History 1501
The Global History of Capitalism
Tuesdays and Thursdays: 1:05 to 2:25
Kenneth Rowe Management 1020

Dr. Justin Roberts

Course Description:
What is capitalism? Where did it come from? Where is it going? How has it shaped people’s lives over the last six centuries? This course explores the spread and development of global capitalism from its origins in the expansion of European seaborne empires to Africa, Asia and the Americas in the fifteenth century to the global economic crisis of 2008. We will examine the many forms of capitalism that have emerged over five centuries, including merchant capitalism, industrial capitalism, slave-based capitalism, war capitalism, financial capitalism, casino capitalism and state-run capitalism. We will learn about the revolutionary economic and social changes, the technological inventions and the intellectual frameworks that helped drive the expansion of this relentlessly adaptive economic system. We will pay close attention to the impact that capitalism had on the material realities of everyday life and on the lived experiences of the forced and free workers in capitalist economies. We will explore how capitalism—a constructed reality—has shaped and reshaped politics, the natural world and people’s core beliefs about human nature, human rights and the meaning of life.

Contact Info:
justin.roberts@dal.ca
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 3:00-5:00 or by appointment 1169 McCain Arts & Sciences

Course Requirements:

Personal Reflection: 10%
You will draft a personal reflection (minimum 500 words and maximum 700 words) about how you think some of the historical forces of capitalism have shaped one or two aspects of your own life. I will provide a few questions to consider in advance. This assignment will allow me to give you some early feedback on your writing skills.

Primary Source Essay: 25%
For this essay, you will read a novel: Upton Sinclair’s The Jungle. You should be reading this book throughout the semester. You will place it in historical context using lectures, course readings and some outside research and analyze it as a primary source. I will provide essay questions in advance. You will draft a short essay (minimum 1250 and maximum 1500 words) in response to one of these essay questions. I will read and help you with drafts in advance but drafts must be submitted to me at least three weeks in advance of the assignment deadline.
**Pop Quizzes: 10%**  
There will be 4 **short pop quizzes** in class. These may address any of the issues covered in lectures to that date and/or any of the readings up to the end of the previous week. The quizzes will consist of short answer, true and false, and multiple choice questions.

**Midterm Exam: 20%**  
This exam will address all lectures to date and the readings until the end of the previous week. It will consist of ID’s, short answers, multiple choice, and an essay question.

**Final Exam: 35%**  
This exam will be comprehensive. Although it will be weighted towards the second half of the class, it will address all readings and lectures to date. It will consist of ID’s, short answers, multiple choice, true and false questions, chronology questions and an essay question.

**Late Paper Policy**  
Late papers submitted without my prior approval will be docked a letter grade per day (i.e. an “A” paper submitted a day late becomes an “A-”).

**Required Textbooks (available at bookstore):**


[All other articles and short excerpts from books will be made available online]

**Week 1**

**Lecture 1: September 3**  
Introduction and Definitions of Capitalism

**Lecture 2: September 5**  
*Dominus*: Property and Power in Pre-Capitalist Worlds, Agrarian Hierarchies and Counterfactuals

**Required Readings:**


Sinclair, *The Jungle*: You should begin reading this book now and keep reading it through the semester.

**Week 2**

**Lecture 1: September 10**
Oak Trees in Flower Pots: New Markets and Seaborne Empires

Lecture 2: September 12
Conquests: Precious Metals, The Church and Inflation in the Spanish Empire

Required Readings:


Week 3

Lecture 1: September 17
Wild Coasts and Tulips: The Dutch Miracle, the Spice Trades and the Amboyna Massacre

Lecture 2: September 19
Food, Energy and Profits: Agrarian Revolutions and the Importance of Dung to History

Required Readings:


***ASSIGNMENT***

Personal Reflection Paper
Due in class: Thursday, September 19.

