COURSE DESCRIPTION.

Gramsci's theory is often considered to be a radical critique of Marxism, one that does not reject Marx's original thought but seeks to revitalize and update it. Most of his original theories, however, have been of considerable influence among many political thinkers, some of whom are not and would not consider themselves Marxist. This broad appropriation of Gramsci's ideas has led to a complex web of influences that has grown along with many of the contemporary positions within political theory. Thus, Gramsci's vocabulary can clearly be detected in works on feminism, postmodernism, the new political economy, and even in the work of some liberals and communitarians. Although the vocabulary is of Gramscian inspiration, the concepts and the theoretical assumptions behind them are often of a very different character.

The purpose of this course is first of all to develop a rigorous examination of Gramsci's main ideas, his theoretical assumptions, and his approach to philosophical themes. Secondly, by engaging contemporary treatments of the same issues, as well as post-modern appropriations of his thought, the course will lead to a heightened appreciation of the complexity of political theory and to a critical understanding of the development of political thought, Gramscian ideas, and Marxism in general.

COURSE FORMAT.

This course is structured as a research seminar, that is, each member of the class will carry out his/her own independent research within the general themes of the course, and will present a report of his/her findings to the seminar. Although there are some suggested readings for at least some of the sessions, the research of any member of the class need not be focused on them; indeed, it is encouraged that participants seek far and wide to produce interesting reports from which we can all learn and which lead to an appreciation of Gramsci's thought and to serious discussion. It is expected, however, that the class will be given notice of the relevant material for a presentation at least one week prior to the date of the report.

Participants should undertake the research of a problem or issue of interest to them, find the relevant literature, and present their preliminary findings to the seminar. The presentation should be so organized as to stimulate a discussion, and, one hopes, an
on-going conversation about Gramsci. The research paper due on the day of the last seminar should develop a substantive analysis of the issues raised in the seminar presentation.

GRADING SCHEME.

Seminar presentation . . . . 25%
Research Paper . . . . . . 60%
Seminar participation . . . . 15%

PRIMARY TEXTS.


RECOMMENDED TEXTS.

1. General.


2. Method and Philosophy


Buttigieg, Joseph A. "Gramsci's Method." Boundary 17, No. 2 (Summer 1990): 60-81


Haug, Wolfgang Fritz. "Rethinking Gramsci's Philosophy of Praxis from one Century to the Next Boundary 26 No. 2) Summer 1999):101-17


3. History.


4. State, Civil Society, Hegemony, and Culture.


Buttigieg, Joseph A. "Gramsci on Civil Society" *Boundary* 22, No. 2 (Fall 1995):1-32


5. Politics.


6. International Political Economy


7. Subaltern Social Groups.


Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society.


8. Language.


INTERNET RESOURCES

International Gramsci Society:
http://www.internationalgramscisociety.org/

Marcus Green has developed a useful webpage with many links to things gramscian:
http://www.victoryiscertain.com/gramsci

HOW TO READ THE PRIMARY TEXT.

Given the fragmentary character of the Selections From the Prison Notebooks and its limited selection of notes from 2351 pages in 29 notebooks of the original Italian Quaderni del Carcere, it is difficult to match topics with text pages. Hence, it is recommended that you start reading the Selections from the beginning, some 43 pages a week, in addition to the assigned pages.
DISCUSSION THEMES.

Sep. 16 Introduction: The Production of the *Quaderni*

23 Approaches, History and Historical Bloc
Readings: Hoare and Nowell Smith, “General Introduction” to SPN; SPN pp. 52-120; Buttigieg, “Gramsci’s Method.”

30 Civil Society

Oct. 7 State
Readings: SPN pp. 210-78

21 Subaltern Social Groups
Readings: SPN pp. 52-55, 175-85

28 Hegemony and Intellectuals

Nov. 4 International Political Economy

11 Politics and the Party
Readings: SPN pp. 125-205

18 Language
Readings: “Language, Linguistics and Folklore” (SCW)

25 Historical Materialism and the Philosophy of Praxis
Readings: SPN pp. 323-472

Dec. 2 Laclau and Mouffe and the Post-Modern Challenge

9 Open

Other themes, such as for instance feminism, race, religion, ethics, case studies, space/geography, science, etc., can be added to this list.

**Note:** These are the basic readings. Others will be assigned by presenters.