

ISS 1884: Capitalism and its Critics

Quest 1: Justice and Power

I. General Information

Class Meetings

- Fall 2025
- 100% In-Person, no GTAs, 35 residential students
- MWF Period 11 (6:15 PM – 7:05 PM)
- CSE 453

Instructor

- Robert Kaminski
- rkaminski@ufl.edu
- Tel: 352-294-2029
- Office hours: MWF 3:10 P.M. – 4:30 PM and by appointment
- CSE E448

Course Description

Does the capitalist system erode community or enhance it? That is this course's central question. To answer it we will think comparatively about what allows a society to flourish. This multidisciplinary course examines a range of contemporary concerns over the role of capitalism in shaping our society. In it, students will consider both the origins and the future of capitalism. We will engage in a vibrant debate over economic systems and justice. Looking at primary sources from philosophy, politics, and economics, we will trace the ideas and patterns of practice that shaped European and American economic culture from early modernity to the end of the twentieth century. Readings are drawn from sources concerning capitalism and its critics, including Aquinas, Adam Smith, Edmund Burke, Karl Marx, Alexander Hamilton, Max Weber, Simone Weil, and F.A. Hayek. We will analyze the debates over the nature of capitalism, identify what encouraged capitalism's rise in early modern Europe and in America, and think about its role in society today. We will look at exploitative capitalist arrangements, at corruptions in the system such as monopolies, and philosophers such as Rawls and Nozick who address the nature of justice in capitalist social arrangements.

Quest and General Education Credit

- Quest 1

- Humanities
- Writing Requirement (WR) 2000 words

This course accomplishes the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) objectives of the subject areas listed above. A minimum grade of C is required for Quest and General Education credit. Courses intended to satisfy Quest and General Education requirements cannot be taken S-U.

The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.

Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

Required Readings and Works

All readings will be made available in Canvas or provided in class; bibliographic information is included in the weekly schedule.

1. The writing manual for this course is *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th ed. (Chicago, 2017). ISBN: 978-0226287058.
2. Materials and Supplies Fees: n/a.

Course Objectives

- Identify, describe, and explain the history and underlying theories of capitalism in early modern Europe, its rise in America by the late nineteenth century, and nineteenth and twentieth century critical debates concerning the marketplace and its impact on society.
- Identify, describe, and explain the origins of debates in Western Civilization concerning the acquisition of goods and their distribution in society.
- Identify, describe, and explain how the value and virtues of the market society resulted in new forms of social organization in Europe and America from the eighteenth century forward.
- Evaluate the extent to which Christian virtues are at odds with capitalist virtues; evaluate theories on the moral effects of luxury and commerce.
- Analyze primary documents, situate them in historical and literary context, and develop critical interpretations of their significance to the emergence of modern conceptions of economic inequality.
- Evaluate multiple perspectives on the causes and consequences of economic inequality, and on the effects of property ownership.

- Develop and articulate in writing clear and effective responses to central questions about the historical development of the belief that market relations had a positive moral effect on people, a transformation from ancient and medieval suspicions of the market's deleterious effects.
- Communicate orally and in writing the significance of the debates regarding free market operations vs. government responsibility for monetary and fiscal policy as two models of capitalist systems.
- Connect course themes such as justice, property ownership, and market structures such as monopolies to their own intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.
- Reflect on their own experience identifying a contemporary issue concerning marketplace dynamics in a capitalist society.
- Reflect on how the battle for the organization of society according to the principles of capitalism and free trade is visible in their own society or political organization today.

II. Graded Work

Description of Graded Work

1. Active Participation and Class Attendance: 25%

- a. Participation: 15%
 - i. This will be a discussion-intensive class. See below for the Participation Rubric. (R)
- b. Class Attendance: 10%
 - i. On-time class attendance is required for this component of the course grade. You may have two unexcused absences without any penalty. Starting with the third unexcused absence, each unexcused absence reduces your attendance grade by 2/3: an A- becomes a B, and so on.
 - ii. Except for absence because of religious holiday observance, documentation is required for excused absences, per university policy. Excessive unexcused absences (10 or more) will result in failure of the course. If you miss 10 or more classes (excused or not), you will miss material essential for successful completion of the course.

