

ECONOMIC CRISIS AND SOCIAL CHANGE
**The Political Economy of Crisis
and the Fight for a Just and Sustainable World**

This course analyzes key topics in social and political economy focusing on the current economic crisis in the context of the corporate order in America and the world. It focuses on the interface between corporations and the state, and the way that the corporate regime organizes economic, political and social life while producing extreme instability and a new economic and financial meltdown. It also proposes changes in the corporate system – both at the national and global levels - that can heal American and world-wide deep social, economic and environmental crises while ushering in a new system of sustainability and global democracy.

The vast power of rising global corporate empires - from Citigroup to Exxon/Mobil to Microsoft - poses new threats to American democracy and the wellbeing of all citizens. Globalization and American corporations are trumpeted as the best hope for global prosperity and democracy. But the vast size of global markets and firms, their single-minded profit seeking, and *lack of public accountability* create a system of corporate domination, with financial deep instability and a deteriorating economy, a dangerously deteriorating planetary environment, and corrupted democracy.

This course offers new solutions for these problems, offering a vision of how to deal with the current crisis in the economy and environment and polity, while bringing corporations and unchecked American power under democratic control. It shows that we need new social movements with a global vision of democracy, equality, and global environmental justice and sustainability.

The course offers students literacy in globalization, political economy, the theory of the corporation and corporate responsibility, the practice of business, and the making of democratic and sustainable social change. It provides a new perspective on world affairs and American society, and should help students interpret the news about the economy and American social problems in a more critical and informed way. It does not require prior background in political economy or economics, and uses texts that are written for the general reader.

- 1) Requirements and Basis For Grading: Midterm and Final Exams (each about 50% of grade) Attendance and Participation are also a consideration

Books (In Book Store and on Library Reserve):

PURCHASE:

Bacevich, The Limits of Power
Collins and Yeskel, Economic Apartheid in America
Derber, Corporation Nation
Derber, The Wilding of America
Derber, People Before Profit
Derber, Greed to Green
Foster and Magdoff, The Great Financial Crisis
Friedman, The Lexus and the Olive Tree
Korten, Agenda for A New Economy
Kuttner, Obama's Challenge
Phillips, Bad Money
Rifkin, The European Dream

READINGS

I. The Backstory of the Crisis: Creating the Global Capitalist Regime

A. Introduction

session 1

Derber, Hidden Power, Intro, Chaps 1-4 (optional)

B. Globalization: Neo-Classical Economics and Exporting the Corporate System

session 2

Friedman, Thomas The Lexus and the Olive Tree, Chaps. 1,6,7,9

Friedman, Milton, Free to Choose, Chapters 1-2 (online reserves)

Derber, People Before Profit, Chapters 1-3

C New Robber Barons?: Savage Capitalism and Corporate Sovereignty

Session 3

Derber, Corporation Nation

Intro, Chaps 1,2, 5, 6, 8, 9

D. Inequality and Poverty: The Beginning of the End of the American Dream

session 4

Collins and Yeskel, Economic Apartheid in America, Chapters 1-3

E. Social Disintegration: Capitalist Culture and The Ungluing of America

session 5

Derber, The Wilding of America. Chaps. 1,2,4, 5,9

II. The Current Crisis: Regime Collapse?

- A. The 2008 Meltdown: A Conservative on Financialization, Debt and Financial Panics
Session 6
Phillips, Bad Money, Chapters 1,2,4,7

- B. Toward Depression?: Liberals, Marxism, Capitalism and Economic Collapse
Session 7
Kuttner, Obama's Challenge, Chapter 1
Krugman, "How Did Economists Get It So Wrong" (online Reserve"
Foster and Magdoff, The Great Financial Crisis, Intro, 1, 5, 6

- C. Hegemony: Empire and Profligacy, A Centrist View
Session 8
Bacevich, The Limits of Power Chapters 1-3

MIDTERM EXAM – WEEK 9

III. Solutions to the Crisis: Regime Change at Home

- A. Justice and Prosperity: The Western European Solution
session 10
Rifkin, The European Dream, Chaps 1-6;9;16

- B. Obama's Hope: Keynes, Liberalism, and The New New Deal
Session 11
Kuttner, Obama's Challenge, Chaps. 4-5

- C. The Green New Deal: Solving the Crisis and Saving the Planet
Session 12
Derber, Greed to Green, Intro; chapters 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17

- D. Democracy in Action: Postive Populism and Regime Change at Home:
session 13
Derber, Corporation Nation, Chapters 9-12; 13,14

- E. Localism or Globalism? Two Radical Visions for Democracy
Session 14
Korten, Agenda for a New Economy, Parts III and IV
Derber, People Before Profit, Chapters 6-8

Derber, Greed to Green, Chaps 13-14