

Despair Communist Manifesto

IDH2930 -Section 28510

Class Periods: T/ 7

Location: Little 117

Academic Term: Fall 2023

Instructor:

Carlos Casanova

carlosacasanovag@gmail.com (ccasanova1@ufl.edu, from January 5th on)

Office Phone Number: 352-3164175.

Office Hours: Monday through Friday until 12:00, office location to be determined.

Teaching Assistants:

Please contact through the Canvas website

- Name of TA, email address, office location, office hours
- Name of TA, email address, office location, office hours

Course Description

This course will introduce you into Karl Marx's revolutionary mindset. We will learn the divisions that Marx found within humanity and within human communities; the way he divided the different revolutionary movements; the main goals of his revolutionary action (the abolition of religion, the family, private property, culture, truth, philosophy and morality); and the strategies and measures that he proposes for seizing power and using it. The text will be clarified in the light of previous writings (especially Marx's poetry and play, the "Theses on Feuerbach" and the "Philosophical and Economical Manuscripts"), and some of the later writings. We will examine the surprising transformations suffered by the main drive of Marx's revolutionary action, the interplay between the hope for the utopia and despair concerning human goodness.

We will read the text in class and analyze it in a very detailed way, unearthing its philosophical and historical influences and assumptions. We will also hold a Socratic discussion led by the professor. Besides, you will have to critically discuss one problem suggested by the reading in a 2,000 words final essay. The last week of the semester will be dedicated to help the students to rightly finish their essay.

1 credit.

Course Pre-Requisites / Co-Requisites

None.

Course Objectives

Develop reading comprehension abilities: the students must read the book and discuss it in class.

Develop writing abilities: the students must write reports of the prior week's class discussion. Moreover, they must hand in a draft of their 2,000-word final essay and then polish it into a final copy.

Develop critical thinking and discussion abilities: the students will discuss in class the meaning of the text and the professor will use the Socratic method to provoke thought and active participation by each student in the discussion. Understand the influences and assumption of Marxist revolutionary thought: reading the book, discussing it and writing the paper will lead to the fulfillment of this objective.

Course Title, Prefix, and Number

Course Instructor and Academic Term

Page 1

Materials and Supply Fees

None.

Required Textbooks and Software

- Title: *Selected Writings*.
- Author: Karl Marx.
- Publication date and edition 1994, Hackett Publishing Company
- ISBN number: 9780872202184

While this translation is highly recommended, the students may use any other edition, printed or online. Please note that other translations will have to be checked and possibly corrected if need be.

Recommended Materials

- Title: *The Collected Works of Marx and Engels*
- Author: Marx and Engels
- Publication date and edition: New York: International Publishers, 1975.

(Students do not need to acquire these books. The professor will provide the relevant passages)

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Content	Readings and tasks
1	08/29	Who was Karl Marx. Context of the <i>Communist Manifesto</i> . Some of the other works we are going to use in our readings. Very particularly, the “Philosophical and Economical Manuscripts,” the “Theses on Feuerbach,” the “Address of the Central Authority to the Communist League (1850)” and some of Marx’s poems. Many of them are contained in the <i>Selected Writings</i> that I placed in the bibliography, while others I will cite from <i>The Collected Works of Marx and Engels</i> (New York: International Publishers). Method of the classes. Explanation concerning the final essay	The Preface of the <i>Manifesto</i> : the historical context
2	09/05	The formation of the bourgeoisie. Meaning and historical accuracy of chapter 1 of the <i>Manifesto</i> .	Chapter 1 of the <i>Manifesto</i> , pp. 158-160 (Hackett edition), up to “revolutions in the modes of production and exchange.”
3	09/12	The revolutionary action of the bourgeoisie. Meaning and historical accuracy of chapter 1 of the <i>Manifesto</i> .	Chapter 1 of the <i>Manifesto</i> , pp. 160-162, up to “the East on the West.”
4	09/19	The revolutionary action of the bourgeoisie and historical dialectics. The sorcerer that cannot control the powers of the nether world. Meaning and historical accuracy of chapter 1 of the <i>Manifesto</i> .	Chapter 1 of the <i>Manifesto</i> , pp. 162-164, up to “But not only has the bourgeoisie... the proletarians.”
5	09/26	The historical formation of the proletariat. Hegelian influence. Contrast with <i>The Holy Family</i> and the Michael Thomas Sadler’s work. Meaning and historical accuracy of chapter 1 of the <i>Manifesto</i> .	Chapter 1 of the <i>Manifesto</i> , pp. 164-166, up to “thanks to railways, achieve in a few years.”
6	10/03	The necessary worsening of the conditions of the proletariat. Explanation of the labor laws as result of revolutionary action. Marx and Engels opposition to the laws in <i>The Holy Family</i> . Serious difficulty of historical materialism: Marx’s and Engel’s	Chapter 1 of the <i>Manifesto</i> , pp. 166-169, up to the end of the chapter.

