

Postcolonial Political Economy

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Monday 3-5

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Office Hours: Thurs 1-3 and by appointment

By the end of the eighteenth century, political economy had emerged as a moral philosophy of “commercial society”; by the end of the nineteenth century, economists presumed market behaviour to be human nature itself. There is a strong critical tradition of political economy that seeks to de-naturalise and historicise the emergence, expansion and reproduction of what we now call capitalism. For this tradition, much is at stake in (re-)interpreting the “classics” of political economy.

Yet these classics emerged at a high point of European empire, and the “science” of economics consolidated its influence during an era of renewed imperialism. So what of the relationship between capitalism and colonialism? To what extent and in what ways were the key elements of classical political economy – for example, labour, land, exchange – apprehended through colonial mediations? Is the human nature that drives market behaviour colonial? Unfortunately, there is an intermittent and under-examined relationship between postcolonial critique and critical political economy, which makes this addressing of the questions all the more difficult.

This course will challenge you to make sense of the relationship between colonialism and capitalism on your own terms. To this end, we will build unconventional conversations between classical political economists (and their 19th century sociological and economist successors) and thinkers and traditions invested in confronting colonialism and its legacies. We will focus primarily on regions affected by (Anglo) settler colonialism – primarily the Americas and the Pacific. There are solid pedagogical reasons for focusing our inquiry in this way; nonetheless, it should be noted that this strategy unavoidably attenuates the complexities and divergences of colonial rule on a global scale.

The course requirements are as follows:

Letter (40%)

You will write a letter (3-5 pages) wherein you take on the intellectual persona of either Māori Marsden, Adam Ferguson or Silvia Federici. You will write in the first person to your interlocutor, whom you will critically engage over the issues that you deem to be of shared interest. Your letter will begin, “Dear ...”. You will choose one of the following letters:

- Māori Marsden to John Locke
- Adam Ferguson to Charles Darwin
- Silvia Federici to John Millar

The assignment is due by class-time, Monday, 8th October.

Critical Essay (50%)

Choose from one of the weekly topic questions between weeks 5-10. Construct your argument by engaging comprehensively with the key readings of that week along with the

support of 3 sources from the “additional” list at the end of this outline. Your essay should be 6-7 pages long (excluding bibliography), and fully referenced.

The assignment is due by class-time, Monday 12th November

Presentations (10%)

You will create a presentation with at least one other member of class. I shall assign groups at some point early in the semester. Your task is to produce a 15 minutes group presentation, using some kind of visual aid (e.g. PPT), explaining neoliberalism by reference to the relationship between colonialism and capitalism. You might, for example, chose to focus on e.g. the origins or rise of neoliberalism, or the ethos of neoliberalism, or key categories or rhetorics implicated in neoliberalism, or neoliberal processes and/or effects etc.

For this purpose, you will mobilize at least one theme, concept or line of argument arising from the prior weeks’ discussions. If you chose more than one, you will need to demonstrate how they analytically relate to each other.

I do not expect you to undertake detailed and intricate research for the presentation. Each group only need chose two resources from the additional readings (below) that you think might help you (in addition to the readings and conversations you will have already undertaken). Primarily, I want you to be led by the connections or openings that you might have started to make as we proceeded through the course. In other words, I am most interested in your collective brainstorming – critically and imaginatively – of the ways in which neoliberalism might be said to have - at least in part - a colonial provenance.

You will begin work on this assignment only after you have submitted the critical essay, and you will present in the seminar of week 13, e.g. Monday 26th November.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

*(readings marked with * are ones that you will find at the bottom of the Blackboard page – all other readings are accessible via links or via JHU electronic library)*

1: Introduction (NB: first class is on 30th Aug – Thursday - as Monday is Labor Day)

Does political economy address a historical or epistemological problem?

- Robert Heilbroner, "The Economic Revolution" (ch.2), in *The Worldly Philosophers: The Lives, Times and Ideas of the Great Economic Thinkers* (Simon & Schuster, 1953 - Seven Editions) *

EITHER

- Rudolfo Kusch, “Understanding”, in *Indigenous and Popular Thinking in America* (Duke University Press, [1970] 2010) *

OR

- Matthew Watson, “Crusoe, Friday and the Raced Market Frame of Orthodox Economics Textbooks”, *New Political Economy* 23 (5), 2018 *

2: Nature and improvement (10th Sep)

(How) must nature be improved for civilization to proceed?

