

Colloquium in Global and Comparative History:
Capitalism and Its Discontents

Professors Johan Mathew and Jackson Lears

Wednesdays, 4:30-7:30 p.m.
31 Mine Street

In recent years, historians have challenged the reigning economic wisdom that market exchange reflects timeless laws by exploring capitalism as a historically contingent and culturally specific economic system, with myriad manifestations across the globe. The new scholarship builds on and responds to previous work in economic history, business history, labor history and histories of consumption. This seminar will examine the new histories of capitalism in conversation with these older historiographies. We will also ground our discussions in some of the classic theoretical works on capitalism. Reflecting the focus of the new historiography, the course will be centered on US history but with frequent readings and discussions on capitalism in other parts of the world and as a global system. Assignments will include a short book review and a longer historiographical essay.

1. September 6 Introductions

 “In History Departments, It’s Up With Capitalism” NYTimes, 4/6/2013

2. September 13 Big Stories, I

 Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, “Introduction and Plan of the Work,”
 ch. 1-8
 Karl Marx, “Wage Labor and Capital,” in Robert Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 203-217
 _____, “The Labor-Process and the Process of Producing Surplus-Value,” ch. 7 in *Capital*, v. 1
 Max Weber – *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, tr. Talcott Parsons, pp. 47-128, 155-183.
 Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, ch. 1

3. September 20 Big Stories, II

 Michel Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics: Summary* 317-24, Lecture 7, 159-84
 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Ch. 2*, 47-71
 J.K. Gibson-Graham, *The End of Capitalism: Ch. 11*, 251-265
 Jason Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Chs. 1-2*, 33-74

4. September 27 Origins
Book Review is due
- Karl Polanyi, *Great Transformation Chs 3-10*, pp. 33-129
Friedrich Hayek, *Road to Serfdom* (Condensed Version, pp. 39-70)
Fernand Braudel, *Afterthoughts on Material Civilization and Capitalism*
Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis*: Ch. 2, 23-41
5. October 4 Empires, I
- James Fichter, *So Great a Profit*: Ch 9-Conclusion, 232-290
Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence*: Intro & Ch 6, 3-27 & 265-297
Jane Guyer, *Marginal Gains*: Ch 1-2, 3-48
6. October 11 Transitions, I
- John Lauritz Larson. *The Market Revolution in America*
Jon Levy, *Freaks of Fortune*, prologue, Ch. 1, 5
Stephen Mihm, *A Nation of Counterfeiters*, Prologue, ch. 1
William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, ch. 3, 5.
7. October 18 Slavery
- Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, ch. 1, 3, 7, 10, 13
Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, ch. 2, 6.
Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, ch. 4, 5.
Edward Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*
8. October 25 Labor
- Karl Marx, "The Working Day" ch. 10 in *Capital*, v. 1
E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism" *Past & Present*, No. 38 (Dec., 1967), pp. 56-97
_____, *The Making of the English Working Class*, ch. 6, 9, 16.
Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Rethinking Working Class History*: Intro & Ch. 3
Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves*, Introduction, ch. 7
Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart*, ch. 4, 5, 8
9. November 1 Management
- Alfred Chandler, *The Visible Hand*, Introduction, ch. 4
Richard White, *Railroaded*, ch. 1, 3, 9, 11
Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, ch. 11, 12
Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money*, ch. 12
_____, "The General Theory of Employment," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (February 1937), 209-223
Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Retail Revolution*: Introduction, ch. 2, 3, 5.

10. November 8 Consumption
- Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance*, ch. 2, 3.
 Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic*, ch. 1, 7, 8.
 Frank Trentmann, *Empire of Things*, ch. 3, 5, 8
 Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World*, Introduction, ch. 2
11. November 15 Empires, II
- J.A. Hobson, *Imperialism*: Chs. 4-6, 51-99
 V.I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*: Chs. 7-8, 265-84
 Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts*: Chs. 2-3, 54-119
 Ritu Birla, *Stages of Capital*: Ch. 2, 67-102
12. November 29 Debt, Currency and Finance
- David Graeber, *Debt*: Chs. 2-4, 21-88
 Louis Hyman, *Debtor Nation*: Intro & Ch. 1, pp. 1-44
 Johan Mathew, *Margins of the Market*: Intro & Ch. 4, 1-20 & 113-42
 Massimo Amato and Luca Fantacci, *The End of Finance*: Part I, 3-63
13. December 6 Transitions, II
- James Ferguson *Anti-Politics Machine*: Intro & Ch. 5, 1-22, 135-166
 David Harvey, *Brief History of Neo-Liberalism*: Intro & Chs. 1-2, 1-63
 Julia Elyachar, "Before and After Neoliberalism" in *Cultural Anthropology*: 27:1, 76-96
 Anna Tsing, *Friction*: Intro & Ch. 1, 1-54
14. December 13 What Now?
- Pankaj, Mishra, *Age of Anger*, ch. 1
 Philip Mirowski, *Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste*, ch. 3
 Nancy Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," *New Left Review* 100 (July-August 2016), 99-117.
 Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: the Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, Introduction.
 _____, "It Was the Rise of the Davos Class That Sealed America's Fate" <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2016/11/09/>