2. Short Paper: 15%

- a. This short paper will be a 1000-word analytical essay due on Sept. 22.
- b. The topic for this essay will be provided in Canvas. It will include instructions for submitting a brief outline.
- c. You must meet with Professor Kaminski to discuss this outline the week before your essay is due.
- d. Professor Kaminski will evaluate and provide written feedback on all of the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence and organization. You may access the university's Writing Studio at www.writing.ufl.edu
- e. For grading standards, see the Writing Assessment Rubric (below).

3. Longer Paper (Week 12): 25%

- a. The midterm paper will be a 2000-word analytical essay due on Nov. 3.
- b. The topic will be provided on Canvas. It will include instructions for submitting a brief outline.
- c. You must meet with Professor Kaminski to discuss this outline the week before your essay is due.

- d. Professor Kaminski will evaluate and provide written feedback on all of the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence and organization.
- e. You may access the university's Writing Studio at www.writing.ufl.edu
- f. For grading standards, see the Writing Assessment Rubric (below)

4. In-class Reading Quizzes: 20%

- a. Unannounced reading quizzes will be administered 7 times across the semester. They will test the student's knowledge of the week's readings, and may contain short-answer, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and/or multiple-choice questions. Professor Kaminski will provide written feedback on any short-answer questions. Your reading-quiz grade will reflect your best 5 quiz scores. See the examination rubric below. (R)
- b. Quiz dates: unannounced.

5. Experiential Learning Presentation, due Week 14: 15%

- a. You will write your own "Capitalism on Campus" debate, taking two sides to the argument as to whether or not capitalism is a just system. Your debate can be in the form of a song, a poem, a rap song, a dialogue, or even a Superbowl ad. Your "debate" must articulate the pros and cons of a capitalist system as you see it in practice somewhere at UF (sports team or events, food service, volunteer or community groups, student council, curriculum, transportation, dorms or housing, etc.). You will read, perform, or otherwise present your debate in class during week 14 or 15 (see sign-up sheet). You must reference at least 3 of our course readings, by quoting them somewhere in your "debate." See more details below, in the syllabus as "Experiential Learning Component."

III. Weekly Schedule

WEEK 1 (AUGUST 22): WHAT IS CAPITALISM?

We will begin by examining some basic questions about capitalism: What is a market society? Does market society increase sociability? Or decrease it?

Readings (30 pages):

1. Albert O. Hirschman, "Rival Views of Market Society," in *The Essential Hirschman*, ed. Jeremy Adelman (Princeton, 2013), pp. 214-247.

WEEK 2 (AUGUST 25-29): BEFORE CAPITALISM

Do Greek philosophy and the Bible tell us anything about market society? Are the Christian virtues in the Sermon on the Mount at odds with capitalist virtues? What would Aristotle think of the principles of modern capitalism? Does Aquinas think it is natural to "possess external things?" Why or why not? How do Aristotle and Aquinas define justice in trade?

Readings (24 pages):

1. Aristotle, *The Politics and Nichomachean Ethics* in *History of Economic Thought Reader*, eds. Steven Medema and Warren Samuels (London, 2003), pp. 5-15.
2. Matthew 5-7 (The Sermon on the Mount), in *Western Civilization*, ed. George H. Knoles and Rixford K. Snyder (New York, 1968), pp. 166-169.
3. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London, 1920-1922), II-II:66:1-2, 7 and II-II:78:1-2.

WEEK 3 (SEPT. 3-5): MORALITY, PROPERTY, AND EQUALITY

Does economic development necessarily lead to inequality? What are the moral effects of luxury and commerce? What, according to Rousseau, are the causes and consequences of inequality? How do Locke and Rousseau differ regarding property?

