of Nations</i> , vol. 2, pp. 689-816
April 1	Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> , pp. 1-103
April 8	Mill, <i>On Liberty</i> , pp. 104-28; <i>Utilitarianism</i> , pp. 129-201
April 15	Mill, <i>Principles of Political Economy</i> , pp. 159-255
April 22	Mill, <i>Principles of Political Economy</i> , pp. 256-367
April 29	Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach,” pp. 143-45; <i>The German Ideology</i> , pp. 146-200; <i>Capital</i> , pp. 302-12, 319-29; <i>Manifesto of the Communist Party</i> , pp. 469-500; <b>long paper due</b>
May 6	Readings to be announced (on electronic or physical reserve at library)

### **Format:**

Each session will consist of discussion of the assigned reading. Thus it is *imperative* that you come to class having done the assigned reading for that week.

### **Assignments:**

Written assignments include a short paper, 5 to 6 pages, on a topic to be assigned (worth 20% of your final grade), and a long paper, 20 to 25 pages (worth 50%). For the long paper you may write on a topic assigned by me or on a topic of your choice, with my prior approval no later than March 25. Each student will be responsible for giving a critical analysis (not a summary) of the readings of a week at the beginning of class, which will serve as a basis for discussion (not a written assignment; worth a total of 10% of the final grade). Your participation in the discussions will count for 20% of your final grade. Each of these components will be graded on a scale from A to F. You must complete both written assignments in order to pass the course. Your grade will be reduced if you have more than one unexcused absence; lateness normally counts as an absence.

Extensions for submitting papers will be granted only in cases of emergency (e.g., personal illness, preferably with a note from a doctor; serious illness in one's family). The grade on a paper will be reduced by one increment for each day the paper is late without an approved extension (e.g., a paper of B+ quality will receive a B if it is one day late; a paper of A quality will receive a A-/B+ if it is two days late).

### **Other Information:**

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If you have a documented disability that may require assistance, you should contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) for coordination of services. DRC is located in the Student Services Complex, room 137. The telephone number is 895-0866 (TTY 895-0652).