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GRAMSCI SYLLABUS

A NOTE ON EDITIONS

Given that our discussions will be in English, this class will have to cope with a bit of an editorial problem: as of today, there is no complete English translation of the *Prison Notebooks*. While this could in itself be matter for reflection, our syllabus tries to put the notebooks in their (intended? original?) order by relying on the following English translations:

For Notebooks 1-8: Gramsci, Antonio. *Prison Notebooks*. Ed. Joseph Buttigieg, New York: Columbia University Press, 1992-.

For Notebook 25 on subaltern historiography: Gramsci, Antonio. *Subaltern Social Groups: A Critical Edition of Prison Notebook 25*. Eds. Joseph Buttigieg and , New York: Columbia University Press, 2021.

And, for the rest of the notebooks, on this [concordance table](#) of:

1. Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*. Eds. Quintin Hoare, and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, 1st ed., New York: International Publishers, 1971.
2. Gramsci, Antonio. *Further Selections From the Prison Notebooks*. ed. Derek Boothman, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.
3. Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections From Cultural Writings*. Eds. David Forgacs, and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985.

Needless to say, you should feel free to read the *Notebooks* in any other language than English.

SYLLABUS

• **Week 1 (August 28-30): Introduction**

There are no required readings for today's class. If, on the other hand, you want to familiarize with some of the current discussions on/around Gramsci, below is a very idiosyncratic list. Read what you please — or nothing at all.

Mark Engler and Paul Engler. "Lessons from Gramsci for social movements today." *Waging Nonviolence*. August 1, 2023. Available [here](#).

Marzia Maccaferri. "How Antonio Gramsci's Ideas Went Global." *Jacobin*. November 1, 2021. Available [here](#).

Dal Maso, Juan. “The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci: A Rereading.” *Historical Materialism* 1 (2021): 1-39. Available [here](#).

The essay reconstructs one of the major diatribes around Gramsci, launched in 1977 by Perry Anderson, and reignited more recently as the *querelle* of Gramscian philologists versus activists.

Mohamed, Eid. “Culture and Society During Revolutionary Transformation: Rereading Matthew Arnold and Antonio Gramsci in the Context of the Arab Spring’s Cultural Production.” *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 23.2 (2020): 150-68. Available [here](#).

The essay is one example of the growing interest in Gramsci in the Arab world.

Some topics for discussion: What are the Prison Notebooks? Overview of publication and reception. Structure and composition of the notebooks. Problems of periodization. Distinction between “miscellany” and “special” notebooks. Distinction among A, B, and C notes.

- **Week 2 (September 6): Before the Prison Notebooks**

Antonio Gramsci, “The Revolution against Capital” (1917); “Our Marx” (1918); “Letter to the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party” (1926); “Some Aspects of the Southern Question” (1926) (All readings for this week are in Sakai/Resources).

Some topics for discussion: The relation of the Notebooks to Gramsci’s political activity before imprisonment; vitalism; voluntarism; idealism; materialism; relation with Marx and Marxism; “intellectuals”; emergence of the term “hegemony.”

- **Week 3 (September 11-3): Notebook 1 (1929-1930)**

From *Prison Notebooks* or *Quaderni del carcere*

Some topics for discussion: Q1§47. Civil Society and its relation to the State. The relation between “cultural” and “economic” spheres. How does the question of “ideology” emerge?

- **Week 4 (September 18-20): Notebook 2 (1929-1933)**

From *Prison Notebooks* or *Quaderni del carcere*

Some topics for discussion: Gramsci’s prison readings. The “charismatic leader.” Q2§75. Relation between the intellectual avant-garde and the masses; or between party and “people”. How is the notion of “hegemony” developing/changing? Why?

- **Week 5 (September 27): Notebook 3 (1930)**

PLEASE NOTE: there will be no class on September 25.

Term paper preparatory session 1

From *Prison Notebooks* or *Quaderni del carcere*

Some topics for discussion: Consensus/Coercion; leadership/domination; past/present; nation/nationalism; popular/populist; Q3§34.

- **Week 6 (October 2-4): Notebook 4 (1930-1932)**

From *Prison Notebooks* or *Quaderni del carcere*

Some topics for discussion: Relation between philosophy and politics; art and culture; the problem of “everyday life”; structure/superstructure and the notion of “historic bloc”; Taylorism, Weber, and “rationalization”; Q4§52.