Readings (45 pages):

1. John Locke, *Of Civil Government* (1690), in *History of Economic Thought*, eds. Medema and Samuels, pp. 59-62.

2. Voltaire, “On Commerce and Luxury” (1738), in *Commerce, Culture and Liberty: Readings in Capitalism before Adam Smith*, ed. Henry C. Clark (Indianapolis, 2003), pp. 276–281.
3. Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws* (1748), in *Commerce, Culture and Liberty*, ed. Clark, pp. 288–306.
4. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality among Men* (1755), in *Princeton Readings in Political Thought*, ed. Mitchell Cohen (Princeton, 2018), pp. 280–297.

WEEK 4 (SEPT. 8–12): CAPITALISM, REVOLUTION, AND DEMOCRACY

What economic systems work best for democratic societies? How did Jefferson differentiate the ways that Europeans and Americans thought about the economy? What is the division of labor? What are its implications for republican governance? What is good about free trade, and what is wrong with monopolies?

Readings (40 pages):

1. Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (London, [1767] 1782), Part IV.
2. Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), in *Princeton Readings in Political Thought*, ed. Cohen, pp. 298–316.
3. Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1776) in *American Political Thought: A Norton Anthology*, eds. Isaac Kramnick and Theodore J. Lowi (New York, 2018), pp. 102–112.
4. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Boston, [1784] 1832), pp. 169–173.
5. James Madison, “Fashion,” *The National Gazette*, March 20, 1792.

WEEK 5 (SEPT. 15–19): GOVERNMENT, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND THE MARKET

Can the market enhance community ties? What is the best way to preserve freedom and liberty in a market system? What is the role of government in the marketplace?

Readings (65 pages):

1. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), in *Modern Political Thought: Readings from Machiavelli to Nietzsche*, ed. David Wootton (Indianapolis, 1996), pp. 535–550.
2. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), in *Princeton Readings in Political Thought*, ed. Cohen, pp. 336–342.
3. Edmund Burke, *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity* (1795), in *Reflections on the Revolution in France and Other Writings*, ed. Jesse Norman (2017), pp. 815–839.
4. Benjamin Constant, “The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with That of the Moderns” (1819), in *Political Writings*, ed. Biancamaria Fontana (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 309–328.

Assignment: Meet with professor about Short Paper outline

WEEK 6 (SEPT. 22–26): AMERICAN CAPITALISM

Is there a unique American approach to capitalism? Has our culture produced a different capitalist system from that, for instance, in Europe? What are the origins of those differences?

Readings (66 pages):

1. Benjamin Franklin, “Advice to a Young Tradesman” (1748), in *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, Vol. 2, ed. Albert Henry Smith (New York, 1905), 370–372.
2. Thomas Jefferson to G.K. van Hogendorp, Oct. 13, 1785, in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 8, 25 February–31 October 1785, ed. Julian P. Boyd (Princeton, 1953), pp. 633–634.
3. Alexander Hamilton, *First Report on Public Credit* (1790) and *Report on Manufactures* (1791) in *The American Economic History Reader*, eds. John William Malsberger and James N. Marshall (New York, 2009), pp. 49–60.
4. Friedrich List, *Outlines of American Political Economy* (Philadelphia: Samuel Parker, 1827), 5–8, 18–24, 33–37.
5. Andrew Jackson, *Bank Veto Message* (1832), in *American Political Thought*, pp. 361–365.
6. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1835–1840), eds. and trans. Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (Chicago, 2002), pp. 506–522, 535–532.
7. Henry Carey, *A Harmony of Interests, Agricultural, Manufacturing and Commerce* (New York, 1851), pp. 227–229.
8. Abraham Lincoln, “Equality...Beats Inequality” (1859) and “Free Labor...Gives Hope to All” (1859), in *Lincoln on Democracy*, ed. Mario M. Cuomo and Harold Holzer (New York, 1990), 159–163.

