NEOLIBERALISM

Overview:

In recent years scholars have increasingly adopted neoliberalism as an explanatory framework for the workings of global capitalism since the late twentieth century. This course reviews recent scholarship that explicitly engages with this concept and phenomenon. We will reflect on the definition, roots, and manifestations of neoliberalism, both from a historical perspective and in contemporary political economy. The first part of the course interrogates the nature of neoliberalism, starting with the recent scholarly debate around Foucault’s lectures on neoliberalism. In the second part of the course, we then move on to a review of various instantiations of neoliberalism. Because neoliberalism is a multifaceted phenomenon, we will freely cross disciplinary boundaries and read works of theory, history, political science, sociology, and anthropology.

Assignments and Grading:

This is a readings seminar, and the primary expectation is that every student will arrive in class prepared to contribute to in-depth discussions of the assigned texts. Additionally, at the conclusion of the semester students will be asked to submit a paper of about 20 pages exploring one of the (many) themes discussed during the seminar. This paper should include substantial readings beyond those assigned on the syllabus. It will be due on Monday, December 18th. This course may be graded either on a letter basis or on a pass/fail basis.

Texts:

A number of the course readings (denoted with an in the syllabus) will be available on electronic reserve. Other readings, listed below, should be acquired separately.

Part I - What is neoliberalism?

Thursday, August 31: Foucault and Neoliberalism


**Monday, September 11: The Concept of Neoliberalism**


*Jamie Peck, Constructions of Neoliberal Reason (Oxford University Press, 2010), ch. 1 (“Neoliberal worlds”), 2 (“Freedom rebooted”), 5 (“Creative liberties”).


**Monday, September 11: Marx and Neoliberalism**


**Monday, September 25: The Influence of Neoliberal Ideas**


*Mark Blyth, Great Transformations: Economic Ideas and institutional Change in the Twentieth Century (Cambridge University Press, 2002), ch. 1 (“Karl Polanyi and institutional change”), 2 (“A theory of institutional change”), 5 (“Ideas to break a bargain”).

**Monday, October 2: Neoliberal Economics**


**Monday, October 9: Neoliberal Society and Subjectivity**

*Dean Mathiowetz, *Appeals to Interest* (Penn State UP, 2011), ch. 1, 5, 6, epilogue.

**Part II - Instantiations of neoliberalism**

**Monday, October 16: Democracy and Authoritarianism**


**Monday, October 23: Colonialism and Postcolonialism**

- *Clara Han, Life in Debt: Times of Care and Violence in Neoliberal Chile* (University of California Press, 2012), selections.

**Monday, October 30: Globalization and Growth**


**Monday, November 6: Financialization**

- *Jacqueline Best, The Limits of Transparency: Ambiguity and the History of International Finance* (Cornell UP, 2005), Ch. 1, 5, 6 (pp. 1-12, 86-144).

**Monday, November 13: Incarceration**

Monday, November 27: Institutions and Elites


Monday, December 4: Conclusion: neoliberalism and social theories


Supplementary Readings:

- Peter Hall and Michelle Lamont, eds., *Social Resilience in the Neo-Liberal Era* (Cambridge University Press, 2013)