- **Week 7 (October 9-11): Notebook 5 (1930-1932)**

From *Prison Notebooks* or *Quaderni del carcere*

Some topics for discussion: the locution “philosophy of praxis”; philology and censorship (problems of interpretation).

- **Week 8 (October 18): Paper Abstracts Due**

There will be no class this week. A 100-300-word abstract for the term paper should be sent via email at dainotto@duke.edu by October 19.

- **Week 9 (October 23-25): Notebook 6 (1930-1932)**

From *Prison Notebooks* or *Quaderni del carcere*

Some topics for discussion: Logic and the “language of science”: Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Giuseppe Peano. The notion of “organic crisis”.

- **Week 10 (October 30-November 1): Notebook 7 (1930-1931)**

From *Prison Notebooks* or *Quaderni del carcere*

Dal Maso, Juan. “The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci: A Rereading.” *Historical Materialism* 1 (2021): 1-39. Available [here](#).

Some topics for discussion: “Conformism” and the “collective man”; the notions of “war of position” and “war of maneuver”; “ideology”.

- **Week 11 (November 6-8): Notebook 8 (1931-1932)**

From *Prison Notebooks* or *Quaderni del carcere*

Hall, Stuart. "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10.2 (1986): 5-27. Available [here](#).

Hall, Stuart. "Gramsci and Us." *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left*. 1988. 161-73. Available [here](#).

Some topics for discussion: The notion of "passive revolution"; "determined market" and the place of economy in Gramsci's Notebooks; Q8§128.

- **Week 12 (November 13-15): Notebooks 9-12 (1932-1933)**

Further Selection, pp. 99; 140-3; 145-7; 156-160; 164-173; 176-180; 182-4; 189-90; 226-229; 233-4; 268-70; 283; 285-304; 306-313; 315-319; 328-361; 366-377; 379; 382-435; 439; 441; 445-475

Selection from the Prison Notebooks, pp. 5-23; 26-43; 114-120; 200-2; 208; 323-354; 357-60; 362-376; 386-8; 399-402; 402-407; 410-14; 418-472

Selections from Cultural Writings: pp. 138-40; 194-5; 285-6; 333-4; 378-9

Some topics for discussion: "What is Man?". Sciences, relativism, and quantum physics.

- **Week 13 (November 20): Notebooks 13-20 (1932-1935)**

Selection from Cultural Writings, pp. 99-102; 108-112; 117-19; 124-133; 140-145; 203-6; 217-222; 236-7; 241-249; 257-9; 266-7; 272-273; 294-297; 313-314; 340-1; 355-9; 375-377; 379-385; 403-408

Further Selection, pp. 21-2; 25-28; 28-35; 43-44; 55-71; 76-92; 92-94; 96-100; 102-106; 137; 151-154; 174-176; 181-182; 219-226; 237-239; 243-246; 248-534; 256-258; 261; 266-267; 273-274; 283-285; 303; 305; 313-315; 323-325; 380-382; 423-4; 439-442; 461-462

Selection from the Prison Notebooks, pp. 55-114; 125-150; 150-194; 202-205; 210-226; 240-247; 253-257; 265-267; 269-270; 361-365; 372-373; 382-386; 388-599; 414-418

Some topics for discussion: Niccolò Machiavelli; the "Modern Prince"; Renaissance and Reformation; Catholicism and Religion; epoch/duration and the problem of historiography.

- **Week 14 (November 29): Notebooks 21-29**

Selection from Cultural Writings, pp. 91-99; 102-103; 112-115; 122-123; 133-134; 146; 171-173; 179-194; 199-202; 206-216; 238-241; 252-255; 264-265; 267-269; 271-272; 277-278; 288-291; 293-294; 301-306; 309-311; 315-326; 328-331; 335-337; 353-355; 359-362; 364-375; 408-425

Further Selection, pp. 23-24; 50-55

Selection from the Prison Notebooks, pp. 52-55; 261-262; 279-318

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. “Can the Subaltern Speak?” *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Eds. Cary Nelson, and Lawrence Grossberg. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988. 271-313. Available [here](#).

Some topics for discussion: Americanism; the notion of “subaltern groups”; folklore; linguistics and/as politics; spontaneity and coercion.

- **Week 15 (December 4-6): Notebooks 21-29**

Beasley-Murray, Jon. *Posthegemony: Political Theory and Latin America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010. The Introduction is available [here](#).

Term paper preparatory session 2.

Research Paper Due: December 20

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