- Adam Ferguson, “Part 1, Section 1 ONLY: “Of the question relating to the State of Nature”, in *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (Various, 1767) <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/ecco/004846977.0001.000/1:3?rgn=div1;view=fulltext>
- Charles Darwin, *The Voyage of the Beagle* (1839), ch.18: “Tahiti and New Zealand” <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/944/pg944-images.html>
- Māori Marsden, “The Natural World and Natural Resources: Maori Value Systems and Perspectives”, in Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal (ed.) *The Woven Universe* (Masterton: The Estate of Rev. Māori Marsden, 2003) pp.24–53 *

3: Land and Value (17th Sep)

With what consequences might value be extracted from the land?

- John Locke, “Of Property”, in *Two Treatises on Government* (Various, 1689) <http://www.yorku.ca/comninel/courses/3025pdf/Locke.pdf>
- Tasha Hubbard, “Buffalo Genocide in Nineteenth Century North America”, in A. Hinton, A. Woolford & J. Benvenuto (eds.), *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America* (Duke University Press, 2014) *
- Lloyd Best, “Outlines of a Model of Pure Plantation Economy”, *Social and Economic Studies* 17 (3), 1968 *

4: Family and Reproduction (24th Sep)

What economic functions must the family perform to assure progress from savagery to civilization?

- John Millar, *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks* (1771), Ch.1, Section 1, “The effects of poverty and barbarism, with respect to the condition of women” http://if-oll.s3.amazonaws.com/titles/287/Millar_1342_EBk_v6.0.pdf
- Adam Smith, Letters on Feb 11th, Feb 14th, Feb 15th 1763, in *Letters on Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978) *
- Silvia Federici, “Colonization and Christianization”, in *Caliban and the Witch* (New York: Autonomedia, 2004) *
- Joan French, “Colonial Policy Towards Women after the 1938 Uprising: The Case of Jamaica”, *Caribbean Quarterly* 34 (3), 1988

5: Labour and Order (1st Oct)

What is the difference between slavery and servitude, and why might the difference matter?

- Blackstone, W. 1766. *Commentaries on the Laws of England. Book the First*. Dublin: John Exshaw, Henry Saunders, Samuel Watson & James Williams. (Book 1, chapters 1, 14-18) http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/blackstone.asp
- John Locke, “Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina (1669)” http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/nc05.asp
- Edmund and William Burke, *An Account of the European Settlements in America* (1760) **Part SIX**: ch 10-12 <https://ia802303.us.archive.org/4/items/anaccountofeurop02burkiala/anaccountofeurop02burkiala.pdf>
- Hulsebosch, Daniel J. 2006. “Nothing But Liberty: Somerset’s Case and the British Empire.” *Law and History Review* 24 (3)

6: The Market and Freedom (8th Oct)

“The struggle for freedom must be pursued through market relations”. Discuss.

- Karl Marx, “The Modern Theory of Colonialism”, in *Capital Vol.1* (Various) <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch33.htm>
- Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), chs 11-13 *
- Zora Neale Hurston, “High John de Conquer.” In *Hurston: Folklore, Memoirs, and Other Writings*, 922–31. New York: The Library of America, 1995. *

7: Inheritance (15th Oct)

In what ways might heredity be a crucial element of political economy?

- Walter Bagehot, *Physics and Politics: Thoughts on the Application of the Principles of "Natural Selection" and "Inheritance" to Political Society* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1873), parts 2-4 <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4350/4350-h/4350-h.htm#chap02>
- Max Weber, “The Nation State and Economic Policy.” In P. Lassman (ed.), *Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) *
- William Beveridge, “Children’s Allowances and the Race”, in *The Pillars of Security, and Other War- Time Essays and Addresses* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1943). *
- Mutabaruka, “Where mi Belang?” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ih6P5OI4GNE>

8: Race and social conservatism (22nd Oct)

Who is a worthy subject in capitalist society and how is race implicated in this moral calculus?

- Thomas Carlyle, “The Nigger Question”, in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays in Five Volumes, IV* (London: Chapman and Hall Limited, [1849] 1899). <https://www.americanantiquarian.org/Freedmen/Manuscripts/carlyle.html>
- John Stuart Mill, "The Negro Question", *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* (Vol. XLI, 1850) <https://cruel.org/econthought/texts/carlyle/millnegro.html>
- United States. Department of Labor. Office of Policy Planning and Research. 1965. *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. <https://web.stanford.edu/~mrosenfe/Moynihan%27s%20The%20Negro%20Family.pdf>
- Frances Beal, "Double Jeopardy: To be Black and Female", in *Black Women's Manifesto* (New York: The Third World Women's Alliance, 1970) *

9: Providence and Accumulation (29th Oct)

Is accumulation a sacred pursuit?