Assignment: Short Paper due Monday, Sept. 22

WEEK 7 (SEPT. 29–OCT. 3): MARXISM

We will discuss the theories of history and economic exploitation that Marx spelled out in *The Communist Manifesto* and *Das Kapital*. How did Marx see capitalists extracting value from workers? What did he see making this form of exploitation possible? Do you agree with his analysis? What factors did he see driving human history?

Readings (47 pages):

1. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848), trans. Samuel Moore (Chicago, 1888), Ch. 1-2, 4.
2. Karl Marx, *Das Kapital* (1867), in *The History of Economic Thought*, eds. Medema and Samuels, pp. 378-404.

WEEK 8 (OCT. 6-10): DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE, THE STATE, AND THE MEANING OF LABOR

Is it important for the state to ensure an equal distribution of goods among its citizens? How does Rawls define justice? How does Rawls think equality might be achieved? What are Nozick's arguments against distributive justice and for a minimal state? How does John Paul II distinguish between the subjective and objective natures of work? What implications does he see this distinction having for the organization of a just economic system?

Readings (44 pages):

1. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (1971), in *Princeton Readings in Political Thought*, ed. Cohen, pp. 685-708.
2. Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974), in *Princeton Readings in Political Thought*, ed. Cohen, pp. 709-717.
3. John Paul II, *Laborem excrens* (1981) and *Centesimus annus* (1991), in *Pope John Paul II: A Reader*, eds. Daniel Kendall, Jeffrey LaBelle and Gerald O'Collins (New York, 2007), pp. 197-201, 208-214.

WEEK 9 (OCT. 13-15): CULTURE AND CAPITALISM

What is culture's proper role in capitalist societies? Does a certain culture promote a socialist rather than a capitalist system? Is there a "spirit of capitalism" and is it connected with a "Protestant ethic," as Weber argues?

Readings (47 pages):

1. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), in *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York, 1993), pp. 1404-1410.
2. John Stuart Mill, *Chapters on Socialism* (1879), in idem, *Essays on Economics and Society*, ed. J.M. Robson (Toronto, 1967), pp. 705-711, 737-753.

3. Max Weber, "Puritanism and the Spirit of Capitalism" (1905), in *The Essential Weber: A Reader*, ed. Sam Whimster (London, 2004), pp. 25–34.

WEEK 10 (OCT. 20–24): IMPERIALISM AND THE ENTREPRENEUR

How did Lenin define imperialism? How is imperialism related to capitalism? How does Schumpeter define the entrepreneur's role in capitalist economies? Why is the entrepreneur so important to capitalism's success?

Readings (48 pages):

1. V.I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917), in *Great Issues in Western Civilization*, eds. Brian Tierney, Donald Kagan and L. Pearce Williams (New York, 1968), II, pp. 358–366.
2. V.I. Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?* (1902) and *State and Revolution* (1917), in *Princeton Readings in Political Thought*, ed. Cohen, pp. 481–493.
3. Joseph Schumpeter, *The Sociology of Imperialisms* (1919), in *Great Issues in Western Civilization*, ed. Tierney et al., II, pp. 387–393.
4. Joseph Schumpeter, "The Instability of Capitalism," *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 151 (Sept. 1928), pp. 361–363, 374–386.
5. Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York, 1942), pp. 81–86.

Assignment: Meet with professor about Long Paper outline

WEEK 11 (OCT. 27–31): INDIVIDUALISM AND CAPITALISM

Does the concept of individualism and self-interest conflict with the workings of democracy, and how is this conflict manifested in an economic system? We will look at the writings of the conservative revolutionary theorist Carl Schmitt, the fascist political leader Mussolini, the philosopher Simone Weil, and the influential macroeconomic theorist John Maynard Keynes.

Readings (43 pages):

1. John Maynard Keynes, "The End of Laissez-Faire" (1926), in John Maynard Keynes, *Essays in Persuasion* (London, 1963), pp. 312–322.

