This seminar will explore a wide range of issues around complex relationships among three critical domains: state(s), market(s), and society(ies). This is not a survey course, organized in terms of a systematic sequence of connected topics. Rather, this seminar is organized as a collective reading course of what I consider to be contemporary classics (i.e., foundational texts that have constantly inspired scholars) and exemplary studies in the humanities and social sciences on a relatively scattered set of specific topics: e.g., the formation of the state and market, ideology, the state and society under capitalist democracy, societal (in)actions and movements, regime transitions, institutions, and neo-liberalism. While the purpose of this seminar is to actively engage in academic discussions on these topics, our ultimate aim is to search for a “better” political socio-economic organization in the real world.

By reading classics and exemplary studies, we will be exposed to diverse epistemological and ontological traditions of scholarship. “Reading” here is a three-fold operation. The first reading is analytical in that we attempt to “accurately” understand the author’s main arguments and logical trajectory that reaches the conclusion. We pay particular attention to conceptual formulations, methodology, and tools that the author employs and develops. The second reading is to relate the author’s entire argumentation to his/her contemporary polemics/literature and to situate the text in a specific historical situation. In the third reading, we conduct a critical assessment of the text by finding out what (part or totality of the text) we can adopt (as applicability or inspiration) and discard (as “bullshit” à la Frankfurt or relics). “Reading” means open to all kinds of possibilities and potentialities. We proceed behind a veil of ignorance, amicable to various positions, methods, ideologies, cultures, religions, and cults. As such, the only approach is Bayesian, and the sole goal is to understand (as a corollary, possibly change) the world.

This is an advanced graduate seminar. A “seminar” is a forum for a collaborative exploration of ideas, focusing on identifying what we do not know and on theoretical and empirical formulations for finding out. The pace of the course will depend on our understanding of topics; we will stop and think of new approaches if there is no satisfying answer given by existing scholars. Hence, this seminar will probably contribute little to your academic career if you already have a dogmatic faith in the same methods and same models safely used by everyone else. Class meetings will combine lectures, student presentations, and discussions.

**REQUIREMENTS**

1) **Weekly memos (reaction papers) on the required books (200-500 words)**

It is important for students to engage each week’s book in a written memo prior to the seminar sessions. Memos on the reading are not mini-papers. Rather, they are meant to be think pieces, reflecting your own intellectual engagement with the book: identifying some core idea/argument, method, and position; specifying what is obscure, hidden, or confusing in the book; exploring some interesting implications of the book. They do not have to be profound or brilliant but need to address some issue(s) you like to talk about in class. These memos will be a substantial basis for the seminar discussions. Memos should be emailed to me by noon on the day before the seminar meets (i.e., Monday noon). I will then merge them with my brief comments into a single file, and send them to all the seminar participants by late Monday. Everyone should try to read all the memos before coming to class. Because memos are meant to improve the quality of seminar discussions, late memos will not be accepted. Failing to hand in memos will affect your grade. If you have to miss a class, you are still expected to email a memo to me by Monday noon.
2) Term paper/project (6000-10,000 words)

Students are expected to write a term paper on the state and society (or political economy broadly defined). The paper may take a variety of forms. It may be an empirically informed research paper in which a research question is posed, a hypothesized answer is advanced, and the plausibility of that answer is evaluated with some evidence (N.b.: theoretical discussions must be incorporated even in a heavily empirical paper). The paper may be a critical review essay in which some body of work is reviewed with avenues for future research identified. The paper may also take the form of a research proposal in which the significance of a problem is explained, existing attempts to address it are reviewed, and a research design to address the problem is developed. A warning: The least satisfactory paper would be either the one that has little to do with the spirit/topics of the seminar or the one that tries to synthesize too much, too abstractly, and too pretentiously. Whatever format is chosen, students should frequently discuss their paper with me.

The process of writing a term paper is as follows: 1) consult with me about your topic early in the semester, 2) hand in a hard copy of your paper proposal (one-page single-spaced) by March 3 in class, 3) circulate your draft (email it to all the participants) by Saturday noon, three days before your paper presentation (either April 18 or April 25) in a mini-conference, and 4) revise your paper based on comments from a mini-conference and hand in a hard copy of your final draft by May 5 (Tuesday). Late papers will not be accepted unless arrangements have been made in advance.