- Sahlins, Marshall. 1996. “The Sadness of Sweetness: The Native Anthropology of Western Cosmology.” *Current Anthropology* 37 (3) (June 1): 395-428
- Ashis Nandy, "The Beautiful, Expanding Future of Poverty: Popular Economics as a Psychological Defense", *International Studies Review* Vol. 4, No. 2, (Summer, 2002)
- Dejusticia, "Sumak Kawsay: El Caso Sarayaku" (2017) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFKbLzJ3QjQ>

10: The Spirit of Exchange (5th Nov)

What makes exchange a necessary aspect of being human?

- Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (Various, 1776), "Of the Principle which gives Occasion to the Division of Labour"
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3300/3300-h/3300-h.htm#link2HCH0002>
- Robbie Shilliam, "The Spirit of Exchange", in Sanjay Seth (ed.), *Postcolonialism and International Relations* (Routledge, 2013)
<https://robbieshilliam.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/shilliam-spirit-of-exchange.pdf>
- 'The Dangers of 'Dumb Talk': Eurocentric Translations of the Potlatch', Lane, Richard J. *Commonwealth Dijon* 21 (2), 1999

11: Whose Commons? (12th Nov)

"If private property is the problem, then the commons is the solution". Do you agree?

- Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons", *Science* 162 (3859), 1968
- C. Clement et al, "The Domestication of Amazonia before European Conquest", *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, July, 2015
- Stefano Harney & Fred Moten, "The University and the Undercommons" in *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (Minor Compositions, 2013) *
- Open Letter to the Oakland Occupy Movement: The Decolonization Proposal (2011)
https://youtu.be/r_s3X0uW9Ec

12: THANKSGIVING (19th Nov)

13: Neoliberalism: a Critique (26th Nov)

This seminar will be devoted to presentations (see assignment info)

14: Recap (3rd Dec)

In this seminar we will draw all the threads of our conversations together and clarify how we might utilize classical political economy and postcolonial critique to rethink the relationship between colonialism and capitalism. We will talk about how the course might contribute to your research ambitions.

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

- Arneil, Barbara. *John Locke and America: The Defence of English Colonialism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.
- Bhandar, Brenna. *Colonial Lives of Property: Law, Land, and Racial Regimes of Ownership*. Duke University Press, 2018.
- Bhattacharyya, Gargi. *Rethinking Racial Capitalism: Questions of Reproduction and Survival*. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.
- Beckles, Hilary. *Britain's black debt: reparations for Caribbean slavery and native genocide*. Kingston, Jamaica: University Of West Indies Press, 2013.

- Blaney, David L., and Naeem Inayatullah. *Savage Economics: Wealth, Poverty, and the Temporal Walls of Capitalism*. Basingstoke: Routledge, 2010.
- Coulthard, Glen. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014.
- D'Alisa, Giacomo, Federico Demaria, and Giorgos Kallis. *Degrowth: A Vocabulary for a New Era*. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- De la Cadena, M. (2015). *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice Across Andean Worlds*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Fabian, Johannes. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.
- Gammage, Bill. (2012), *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aboriginals Made Australia*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin
- Goldberg, D.T. (2009), *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell).
- Goodyear-Ka'Ōpua, Noelani, Ikaika Hussey, and Erin Kahunawaika'ala Wright, eds. *A Nation Rising: Hawaiian Movements for Life, Land, and Sovereignty*. Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2014
- Ince, Onur Ulas. *Colonial Capitalism and the Dilemmas of Liberalism* (Oxford University Press, 2018).
- James, CLR. (1993). *American Civilization*. London: Blackwell
- Mbembe, Achille. *Critique of Black Reason*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.
- Midnight Notes Collective, *The New Enclosures* (1990) *
- Neubeck, K.J and Cazenave, N.A. (2001), *Welfare Racism: Playing the Race Card Against America's Poor* (New York: Routledge).
- Robinson, C. (2000), *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (London: University of North Carolina Press).
- Roediger, David R, and Elizabeth D Esch. *Class, Race, and Marxism*, (Verso, 2017).
- Silver, Beverly, *Forces of Labor: Workers' Movements and Globalization since 1870* (Cambridge University Press, 2003)
- Soss, J., Fording, R.C., and Schram, S. (2011), *Disciplining the Poor: Neoliberal Paternalism and the Persistent Power of Race* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Spence, Lester. (2015). *Knocking the Hustle: Against the Neoliberal Turn in Black Politics*. New York: Punctum Books
- Stewart-Harawira, Makere. *The New Imperial Order: Indigenous Responses to Globalization* (London: Zed, 2013)
- Thomas, Deborah A. *Modern Blackness: Nationalism, Globalization, and the Politics of Culture in Jamaica*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Lisa Tilley and Robbie Shilliam (eds.), "Special Issue: Raced Markets", *New Political Economy* 23 (5), 2018
- Wolfe, Patrick. *Traces of History Elementary Structures of Race*. London: Verso, 2016.

