

POLSH365: Post-Capitalist Politics and Solidarity Economies

(Spring 2018)

Professor Craig Borowiak

Office Hours: MW 2:45 – 4:00pm (or by appt.)

Office: Hall 214

Email: cborowia@haverford.edu

Class period: Tues 1:30-4pm

Classroom: Stokes 119

During this intensive research seminar, we will critically examine efforts to envision and generate alternatives to capitalism. We will engage theoretical scholarship on capitalism and its limits, as well as on the challenges facing initiatives aiming to move beyond capitalist institutions and practices. Rather than approaching the question of post-capitalism merely as an abstraction, we will also analyze existing initiatives that, in one way or another, already embody noncapitalist dimensions. We will compare and contrast different conceptual frameworks and terminologies for describing alternative economies. We will pay particular attention to the idea of “solidarity economies.” The term “solidarity economy” refers to a wide set of initiatives around the world that seek alternatives to mainstream capitalism by organizing economic activity around principles of social solidarity, cooperation, and community-based development. Examples include cooperatives and credit unions, community gardens, eco-villages, time banks, and participatory budgeting, among other related initiatives. Some of these are conceived as radical alternatives to mainstream capitalism. Others are seen to offer niches of alternative economic practices within a larger capitalist framework. This seminar is designed to involve a considerable amount of collaborative research.

Classroom Etiquette and Protocols:

- Be respectful of other students, but understand that critique can also be a sign of respect. Do not be afraid to challenge other students and the professor, but do so respectfully.
- NO TEXT-MESSAGING in class.
- Any student who misses more than three weeks of class may face dismissal from the course
- All assignments must be completed to pass the course

Assignments:

- 1) **1-page response essays for weekly readings and films**
- 2) **Brief classroom presentation on an alternative economy initiative**
- 3) **5-7 page essay on theoretical course material**
- 4) **3-page research proposal**
- 5) **PowerPoint classroom presentation on research**
- 6) **Final Paper with Annotated Bibliography**

Paper should be 7-8000 words (approx. 20 pages), not including the bibliography. It should be formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style. Paper topics will be coordinated so as to avoid too much overlap and to ensure a good coverage of the issues for classroom presentations. Students will be encouraged to think of the entire course as a giant collaborative research project.

Evaluation (approximate):

- Participation, response essays, short presentation: 20%
- 5-7 page essay: 20%
- PowerPoint presentation: 10%
- Annotated Bibliography and Research Proposal: 10%
- Research Paper: 40%

FILM SCREENINGS

This course will involve some documentary film screenings outside of class. These are required and are intended as a complement for the course readings and in-class discussions. If you are not able to attend one or more of the screenings, you are responsible for watching them on your own. Copies of the films will be made available online or through the library reserve desk.

Books for purchase

- Erik Olin Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2010)
- J. K. Gibson-Graham, *A Post-Capitalist Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006)
- Jessica Gordon Nembhard, *Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2014)
- Kali Akuno and Ajamu Nangwaya, *Jackson Rising: The Struggle for Economic Democracy and Black Self-Determination in Jackson, Mississippi* (Daraja Press, 2017)

All other readings will be available on Moodle or on the internet via web addresses listed on the syllabus. Additionally, a webpage on the solidarity economy has been prepared for this course.

<https://www.haverford.edu/politicalscience/solidarityeconomy/>

NOTE: Haverford College is committed to supporting the learning process for all students. Please contact me as soon as possible if you are having difficulties in the course. There are also many resources on campus available to you as a student, including the Office of Academic Resources (<https://www.haverford.edu/oar/>) and the Office of Access and Disability Services (<https://www.haverford.edu/access-and-disability-services/>). If you think you may need accommodations because of a disability, you should contact Access and Disability Services at hc-ads@haverford.edu. If you have already been approved to receive academic accommodations and would like to request accommodations in this course because of a disability, please meet with me privately at the beginning of the semester (ideally within the first two weeks) with your verification letter.