2. Carl Schmitt, "On the Contradiction between Parliamentarism and Democracy" (1926) and "The Concept of the Political" (1927), in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, ed. Anton Kaes et al. (Berkeley, 1994), 334–338, 342–344.
3. Benito Mussolini, "The Doctrine of Fascism" (1932), in *Princeton Readings in Political Thought*, ed. Cohen, pp. 540–544.
4. Simone Weil, "The Power of Words" (1937), in *Simone Weil: An Anthology*, ed. Sian Miles (1986), pp. 238–258.

Assignment: Longer Paper due Monday, Nov. 3

WEEK 12 (NOV. 3–7): SOCIALISM VS. CAPITALISM

Why does Hayek think that socialism leads to serfdom? What are prices, and what knowledge do they contain or signal? What are the dangers of a centralized price control system? What solutions does Lange offer to this challenge? Are they convincing?

Readings (53 pages):

1. Oskar Lange, "On the Economic Theory of Socialism: Part One," *Review of Economic Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Oct. 1936), 53–71.
2. Sir William Beveridge, "New Britain" (1942), in *Twentieth-Century Europe*, eds. John Boyer and Jan Goldstein (Chicago, 1987), pp. 503–515.
3. F.A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (Chicago, [1944] 2007), pp. 124–133.
4. F.A. Hayek "The Use of Knowledge in Society," *American Economic Review*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (Sept. 1945): 519–530.

Assignment: Longer Paper due Monday, Nov. 3

WEEK 13 (NOV. 10–14): SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INTELLECTUALS UNDER CAPITALISM

Is there anything inherently just or unjust in a capitalist system? What, according to Hayek, is social justice? Where does his argument fit vis-à-vis Rawls, Nozick, and Leo XIII? What role does the intellectual elite serve in capitalist societies?

Readings (56 pages):

1. Leo XIII, *Rerum novarum* (1891), in *Western Civilization*, ed. George H. Knoles and Rixford K. Snyder (New York, 1968), pp. 669–677.
2. F.A. Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty. Volume 2: The Mirage of Social Justice* (Chicago, 1976), pp. 62–65, 70–78, 85–91, 96–100.
3. Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York, 1942), pp. 61–62, 131–134, 143–163.

WEEK 14 (NOV. 17–21): THE END OF CAPITALISM AND THE RISE OF THE MANAGERIAL STATE

Does capitalism inevitably create the conditions for its own extinction? If so, what class will replace the bourgeoisie? We will present the thesis of the managerial revolution, probing its social, economic, and political consequences and the failures of the right and the left to grasp its significance.

Readings (65 pages):

1. James Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution: What is Happening in the World* (New York, 1941), pp. 63–96, 119–130.
2. Christopher Lasch, *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy* (New York, 1996), pp. 3–22.

Assignment: “Capitalism on Campus” debates

WEEK 15 (DEC. 1–3): CAPITALISM AND POP CULTURE

What current elements of popular culture offer commentary on the nature of capitalism? Can we see theories of capitalism debated publicly and informally in our culture?

Readings:

1. none.

2. This week our Experiential Learning Activity will involve each student bringing to class their “Capitalism on Campus” debate. For example, See this "Keynes vs. Hayek" [rap video](#).

Assessment: “Capitalism on Campus” debates

IV. Grading Scale and Rubrics

Grading Scale

For information on UF's grading policies for assigning grade points, see [here](#).

A	94 - 100%		C	74 - 76%
A-	90 - 93%		C-	70 - 73%
B+	87 - 89%		D+	67 - 69%
B	84 - 86%		D	64 - 66%
B-	80 - 83%		D-	60 - 63%
C+	77 - 79%		E	<60

Grading Rubrics

Participation Rubric

A (90-100%)	Typically comes to class with pre-prepared questions about the readings. Engages others about ideas, respects the opinions of others and consistently elevates the level of discussion.
B (80-89%)	Does not always come to class with pre-prepared questions about the reading. Waits passively for others to raise interesting issues. Some in this category, while courteous and articulate, do not adequately listen to other participants or relate their comments to the direction of the conversation.
C (70-79%)	Attends regularly but typically is an infrequent or unwilling participant in discussion. Is only adequately prepared for discussion.
D (60-69%)	Fails to attend class regularly and is inadequately prepared for discussion. Is an unwilling participant in discussion.
E (<60%)	Attends class infrequently and is wholly unprepared for discussion. Refuses to participate in discussion.

