

## **Seminar 2 – Reading Marx Today**

Marx, Mario Tronti wrote in the early 1960s, must not be confronted with *his* age but rather with *our* present. And *Das Kapital* must be evaluated with respect to *today's capitalism*. Methodically inspired from such statement, the seminar will propose a reading of Marx guided by an analysis of the mutations of capitalism and of the global turmoil that make up the present conjuncture. To do that, however, there is a need to flesh out the peculiarity and historicity of Marx's texts, to grasp their potentialities for a critical understanding of the present. Remaining aware of this historical and theoretical gap, the seminar will stage an attempt to read Marx against the background of present critical debates, organized around seven conceptual keywords. For each keyword, Marx's work will be read together with a contemporary text, which means in light of specific problematics we are confronted with today. Working through such concepts as subjectivity and world market, class struggle and exploitation, reproduction, ecology, and machines, the aim of the seminar is to contribute to the forging of a conceptual lexicon capable to articulate in new ways what the young Marx famously called "the dream of a thing," i.e. communism.

*The seminar is open to undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students and to free auditors.*

### **Class meetings: Monday, 3-5pm**

#### **1. February 26. General introduction. Reading Marx today**

- K. Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*. In Marx, K. and Engels, F. *Collected Works*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975–2005, volume 5 (Theses 1 and 6).  
S. Mezzadra, *In the Marxian Workshops. Producing Subjects*. London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018 (introduction to the English edition, preface, and chapter 1).  
É. Balibar, *The Philosophy of Marx*. London – New York: Verso, 2007 (chapter 2).

#### **2. March 4. Subjectivity**

- K. Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*. London: Penguin Books, 1993, pp. 266-273 and 295-304.  
E. Balibar, *Citizen Subject: Foundations for Philosophical Anthropology*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2017 (introduction and overture).

#### **3. March 11. World market**

- K. Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*. London: Penguin Books, 1993, pp. 401-408.  
K. Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*, vol. 2. In *Marx Engels Collected Works*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975–2005, volume 32, pp. 385-388.  
G. Arrighi and B.J. Silver, *Chaos and Governance in the Modern World System*. Minneapolis, MI – London, University of Minnesota Press, 1999 (introduction).

#### **4. March 18. Class struggle**

- K. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*. In *Marx Engels Collected Works*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975–2005, volume 6 (chapter II, § 5).  
K. Marx, *Capital*, vol.1. New York: Vintage Books, 1977 (chapter 10).

M. Hardt and A. Negri, "Empire, Twenty Years On." *New Left Review*, 120 (2019): 67-92.

### **5. March 25. Exploitation**

K. Marx, *Capital*, vol.1. New York: Vintage Books, 1977 (chapters 4, 5, and 6).

E. Renault, *Abolir l'exploitation. Expériences, théories, stratégies*. Paris: La Découverte, 2023, introduction and chapter 1).

### **6. April 8. Reproduction**

K. Marx, *Capital*, vol.1. New York: Vintage Books, 1977 (chapters 4, 5, and 6).

Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 2, trans. David Fernbach. London: Penguin, 1978 (chapter 18).

Tithi Bhattacharya (ed.), *Social Reproduction Theory. Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression*. London: Pluto Press, 2017 (introduction).

D. Alessandrini and E. Rigo, "Social Reproduction and the Challenge to Legal Studies." *Feminism@law*, 12 (2023), 2: 1-4.

### **7. April 22. Ecology**

K. Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*. London: Penguin Books, 1993, pp. 401-410.

K. Marx, *Capital*, vol.1. New York: Vintage Books, 1977 (chapter 7).

K. Saito, *Marx in the Anthropocene. Towards the Idea of Degrowth Communism*.

Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022 (introduction and chapter 1).

### **8. April 29. Machines**

K. Marx, *Capital*, vol.1. New York: Vintage Books, 1977 (chapters 13 and 15).

M. Pasquinelli, *The Eye of the Master. A Social History of Artificial Intelligence*. London – New York: Verso, 2023 (introduction and chapter 1).

**Note:** a good online source for Marx and Engels' texts in different languages is <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/index.htm>. The collected works of Marx and Engels can be downloaded from <https://archive.org/>. *Marx Engels Werke* are also available as pdf online at <https://marx-wirklich-studieren.net/marx-engels-werke-als-pdf-zum-download/>