COURSE SCHEDULE

(Subject to Change)

Jan 23 **First Class. Introductions**

Section 1: Theorizing Post-Capitalist Possibilities

Jan 30 **Envisioning Real Utopias I**
Erik Olin Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias*, Chapters 1-4

Feb 6 **Envisioning Real Utopias II**
Erik Olin Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias*, Chapters 5-8

Feb 13 **Envisioning Real Utopias III**
Erik Olin Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias*, Chapters 9-11, Conclusion

Feb 20 **Diverse Economies and Post-Capitalist Politics**
J. K. Gibson-Graham, *A Post-Capitalist Politics*, xix -78 (Especially Chapter 3)
J. K. Gibson-Graham, Jenny Cameron, and Stephen Healy, *Take Back the Economy: an Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities* (Selections)

Feb 27 **Defining Solidarity Economies: Diverse Frameworks**
The Human Economy (213-35)
Interview with Luis Razeto (skim)
Ethan Miller, "Other Economies Are Possible," *Dollars & Sense*, July/August 2006.
Jacques DeFourny and Patrick Develtere, "The Social Economy: The Worldwide Making of a Third Sector"
Michelle Williams, "the solidarity economy and social transformation" in *The Solidarity Economy Alternative: Emerging Theory and Practice* (37-63)
Gar Alperovitz, "The New Economy Movement," *The Nation*, June 13, 2011
Johnston Birchall. *People-Centred businesses: Co-operatives, mutual and the idea of membership*. Chapter 1 (1-16)
Craig Borowiak, "Mapping Social and solidarity economy: the local and translocal evolution of a concept" in *Social Economy in China and the World* (NY: Routledge, 2015) (17-40)

****7-page midterm essay due Friday, 4pm****

Section 2: Solidarity Economies in Practice

Mar 6

Community Gardens

Laura Lawson, "The Planner in the Garden: A Historical View into the Relationship between Planning and Community Gardens," *Journal of Planning History*, Vol. 3 no. 2 (2004): 151-176.

Laura Lawson, *City Bountiful: A Century of Community Gardening in America* (287-302)

Saldivar-Tanaka, L. and Krasny, M.E., 2004. Culturing community development, neighborhood open space, and civic agriculture: the case of Latino community gardens in New York City. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 21 (4), 399–412.

Guthman, J. "If only they knew. The unbearable whiteness of alternative food" in *Cultivating Food Justice*, 263-283

Pudup, M., 2008. It takes a garden: cultivating citizen-subjects in organized garden projects. *Geoforum*, 39 (3), 1228–1240

Staeheli, L.A., Mitchell, D., and Gibson, K., 2002. Conflicting rights to the city in New York's community gardens. *GeoJournal*, 58 (2/3), 197–205

Schmelzkopf, K., 2002. Incommensurability, land use, and the right to space: community gardens in New York City. *Urban Geography*, 23 (4), 323–343.

Cahn, Amy Laura Esq. (2015) "Supporting Our Land Stewards: Building a Constituency to Change Policy and Preserve Philadelphia's Gardens," *Cities and the Environment (CATE)*: Vol. 8 2, Article 16.

10-18 March: Spring Break

Mar 20

African American Cooperatives

Jessica Gordon Nembhard, *Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice* (chs. Intro, 1-5, 7, 9-10)

****Research Proposal due Friday March 23****

Mar 27

Diverse Case Studies: Finance and other topics

Carl Ratner, "Rethinking the politics of the mainstream co-op movement" in *Social Economy in China and the World* (41-58)

J erome Blanc, "Community and Complementary Currencies" in *The Human Economy* (303-313)

Mendell and Nogales, "Solidarity Finance"

Readings on Time Banks

Readings TBA (depending on student interests)

****In-class discussion of Research Proposals****

Apr 3 Governance Models

Kali Akuno & Ajamu Nangwaya, *Jackson Rising*:

Chapters 1, 4-7, 15-16, 18, 22 (optional: chs. 2, 10-13, 17, 20)

Monica Juarez Adeler: “Enabling policy environments to support cooperative development:
A comparative experience”

Selected readings on The Cleveland Model & Cincinnati’s Union – Cooperative model

Apr 10 Sharing Economy vs. Platform Cooperativism

Schor, J., 2014. Debating the Sharing Economy

Trebor Scholz, “Platform Cooperativism: Challenging the Corporate Sharing Economy,”
Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung. 2016

Nathan Schneider, “Owning Is the New Sharing”

Scholz and Schneider (eds), *Ours to Hack and to Own: The rise of platform cooperativism, a new vision
for the future of work and a fairer internet* (Selections)

Michel Bauwens, Vasilis Kostakis, *From the Communism of Capital to Capital for the Commons:
Towards an Open Co-operativism*

Readings on Taxi Co-ops and Uber

Apr 17 Independent Research

SECTION THREE: RESEARCH & PRESENTATIONS

Apr 24 Presentations

Readings to be determined by students in conversation with professor

May 1 Presentations

Readings to be determined by students in conversation with professor

Hard copies of final paper due Friday, May 19, noon (for underclass students), Saturday, May 12, 5pm (for seniors)