		political position. Explanation in <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> . Spite for “the scum of society.” The necessary revolution. Herbert Marcuse and the proletariat. Chapter 1 of the <i>Manifesto</i> . Its meaning and the accuracy of its predictions.	
7	10/10	Communists and proletarians. Will to power. Notice well: the proletarians are not actually a class, but the Communists have to organize them into a class. Marxian critique of Locke. Common presuppositions. Hegelian view of artisans and peasants. Chapter 2 of the <i>Manifesto</i> : its sources, meaning and goal.	Chapter 2 of the <i>Communist Manifesto</i> , pp. 169-170, up to “It loses its class character.”
8	10/17	Wage-labor, price and cost of production. This will not be abolished in communism, according to Marx (see p. 171, 2 nd paragraph). Not yet the labor theory of value, it seems. Abolition of individuality. This must be understood in the light of <i>Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law</i> : society as a living organism whose head is the government (<i>The Collected Works</i> , Volume 3, pp. 112-119.) “In Communist society, the present dominates the past.” Connection with 1984. Disappearance of selling and buying but neither of money, exchange nor transportation (historical materialism: its true meaning.) Chapter 2 of the <i>Manifesto</i> : its sources, meaning and goal.	Chapter 2 of the <i>Manifesto</i> , p. 171, up to “and of the bourgeoisie itself.”
9	10/24	The revolutionary technique: denounce a vice, generalize it, blame the institution, abolish the institution. Denunciations by Marx: dispossession of the “great majorities.” Is it so? “Those who work acquire nothing and those who acquire anything do not work.” Is it so? The later theory of surplus value. Its problems. Is the work of management and superintendence real work? If so, surplus value is not a necessity. If not so, then Marx contradicts himself in <i>The Capital</i> (because in some passages there the work of superintendence and control are seen as an economical necessity and therefore as work, but in others [Vol. 3, chapter 23, p. 370 of <i>The Collected Works</i> , Vol. 37], they are seen as non-work; or [Vol. 1, Part IV, chapter 13, pp. 335-336 of <i>The Collected Works</i> , Vol. 35] as the result of the antagonism of the classes) and in <i>The Critique of the Gotha Program</i> , Hackett edition, p. 319. “Intellectual products:” Marxism and capitalism are truly materialist on this point. Abolition of “culture.” “Superstructure”: Preface to <i>A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy</i> . Right and power: Marx repeats Thrasymachus’ thesis. Chapter 2 of the <i>Manifesto</i> : its sources, meaning and goal.	Chapter 2 of the <i>Manifesto</i> , pp. 171-172, up to “your own bourgeois form of property.” In class we will read passages from other works by Marx (cited in the description of the content.)
10	10/31	Abolition of the family. The real motive: 4 th of the “Theses on Feuerbach” (p. 99, Hackett edition). Revolutionary techniques. Wedge between men and women, parents and children. Marxism and neo-Marxism. Marcuse. Marx’s attack on the bourgeois seducing the women of the proletarians. Abolition of the family, destruction of intermediate bodies, authoritarianism and totalitarianism. Chapter 2 of the <i>Manifesto</i> : its sources, meaning and goal.	Chapter 2 of the <i>Manifesto</i> , pp. 172-174, up to “prostitution both public and private.” In class we will read passages from other works by Marx (cited in the description of the content.)
11	11/07	Religion, philosophy, politics and law. There are no eternal truths, including justice and freedom. The only historical	Chapter 2 of the <i>Manifesto</i> , pp. 174-175,