3) Presentations (brief presentation on weekly book, paper presenter and discussant in a mini-conference)

First, students are expected to make a brief presentation on that week’s assigned book (at least once throughout the semester). This presentation should provide the necessary background for questions or points of discussion to be directed to your fellow seminar participants. Second, students are expected to make an “academic” presentation of your term paper in a mini-conference at the end of the semester. In addition, students are expected to serve as a paper discussant in a mini-conference. The nature and organization of the mini-conference will be discussed in class.

GRADING

A basic principle of grading is as follows: I put more emphasis on good faith, serious effort on the part of students than on sheer brilliance. If a student does all of the assignments seriously, then they will almost certainly receive at least a B for the course regardless of the “quality” of the work. The weekly memos will not be graded for quality, although I will keep track of whether or not they were completed.

BOOKS

Many social science courses assign a lot of little bits and pieces from many sources: a chapter here, an article there, sometime even parts of chapters and articles. Articles are valuable forms of scholarly work (and you will write one in this seminar), and some kind of research is best published in this form. In my opinion, however, the most important aspect of one’s intellectual life is reading books. Books are usually not just long articles, nor series of several articles. They are essentially different intellectual products in which an extended argument can be developed and crafted. Reading a book is not just a simple operation to understand an author’s main idea. I think that the real excitement of reading scholarly work lies in the details as much as in the main arguments. Thus, for most of this seminar, we will read the entire book in this semester.

The following books have been ordered as required books at LSU Bookstore. They are all worth having in your permanent library.

## OUTLINE OF THE SEMINAR

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/13</td>
<td>Nature of “Political Socio-Economics”</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1/20</td>
<td>Karl Polanyi’s <em>Great Transformation</em></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1/27</td>
<td>Schumpeter’s <em>Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy</em></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2/03</td>
<td>Marx’s <em>Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte</em></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2/10</td>
<td>Hirschman’s <em>Exit, Voice, and Loyalty</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2/17</td>
<td>Foucault’s <em>Discipline &amp; Punish</em></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>3/03</td>
<td>Scott’s <em>Moral Economy of the Peasant</em></td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>3/10</td>
<td>Piven and Cloward’s <em>Poor People’s Movements</em></td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>3/17</td>
<td>Przeworski’s <em>Democracy and the Market</em></td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>3/24</td>
<td>North’s <em>Institutions, Institutional Change and Econ Performance</em></td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>3/31</td>
<td>Harvey’s <em>Condition of Postmodernity</em></td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>4/14</td>
<td>Mini-conference I</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>4/21</td>
<td>Mini-conference II</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>4/28</td>
<td>No meeting to enable students to finalize their term papers</td>
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Note that the schedule and outline of the seminar are subject to change.
WEEK 1. TRINITY OF STATE-MARKET-SOCIETY AND POLITICAL SOCIO-ECONOMICS


Remedy (general reading, book-length surveys, and study materials):


For political economy and economic sociology, skim through Caporaso and Levine (1998). This book is a general introduction to various perspectives in the history of political economy (although I believe that some of their points are problematic). Read Trigilia’s (2002) an excellent survey. If you still have energy and do not abhor formal modeling, tackle Przeworski (2003). This is a superb textbook that clarifies several convoluted issues in political economy. But before Przeworski, read non-naïve economists’ text by Bowles, Edwards, and Roosevelt (2005).


For those who are interested in the socio-political economy but don’t have time to sit down and dig in, rely on first Heilbroner (1999), and read Foley (2006) and Warsh (2006). They are very useful, non-academic introduction to the intellectual history of the political economy.


Essential reading (order of significance):

We must be familiar to our origins: the historical formation of the modern nation-state and capitalism. Some of the important books selected from the vast literature are as follows:

Braudel, Fernand. 1992[1972]. Civilization & Capitalism 15th-18th Century. Three volumes. Berkeley: University of California Press (I think this is truly monumental work, the most important achievement in the field of the history of capitalism. Three volumes together contain about 2,000 pages, but the good news is that there is a short-version (only 120 pages) neatly summarized by Braudel himself, La dynamique du capitalisme (1985), Paris: Arthaud).