Quiz and Examination Rubric: Essays and Short Answers

	Completeness	Analysis	Evidence	Writing
A (90-100%)	Shows a thorough understanding of the question. Addresses all aspects of the question completely.	Analyses, evaluates, compares and/or contrasts issues and events with depth.	Incorporates pertinent and detailed information from both class discussions and assigned readings.	Presents all information clearly and concisely, in an organized manner.
B (80-89%)	Presents a general understanding of the question. Completely addresses most aspects of the question or address all aspects incompletely.	Analyses or evaluates issues and events, but not in any depth.	Includes relevant facts, examples and details but does not support all aspects of the task evenly.	Presents information fairly and evenly and may have minor organization problems.
C (70-79%)	Shows a limited understanding of the question. Does not address most aspects of the question.	Lacks analysis or evaluation of the issues and events beyond stating accurate, relevant facts.	Includes relevant facts, examples and details, but omits concrete examples, includes inaccurate information and/or does not support all aspects of the task.	Lacks focus, somewhat interfering with comprehension.
D (60-69%)	Fails fully to answer the specific central question.	Lacks analysis or evaluation of the issues and events beyond stating vague, irrelevant, and/or inaccurate facts.	Does not incorporate information from pertinent class discussion and/or assigned readings.	Organizational problems prevent comprehension.
E (<60%)	Does not answer the specific central question.	Lacks analysis or evaluation of the issues and events.	Does not adduce any evidence.	Incomprehensible organization and prose.

Writing Rubric

	Thesis and Argumentation	Use of Sources	Organization	Grammar, mechanics and style
A (90-100%)	Thesis is clear, specific, and presents a thoughtful, critical, engaging, and creative interpretation. Argument fully supports the thesis both logically and thoroughly.	Primary (and secondary texts, if required) are well incorporated, utilized, and contextualized throughout.	Clear organization. Introduction provides adequate background information and ends with a thesis. Details are in logical order. Conclusion is strong and states the point of the paper.	No errors.
B (80-89%)	Thesis is clear and specific, but not as critical or original. Shows insight and attention to the text under consideration. May have gaps in argument's logic.	Primary (and secondary texts, if required) are incorporated but not contextualized significantly.	Clear organization. Introduction clearly states thesis, but does not provide as much background information. Details are in logical order, but may be more difficult to follow. Conclusion is recognizable and ties up almost all loose ends.	A few errors.
C (70-79%)	Thesis is present but not clear or specific, demonstrating a lack of critical engagement to the text. Argument is weak, missing important details or making logical leaps with little support.	Primary (and secondary texts, if required) are mostly incorporated but are not properly contextualized.	Significant lapses in organization. Introduction states thesis but does not adequately provide background information. Some details not in logical or expected order that results in a distracting read. Conclusion is recognizable but does not tie up all loose ends.	Some errors.
D (60-69%)	Thesis is vague and/or confused. Demonstrates a failure to understand the text. Argument lacks any logical flow and does not utilize any source material.	Primary and/or secondary texts are almost wholly absent.	Poor, hard-to-follow organization. There is no clear introduction of the main topic or thesis. There is no clear conclusion, and the paper just ends. Little or no employment of logical body paragraphs.	Many errors.

E (≤60%)	There is neither a thesis nor any argument.	Primary and/or secondary texts are wholly absent.	The paper is wholly disorganized, lacking an introduction, conclusion or any logical coherence.	Scores of errors.
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V. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the [Quest](#) the [General Education student learning outcomes](#) for Humanities (H).

[Humanities \(H\)](#) Humanities courses must afford students the ability to think critically through the mastering of subjects concerned with human culture, especially literature, history, art, music, and philosophy, and must include selections from the Western canon.

Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

Content: *Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline(s).*

- Identify, describe, and explain the history and underlying theories of capitalism in early modern Europe, its rise in American by the late nineteenth century, and nineteenth and twentieth century critical debates concerning the marketplace and its impact on society (H). **Assessments:** In-class reading quizzes
- Identify, describe, and explain the origins of debates in Western Civilization concerning the acquisition of goods and their distribution in society (Quest 1, H). **Assessments:** In-class reading quizzes
- Identify, describe, and explain how the value and virtues of the market society resulted in new forms of social organization in Europe and America from the eighteenth century forward (Quest 1, H). **Assessments:** In-class reading quizzes, short and long papers.

Critical Thinking: *Students carefully and logically analyse information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the discipline(s).*

- Evaluate the extent to which Christian virtues are at odds with capitalist virtues; evaluate theories on the moral effects of luxury and commerce (Quest 1, H). **Assessments:** Reading quizzes, short and long papers.
- Analyze primary documents, situate them in historical and literary context, and develop critical interpretations of their significance to the emergence of modern conceptions of economic inequality. (Quest 1, H). **Assessments:** Reading quizzes, short and long papers.
- Evaluate multiple perspectives on the causes and consequences of economic inequality, and on the effects of property ownership (Quest 1, H). **Assessments:** Reading quizzes, short and long papers.

Communication: *Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline(s).*

- Develop and articulate in writing clear and effective responses to central questions about the historical development of the belief that market relations had a positive moral effect on people, a transformation from ancient and medieval suspicions of the market's deleterious effects. (Quest 1, H). **Assessments:** Short and long papers.
- Communicate orally and in writing the significance of the debates regarding free market operations vs. government responsibility for monetary and fiscal policy as two models of capitalist systems (Quest 1, H). **Assessments:** Active class participation, reading quizzes, short and long papers.

Connection: *Students connect course content with meaningful critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.*

- Connect course themes such as justice, property ownership, and market structures such as monopolies to their own intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond (Quest 1). **Assessments:** "Capitalism on Campus" debate and presentation, reading quizzes, short and long papers. (R)
- Reflect on their own experience identifying a contemporary issue concerning marketplace dynamics in a capitalist society (Quest 1). **Assessments:** "Capitalism on Campus" debate and presentation.
- Reflect on how the battle for the organization of society according to the principles of capitalism and free trade is visible in their own society or political organization today (Quest 1). **Assessments:** "Capitalism on Campus" debate and presentation.

VI. Quest Learning Experiences

1. Details of Experiential Learning Component

You will write your own “Capitalism on Campus” debate, exploring two sides to the argument as to whether or not capitalism is a just system. Your debate can be in the form of a song, a poem, a rap song, a dialogue, or even a Superbowl ad. Your “debate” must articulate the pros and cons of a capitalist system as you see it in practice somewhere at UF (sports team or events, food service, volunteer or community groups, student council, curriculum, transportation, dorms or housing, etc.). You must reference at least 3 of our course readings, by quoting them somewhere in your “debate.” This will count as 15% of your overall course grade. You will be graded on the coherence of your debate: that is, does each argument make sense and is one clearly contradicting the other (5%); presentation of your debate: that is, is it clearly communicated, is the presentation visually and aurally appealing and easy to follow (5%); and does it adequately employ at least 3 of our course readings (5%). See more details of the assignment and grading rubric on Canvas. See an example of one such debate concerning the economic philosophies of Keynes vs. Hayek as a [boxing match](#).

2. Details of Self-Reflection Component

Self-reflection is built into many of the assignments, primarily through the reading quizzes, the analytic essay assignments, and the “Capitalism on Campus” debate assignment. In these opportunities for self-reflection offered by specific activities throughout the course, students will reflect on the broader implications of the themes of the course, considering the impact to themselves and/or to a wider community.

VII. Required Policies

The University's policies on attendance, make-up exams, accommodations for students with disabilities, course evaluations, grading, academic honesty, and in-class recordings are available alongside information about academic resources and the Counseling and Wellness Center at: <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>.