

POLS 6060 3.0/SPTH 6200.3

## Appropriating Marx's Capital, I

Course director: David McNally, S637 Ross Building, x.8883 [dmcnally@yorku.ca](mailto:dmcnally@yorku.ca)

Course time: Thursday, 11:30 AM

Location: S536 Ross

Office hours: Monday 10:30-11:30 and Thursday 10:30-11:30

This course involves a systematic reading of Marx's greatest work, *Capital* (volume 1). The emphasis is on a close reading of that text, with only passing reference to secondary literature. Particular attention is paid to the *movement* of key concepts throughout the text.

I recommend the Penguin edition of *Capital*, translated by Ben Fowkes, and have ordered it through the York bookstore. Also useful are David Harvey's *Companion to Marx's Capital*; Ben Fine and Alfredo Saad-Filho, *Marx's Capital*; and Michael Heinrich, *Introduction to the Three Volumes of Marx's Capital*.

### Grading scheme:

First essay (mainly expository) – 2500-3000 words, due March 2 (30 %)

Second essay – 5000 words, due April 6 (45%)

Seminar participation (25%)

### A Few Recommended Secondary Sources

- Bertell Ollman, *Alienation* (esp. Chs. 1-3): excellent on dialectics and method (available at [www.dialecticalmarxism.com](http://www.dialecticalmarxism.com) under the Books tab)
- Fred Moseley, *Money and Totality*
- Patrick Murray, *Marx's Theory of Scientific Knowledge*: as above
- I. I. Rubin, *Essays on Marx's Theory of Value*: classic "value-form" analysis.
- Enrique Dussell, *Towards an Unknown Marx*
- Dussell, "The Four Drafts of *Capital*," *Rethinking Marxism*, 13: 1 (2001), pp. 9-26
- Michael Lebowitz, *Following Marx: Method, Critique and Crisis*
- Allen Oakley, *Marx's Critique of Political Economy: Intellectual Sources and Evolution*
- Daniel Bensaid, *Marx for Our Times*
- Fred Moseley and Tony Smith (eds.), *Marx's Capital and Hegel's Logic*

All major texts by Marx can be found at [www.marxists.org](http://www.marxists.org) and some course readings can be found on my website – [www.davidmcnally.org](http://www.davidmcnally.org) – under the "Courses" tab.

### Course Schedule:

January 5 – **Course Introduction**

January 12 – **Words Like Bats: Dialectics and Method**

Bertell Ollman, *Alienation*, pp. 3-42 (Chapters 1-3): available online at [www.dialecticalmarxism.com](http://www.dialecticalmarxism.com); Marx, "Introduction" to *Grundrisse*; Marx, "Estranged Labour" from *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*

January 19 – **The Mystery of the Commodity**

*Capital*, Chapter 1.1-3; Peter Stallybrass, “Marx’s Coat”; Tombazos, Ch. 1-3

January 26 – **The Fetishism of Commodities**

*Capital*, Chapter 1.4; Tombazos, Ch. 4; Also: I. I. Rubin, *Essays on Marx’s Theory of Value*, ch. 1, available at [www.marxists.org/archive/rubin/value](http://www.marxists.org/archive/rubin/value)  
Lucio Colletti, *Rousseau to Lenin*, pp. 76-92; Geoffrey Pilling, *Marx’s ‘Capital’: Philosophy and Political Economy*, pp. 146-56, Ch. 4, sections entitled “The elementary form of value” and “The development of the value form” available online at: [www.marxists.org/archive/pilling/index.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/pilling/index.htm)

February 2 – **Dialectical Reversals: Money, Capital, Labour Power**

*Capital*, Chapters 2-6; Tombazos, Ch. 6-7.

February 9 – **The Labour Process, Valorization and the Working Day**

*Capital*, Chapters 7-10.5

February 16 – **Surplus Value, Cooperation, Division of Labour**

*Capital*, Chapters 10.6-14; Tombazos, Ch.8-9.

February 23 – **Reading Week**

March 2 – **Machinery and the Working Class Body**

*Capital*, Chapter 15

March 9 – **Forms of Surplus Value, Wages**

*Capital*, Chapters 16-22; Tombazos, Ch. 17.

March 16 – **“Research Week”**

March 23 – **“Accumulate! Accumulate! That is Moses and the Prophets!”**

*Capital*, Chapters 23-24; Tombazos, Ch. 10, 12.

March 30 – **The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation**

*Capital*, Chapter 25

April 6 – **At Last, the Beginning: Dispossession as World History**

*Capital*, Chapters 26-33; Also: Massimo De Angelis, “Separating the Doing and the Deed: Capital and the Continuous Character of Enclosures,” *Historical Materialism*, 12.2 (2004). Worth consulting: David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, Ch. 4 and Ellen Meiksins Wood’s critical assessment of Harvey’s book in *Historical Materialism* 14.4 (2006).