

POLI 7974, Monday 12:00 – 2:50 pm, Fall 2016

THE STATE AND SOCIETY

**Wonik Kim, wkim@lsu.edu, 225-578-5354
OH: 1:30 – 2:30 pm, Tuesday and Thursday or by appointment
Department of Political Science, 229 Stubbs Hall**

We will explore the formation and dissolution of the modern system, namely “the trinity of capital-nation-state” in the words of Kojin Karatani (柄谷行人, 2010). The basic elements of this trinity are capital/market, nations/civil society, and the state/inter-state system. They are heterogeneous by their origins and fundamentally contradict with each other. But these elements got linked as a unified entity only recently through a series of historical flukes during the long 19th century. They became complementary to each other as one system and generated unprecedented synergy, enabling “creative destruction” of the world. Since the late 20th century after *les trente glorieuses*, however, the “holy” trinity has metamorphosed into something unholy. The painful break-up of the trinity has been synchronized by the deepening of the subaltern’s identity politics, the emergence of neoliberal globalization, the birth of the “precariat” around the world, and the advent of the second machine age. So, our central question is: If the disintegration of the modern system is transformative and inexorable, what will be (should be) a new sociopolitical economic system?

The seminar is divided into two parts. In the first part, entitled “Integration: The Trinity of the Capital-Nation-State,” we will study the origins of the modern state, nations and nationalism, the formation of class society, and the essence of power embedded in the modern system. In the second part, “Disintegration: Movements, Ruling Bloc, and Capital as Power,” the major issues to be examined are societal collective (in)action, movement politics, power relationships within ruling bloc, and neoliberalism.

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 the topics we cover in this seminar. 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 as 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.

The following books are required. They are all worth having in your permanent library.

1. Marx, Karl and Fredrick Engels. 2012[1848]. *The Communist Manifesto*. Modern edition with Eric Hobsbawm's Introduction. New York and London: Verso.
2. Mann, Michael. 2012. *The Sources of Social Power: The Rise of Classes and Nation-States, 1760-1914*. Volume 2. 2nd Edition. New York: Cambridge University Press.
3. Anderson, Benedict. 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised Edition. London and New York: Verso.
4. Thompson, E. P. 1966. *The Making of the English Working Class*. New York: Vintage Books.
5. Foucault, Michel. 1995. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books.
6. Alexander, Jeffrey. 2008. *The Civil Sphere*. New York: Oxford University Press.
7. McAdam, Doug. 1999. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. 2nd Edition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
8. Gilens, Martin. 2014. *Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America*. Reprint edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
9. Flesher Fominaya, Cristina. 2014. *Social Movements and Globalization: How Protests, Occupations and Uprisings are Changing the World*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
10. Crouch, Colin. 2011. *The Strange Non-Death of Neoliberalism*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.

REQUIREMENTS

1) Weekly memos and a brief presentation (50%)

It is important for seminar participants to engage each week's book in a written memo prior to the seminar sessions (around 500 words). Memos 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., Sunday noon)**. I will then merge them with my brief comments into a single file, and send it to all the seminar participants by late Sunday. 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. If a participant has to miss a class, she or he is still expected to email a memo to me by Sunday noon. Participants are also 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 fellow seminar participants.

2) Term paper/project (50%)

Seminar participants are expected to write a term paper on the state and society (6000-10,000 words). 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. *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, participants should frequently discuss their papers 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 short paper proposal (one page single-spaced with references) **by October 10**, 3) receive my comments on your proposal, 4) hand in a hard copy of your first draft **by November 21**, 5) receive my suggestions for revision, and 6) revise your paper and hand in a hard copy of your final draft **by Friday noon, December 9**. Late papers will not be accepted unless arrangements have been made in advance.

GRADING

A basic principle of grading is as follows: I put more emphasis on good faith, serious effort on the part of seminar participants than on sheer brilliance. If participants do 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.

SCHEDULE/OUTLINE OF TOPICS

(subject to change)

| I. Integration: The Trinity of Capital-Nation-State | | | |
|--|-----------|-------|--|
| 1 | August | 22 | Introduction |
| 2 | August | 29 | <i>New Epoch: “All That Is Solid Melts into Air...”</i> Marx & Engels |
| 3 | September | 3 | Labor Day No class meeting |
| 4-5 | September | 12-19 | <i>The Birth of Leviathan</i> Mann |
| 6 | September | 26 | <i>Imagined Communities</i> Anderson |
| 7-8 | October | 3-10 | <i>The Formation of Class Society</i> Thompson |
| 9-10 | October | 17-24 | <i>Agency, Structure, and Power</i> Foucault |
| II. Disintegration: Movements, Ruling Bloc, and Capital as Power | | | |
| 11 | October | 31 | <i>Civil Society and Its (In)Action</i> Alexander |
| 12 | November | 7 | <i>Movement Politics</i> McAdam |
| 13 | November | 14 | <i>Party Politics and the Ruling Elite: What Do They Do?</i> Gilens |
| 14 | November | 21 | <i>Globalization and the Revenge of the Subaltern</i> Flesher Fominaya |
| 15 | November | 28 | <i>Neoliberal Zombie</i> Crouch |

*A CAVEAT: The reading of this seminar (especially for the first part) is heavily Eurocentric, which could distort our world view. To remedy the lopsided view of Eurocentrism, one should consult the so-called “global history” literature and postcolonial studies.

**This is a short version of the syllabus. A longer version with an extensive annotated bibliography is available for those who want to delve into more details on the topics.