

“THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE”: NEOLIBERALISM, FEMINISM, AND RESISTANCE

COURSE SYLLABUS

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OFFICE HOURS: W 2-4, and by appointment

PSCI 7024

Spring 2012

ATLAS 202

Th 11:00am-1:30pm

CLASS DESCRIPTION

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher famously pronounced that “there is no alternative” to neoliberalism. Defenders and detractors of neoliberalism alike have agreed with her, arguing that neoliberalism is inevitable and irresistible. To supporters, neoliberalism represents the triumph of liberal democracy and capitalism over fascism and communism. To opponents, neoliberalism is understood as a totalizing system that manages to coopt all institutions and ideologies that aim to resist it, subjecting them all to the imperative of market rationality.

In this seminar, we will ask, “Is there an alternative to neoliberalism?” We will explore theories of neoliberalism offered by supporters and critics alike to try to identify what neoliberalism is, why it can seem to be inevitable and irresistible, and how (if at all) it might be successfully resisted. Simultaneously, we will explore feminist theory and politics as both a possible site from which to imagine an alternative, and as a case study of a social movement whose achievements, rhetoric, and ideology have been coopted in the service of neoliberal politics in the U.S. and beyond. What does feminist theory have to teach us about imagining an alternative to neoliberalism? What does feminist politics have to teach us about the difficulties of resisting market logic and the lure of consumption?

READING ASSIGNMENTS & COURSE SCHEDULE

The following texts are available for purchase at the University Bookstore. All other required readings are available online on the course website.

Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*

Johanna Bookman, *Markets in the Name of Socialism*

Ann E. Cudd and Nancy Holmstrom, *Capitalism For and Against: A Feminist Debate*

Jodi Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies: Communicative Capitalism and Left Politics*

G rard Dum nil and Dominique L vy, *The Crisis of Neoliberalism*

Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*

Henry Giroux, *Against the Terror of Neoliberalism: Politics Beyond the Age of Greed*

David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*

F.A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*

Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Commercialization of Intimate Life: Notes from Home and Work*

Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*

Aihwa Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*

Nina Power, *One-Dimensional Woman*

Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries*

I. NEOLIBERAL ORIGINS

Recommended readings:

- Manfred Steger and Ravi Roy, *Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction*
- F.A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*
- Milton Friedman and Rose Friedman, *Free to Choose: A Personal Statement*
- Robert A. Dahl and Charles E. Lindblom, *Politics, Economics & Welfare*
- Howard Brick, *Transcending Capitalism: Visions of a New Society in Modern American Thought*
- Wendy Brown, "Neoliberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy," in *Edgework: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Politics*
- Michel Feher, "Self-Appreciation; or The Aspirations of Human Capital," *Public Culture* 21, no. 1 (2009): 21-41

1 Th Jan 19

- David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*

2 Th Jan 26

- F.A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*

3 Th Feb 2

- Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*

4 Th Feb 9

- Johanna Bookman, *Markets in the Name of Socialism*

II. CAPITALISM, NEOLIBERALISM, AND CRISIS

Recommended readings:

- Alfredo Saad-Filho and Deborah Johnston, eds., *Neoliberalism: A Critical Reader*, esp. Part I
- Gérard Duménil and Dominique Lévy, *Capital Resurgent*
- Andrew Glyn, *Capitalism Unleashed: Finance, Globalization, and Welfare*

5 Th Feb 16

- David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital and the Crises of Capitalism*

6 Th Feb 23

- Gérard Duménil and Dominique Lévy, *The Crisis of Neoliberalism*

7 Th Mar 1

- Ann E. Cudd and Nancy Holmstrom, *Capitalism For and Against: A Feminist Debate*

III. CRISIS, SHOCK, EXCEPTION

Recommended readings:

- Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*
- Bonnie Honig, *Emergency Politics*
- Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*

8 Th Mar 8

- Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*

9 Th Mar 15

- Aihwa Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*

10 Th Mar 22 – TO BE RESCHEDULED

- Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*

-Spring Break Mar 24-Apr 1-

IV. WORK, LABOR, FEMINIZATION, AND COMMERCIALIZATION

Recommended readings:

- Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*
- Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work*
- Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild, eds., *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*
- Rosalind Gill and Christina Scharff, eds., *New Femininities: Postfeminism, Neoliberalism, and Subjectivity*

11 Th Apr 5

- Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries*

12 Th Apr 12

- Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Commercialization of Intimate Life: Notes from Home and Work*

13 Th Apr 19

- Nina Power, *One-Dimensional Woman*
- Cristina Morini, "The Feminization of Labour in Cognitive Capitalism," *Feminist Review* 87 (2007): 40-59

IV. RESISTANCE, DEMOCRACY, HOPE, AND FANTASY

Recommended readings:

- Sheldon Wolin, *Democracy, Inc.: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism*
- Colin Crouch, *The Strange Non-Death of Neoliberalism*

14 Th Apr 26

- Jodi Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies: Communicative Capitalism and Left Politics*

15 Th May 3

- Henry Giroux, *Against the Terror of Neoliberalism: Politics Beyond the Age of Greed*

Monday, May 7, 5:00pm: FINAL PAPER DUE