		constant is the exploitation of man by man. <i>Oulanem</i> : “Destroy what only poetry's lie contrived.” What did Marx hope for? Real meaning: “Theses on Feuerbach” (Hackett edition, p. 99, 4 th thesis. Marx and theology. Prohibition of questions. <i>Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts</i> (pp. 77-79. Contradiction in p. 123, <i>The German Ideology</i> , both of Hackett edition) and <i>The German Ideology</i> (p. 112): the end of “independent philosophy.” Chapter 2 of the <i>Manifesto</i> : its sources, meaning and goal.	“rupture with traditional ideas.” In class we will read passages from other works by Marx (cited in the description of the content.)
12	11/14	The dictatorship of the Communist League. Some observations on tactics. Centralization of power in the League and its Central Authority, Marx himself. (See “Address of the Central Authority to the Communist League (1850)”.) The goal: “public power will lose its political character.” Will the State disappear, according to Marx. All explicit texts clearly affirm that the State will subsist but will lose its “political character.” (See <i>Manifesto</i> , p. 184: the State will become “a mere superintendence of production.” Since “production” is the only value-reality left by dialectical materialism, the State will control everything. See also <i>The Critique of the Gotha Program</i> Hackett edition, p. 319 on “the general costs of administration not directly appertaining to production.” See, moreover, <i>The Misery of Philosophy</i> and some passages of <i>The Capital</i> .) There is no doubt, the State will subsist. What is the contents of the utopia hoped for, then? There are some luring expressions that suggest the disappearance of the division of labour, for example, but is this really proposed by Marx? What is the deep meaning of the expression in <i>The Critique of the Gotha Program</i> , “From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs!” (see p. 231 of Hackett edition). The real meaning appears in <i>Capital</i> Vol. I, Part IV, chapter 14, section 4: society at large will be organized as a factory, pp. 360-362 of <i>The Collected Works</i> , Vol. 35. Chapter 2 of the <i>Manifesto</i> : its sources, meaning and goal.	Chapter 2 of the <i>Manifesto</i> , pp. 175-176, up to the end of chapter 2. In class we will read passages from other works by Marx (cited in the description of the content.)
13	11/21	Survey of different socialist movements. Deep meaning of the survey. P. 178: Christianity and Communism (B. Russell). Hegelianism as historiographical despotism: characters “of the past.” German and conservative socialism: the motto, “the worse, the better.” Rejection of charity and of social reforms. Opposition to Michael Thomas Sadler. Historiographical manipulation. Chapter III of the <i>Manifesto</i> : meaning and goal	Chapter 3 of the <i>Manifesto</i> , pp. 176-182.
14	11/28	Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism. In Chapter 4 one can understand that Marxism is not a historical-economical movement or “science.” It is a revolutionary movement whose goals are clearer in the “Theses on Feuerbach” and in the future politico-historical concretion of the influence of Marxism. Chapters III and IV of the <i>Manifesto</i> : their meaning and goals.	Chapters 3-4, pp. 182-186. Students must hand the draft of their paper in.
15	12/05	Discussion of the drafts.	
16	12/12	Dead Line for final papers	Dead Line for final papers

Attendance Policy, Class Expectations, and Make-Up Policy

Attendance will be required. The professor will read the list of students at the beginning of each session. Students must attend 80% of the classes, unless there is an acceptable reason. If the student misses two classes without an acceptable reason, the professor will give a warning. No cell phones or laptops may be used during class. (For the discussion, the student must bring the text of the corresponding *Nicomachean Ethics* book printed on paper. The students must hand in the missed report at the following class, the latest. The student must hand in the draft and/or final paper by email on the set deadline and none other. Excused absences must be consistent with university policies in the [Graduate Catalog](#) and require appropriate documentation. Additional information can be found in [Attendance Policies](#).

Evaluation of Grades

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Total Points</i>	<i>Percentage of Final Grade</i>
Short report of prior week's discussion (14). Required each week by class time regardless of attendance.	300	30%
Week 14, draft of final paper (November 28 th)	200	20%
Final Paper (December 12 th)	500	50%
	1000	100%

Grading Policy

The following is given as an example only.

<i>Percent</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Grade Points</i>
90.0 - 100.0	A	4.00
87.0 - 89.9	A-	3.67
84.0 - 86.9	B+	3.33
81.0 - 83.9	B	3.00
78.0 - 80.9	B-	2.67
75.0 - 79.9	C+	2.33
72.0 - 74.9	C	2.00
69.0 - 71.9	C-	1.67
66.0 - 68.9	D+	1.33
63.0 - 65.9	D	1.00
60.0 - 62.9	D-	0.67
0 - 59.9	E	0.00

More information on UF grading policy may be found at:

[UF](#) [Graduate](#) [Catalog](#)
[Grades and Grading Policies](#)

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should let me know at the beginning of the semester so that I can help them to connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner.](#) Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here.](#)

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." [The Honor Code](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Software Use

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Student Privacy

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the [Notification to Students of FERPA Rights](#).

Campus Resources:

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care:

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: counseling.ufl.edu/cwc, and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or police.ufl.edu.

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu.

Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling.

Library Support, Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints Campus