Week 4

Lecture 1: September 24
How Much Did Sugar Really Cost?: Tropical Goods and Exotic Tastes from the Atlantic Islands to the London Coffee House

Lecture 2: September 27
People with a Price: The Slave Trade and the Chattel Principle

Required Readings:


**Week 5**

**Lecture 1: October 1**  
Slavery and Capitalism and Primary Source Workshop  
York Plantation Slave Inventory, 1782 [Distributed in Class]

**Lecture 2: October 3**  
Money and Risk: Futures and Credit, Insurance and the Zong Massacre

**Required Readings:**


**Week 6**

**Lecture 1: October 8**  
The “Great Divergence”: Why the West?

**Lecture 2: October 10**  
The Industrious and Industrial Revolutions: Why Britain?

**Required Readings:**


[We will discuss and compare the arguments of these two articles during Lecture 2 this week]

**Week 7**

**Lecture 1: October 15**  
Clockwork: Labor and Time Discipline in Capitalist Economies

**Lecture 2: October 17**  
Emancipation and The End of Slavery? Chattel Slaves, Wage Slaves and Parchman Farm

**Required Readings:**


**Week 8**

**Lecture 1: October 22**  
***MIDTERM***

**Lecture 2: October 24**  
Andrew Carnegie, Carl Zeiss and the “Captains of Industry”

**Required Readings:**

Andrew Carnegie, "The Gospel of Wealth" (1889).


**Week 9**

**Lecture 1: October 29**  
For Hearts and Minds: Democracy, Communism, Banana Wars and Cold Wars

**Lecture 2: October 31**  
Counting Bullets and Bodies: Business and Warfeare

**Required Readings**


**Week 10**

**Lecture 1: November 5**  
Consumerisms: Advertisements, Consumption and the Commercialization of Leisure Time

**Lecture 2: November 7**  
The Circle of the Sun: Japanese Reforms, the Rise of East Asia and State-Run Capitalism

**Required Readings:**
Excerpts from Vladimir Illich Lenin “Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism” (1917).
Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "Second Fireside Chat" (1933).

Week 11

***FALL STUDY BREAK***

Week 12

Lecture 1: November 19
“Coca Cola…Absolutely Harmless”: Global Corporations from the VOC to Coca Cola

Lecture 2: November 21
Casino Capitalism and Bubble Bursting: From the South Sea Company to the Crisis of 2008

Required Readings:


Week 13

Lecture 1: November 26
Likes and Selfies: The Internet, the Smart Phone and New Directions in Global Capitalism

Lecture 2: November 28
The One Percent: Twenty-First Century Capitalism and Inequality from a Global Perspective

Required Readings:


***ASSIGNMENT***
Primary Source Essay on Sinclair’s *The Jungle*.
Due in Class: Thursday, November 28
SECTION B: UNIVERSITY POLICIES, STATEMENTS, GUIDELINES and RESOURCES for SUPPORT

This course is governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the University Calendar and the Senate.

University Statements

Academic Integrity
At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect (The Center for Academic Integrity, Duke University, 1999). As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all of the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity. Click here to read more.

Accessibility
The Advising and Access Services Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for student accessibility and accommodation. The advising team works with students who request accommodation as a result of: a disability, religious obligation, or any barrier related to any other characteristic protected under Human Rights legislation (NS, NB, PEI, NFLD). Click here to read more.

Student Code of Conduct
Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don’t follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner—perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can’t be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution. Click here to read more.

Diversity and Inclusion – Culture of Respect
Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our Strategic Direction prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness (Strategic Priority 5.2). Click here to read more.

Recognition of Mi’kmaq Territory
Dalhousie University would like to acknowledge that the University is on Traditional Mi’kmaq Territory. The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office in the McCain Building (room 3037) or contact the programs at elders@dal.ca or 902-494-6803 (leave a message).

University Policies and Programs

• Important Dates in the Academic Year (including add/drop dates)
Learning and Support Resources

- General Academic Support - Academic Advising: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/advising.html
- Copyright and Fair Dealing: https://libraries.dal.ca/services/copyright-office/fair-dealing/fair-dealing-guidelines.html
- Libraries: http://libraries.dal.ca
- Black Student Advising: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/black-student-advising.html
- Indigenous Student Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/indigenous.html
- ELearning Website: https://www.dal.ca/dept/elearning.html
- Student Advocacy Services: http://dsu.ca/dsas
- Writing Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html
- Studying for Success program and tutoring: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html