Karatani, Kojin. 2005. *Transcritique: On Kant and Marx*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press (This work is heavily philosophical (his conception of “parallax” has influenced many scholars including Žižek), but some of Karatani’s analysis on the history of the capitalist state is brilliant (“trinity of capital-nation-state” is taken from him). See also his 世界共和国~(Sekaikyowakoku e), (2006), Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, and his recent article that summarizes his core idea, “Beyond Capital-Nation-State,” *Rethinking Marxism* 20: 569-595.

**Background reading:**

If you are interested in major classical perspectives of capitalism, it is essential to read the following original texts (at some point in your life, read at least Smith and Marx). Adam Smith’s *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776); Karl Marx’s *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), *The Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), and, above all, *Capital, Vol. I* (1867); Vladimir Lenin’s *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916) and *State and Revolution* (1917); Max Weber’s *Economy and Society* (posthumous, 1922) and *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905); Rosa Luxemburg’s *The Accumulation of Capital* (1913); Nikolai Bukharin’s *Imperialism and World Economy* (1929).

**Recommended reading:**


WEEK 2. MARKET-SOCIETY DYNAMICS AND DISCOVERY OF “ACTIVE SOCIETY”

Required reading:

If you have time, also read: Polanyi, Karl. 1957. “The Economy as Instituted Process.” In Trade and Market in the Early Empires, Karl Polanyi et al. (eds.). Glencoe: The Free Press.

Further reading on The Great Transformation:


**WEEK 3. ENGINE OF CAPITALISM AND POLITICAL COMPETITION**


**Required reading:**


**Recommended reading:**


**Further reading on this week’s issues:**


**WEEK 4. “STAR WARS MARXISM”: COMPLEXITY OF CLASSES, STATE, AND REPRESENTATION**


**Required reading:**


**Recommended reading:**

If you have time, read Marx’s other works that completes his trilogy of revolutions: *Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850* (1850) and *Civil War in France* (1871). See also Alistair Horne’s *The Fall of Paris: The Siege and the Commune, 1870-71* (2007[1965]), London: Penguin Books.


**Further reading on classes and the capitalist state from various Marxian perspectives (order of significance):**

I think that Miliband-Poulantzas debates almost forty years ago are still fascinating, although some of their discussions are eccentrically and unnecessarily convoluted. The following is a short list of some of the essential readings.


Further reading on The Eighteenth Brumaire:


Further reading on social cleavages, class voting, and representation:


**Further reading on analytical Marxism:**


**WEEK 5. ANALYTICAL APPROACH TO MODE OF GROUP BEHAVIORS**


**Required reading:**


**Further reading on applications of Hirschman’s model:**


WEEK 6. POWER AND STRUCTURE-AGENCY

Required reading:


Studies on/by Foucault are innumerable, and providing relevant further reading is beyond my intellectual capacity (as of spring 2009); if you’re interested in this week’s issues, talk to Foucault expert Dr. Eubanks or take his grad course in Department of Politics at LSU). An accessible introduction I found is: Alec McHoul and Wendy Grace’s A Foucault Primer: Discourse, Power and the Subject (1997), New York: New York University Press. Concerning the concepts of power widely considered in political science, read Steven Lukes’s Power: A Radical View (2005), New York: Palgrave.

WEEK 7. SUBSISTENCE ETHIC AND AGRARIAN REVOLTS

Required reading:
**Recommended reading:**


**Further reading:**


Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Revolutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.


**WEEK 9. SOCIO-POLITICAL “MOVEMENTS”**


**Required reading:**


If you have time, read Symposium on this book in *Perspective on Politics* 1(4).
Required film:

Pontecorvo, Gillo. 1966. *The Battle of Algiers* (Great visual representation of nuts and bolts about movements and insurgency, the most significant political film ever).

Further reading:


**WEEK 8. DEMOCRACY, TRANSITIONS, AND CAPITALIST ECONOMY**


**Required reading:**


**Conceptualization of regime type:**


**Strategic interaction models:**


**Regime transitions (among others) in addition to the above readings:**


**WEEK 10. INSTITUTIONS MATTER?**


**Required reading:**


**Further reading:**


WEEK 11. STATE OF THE “WORLD”: MODERNITY, POSTMODERNITY, AND NEOLIBERALISM


Required reading:


Recommended reading:


Further reading:


