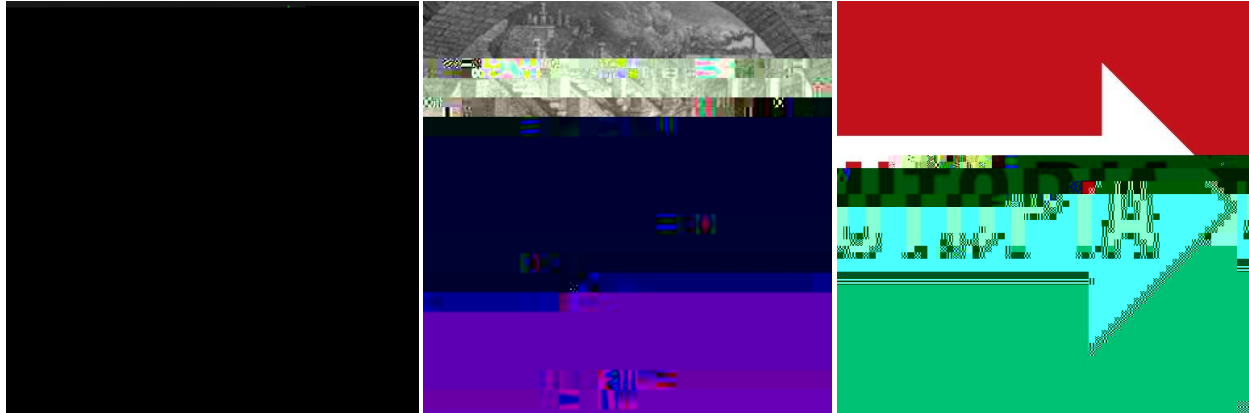


POLS 3520 01 Communism, Capitalism, and Social Justice
Saint Louis University, Political Science
Tuesday/Thursday 12:45-2:00pm
Spring 2024

Dr. Ellen Carnaghan
McGannon Hall, Room138
ellen.carnaghan@slu.edu
(314) 977-3038

In a

show them our



What are the qualities of a just society and a just world?

How can we organize society to promote values that people find important – like freedom, equity, fairness, or human dignity?

To address these questions, this class examines a variety of ideas and real-world cases. We examine theoretical critiques of capitalism and communism. And we investigate a variety of models of economic and political organization, from communist systems as they existed in the past to the present global capitalist system, both as it is experienced in the United States and as it has been moderated in social democratic systems like those in Northern Europe. We also examine whether democracy is an essential element of a just society – and what kinds of economic systems are likely to coexist with desirable political systems.

Inequalities based on gender, race, religion, or national identity usually are manifested in part as economic inequalities, and we investigate how economic and political systems have produced or ameliorated those inequalities.

One of the main goals of this class is to encourage you to think hard about what values should stand at the heart of a just society and to imagine creatively how to get there, with due recognition to the obstacles in place in the world as it exists. That means you need to understand what various types of economic and political organization have managed to accomplish and where they have failed. And you need to be attentive to ways social organizations can be modified to benefit the many instead of merely the few.

Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 2:15-3:15, when you find me in, and by appointment. Feel free to drop by. My door is usually open.

If you prefer to meet on Zoom, you'll need an appointment. We can use this link: <https://slu.zoom.us/j/7172394449> (there is a waiting room set up, and you may need to wait a bit).

Communism, Capitalism, and Social Justice

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| 3. Assess how other people’s social identities and biases shape and are shaped by their interactions within a social context |
| 4. Articulate how one’s own notions of identity and otherness are contingent on the social contexts in which they develop and which they in turn shape |

Dignity, Ethics, and a Just Society

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| Dignity, Ethics, and a Just Society is one of 19 Core Components. The University Core SLO(s) that this component is designed to intentionally advance are listed below: |
| University Core Student Learning Outcomes The Core SLO(s) that this component is intentionally designed to advance are: |
| SLO 1: Examine their actions and vocations in dialogue with the Catholic, Jesuit tradition |
| SLO 3: Assess evidence and draw reasoned conclusions |
| SLO 7: Evaluate the extent to which social systems influence equity and reflect innate human dignity |

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| Additionally, the Core Component-level Student Learning Outcomes are listed below: |
| Component-level Student Learning Outcomes Students who complete this course will be able to: |
| 1. Analyze the cultural-institutional conditions and causes of just and unjust social systems using such concepts as social location, relationships, power, privilege, and vulnerability |
| 2. Apply such ethical concepts as human dignity, equity, well-being justice, and the common good to critically evaluate both existing social systems and proposals for social change |
| 3. Envision and articulate systemic social changes and other ways to promote flourishing, well-being, equity, justice, and the dignity of the human person |

Global Interdependence

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| Global Interdependence is one of 19 Core Components. The University Core SLO(s) that this component is designed to intentionally advance are listed below: |
| University Core Student Learning Outcomes The Core SLO(s) that this component is intentionally designed to advance are: |
| SLO 6: Recognize transnational or global interdependence |

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| Additionally, the Core Component-level Student Learning Outcomes are listed below: |
| Component-level Student Learning Outcomes Students who complete this course will be able to: |
| 1. Ask complex questions about other cultures or international processes |
| 2. Interpret intellectual and emotional dimensions of more than one worldview |
| 3. Describe how the lives, values, and experiences of people are affected by factors or processes outside of their own countries or localities |
| 4. Envision alternative strategies to address challenges rooted in interactions with people and societies outside the United States |
| 5. Reflect on how personal choices and local actions affect and are affected by events or processes beyond national borders |

This class also fulfills the College of Arts and Sciences Global Citizenship requirement. The Global Citizenship requirement is designed to educate students about global and transnational problems and to

1. Identify sources of and strategies to address conflict, cooperation or competition in a global or regional context.
2. Investigate how people and nations confront inequality and claim a just place, whether in their own societies or in the world.

Civility. Sometimes we will discuss controversial issues in class, and you may disagree with things you hear in class. You are always welcome to disagree either with me or with other students, but you must do so in a respectful and informed manner, appropriate to an institution of higher learning.

Plagiarism. It is critical that all work that you hand in is your own work and correctly gives credit to other sources that you consult. Plagiarized work will receive a grade of 0. Copying sections from someone else's work, even if you change the words around, counts as plagiarism, as does having someone else – or something else, like ChatGPT – write your essay for you.

Technology. While the most self-disciplined among us will not be distracted by the wealth of entertainments provided by the internet, laptops tend to reduce uninterrupted focus on what is happening in class. Laptops can even be a physical barrier between you and the person behind the raised screen. Most of the time, I will ask you to keep your laptops and phones closed and stored away.

B Quality Work – work of high quality. Class participation is voluntary, frequent, and reflects effort

March 21 McGhee, *The Sum of Us*, chs. 3 and 5, pp. 41-65, 103-137.

of public goods is so much more meager in the US than in other wealthy capitalist countries?

March 26 McGhee, chs. 6 and 8, pp. 139-164, 193-218.

How do racism and capitalism undermine democracy?

March 28 Easter break – no class

April 2 McGhee, chs. 9 and 10, pp. 221-289.

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Alternate futures?

“Criticism has plucked the imaginary flowers on the chain not in order that man shall continue to bear the chain without fantasy or consolation, but so that he shall throw off the chain and pluck the living flower.”
(Karl Marx)

April 4

GROUP ACTIVITY – ALTERNATE FUTURES

What kinds of strategies can we imagine to promote a more just world?

Nicholas Kristof, “The Biggest Threat to America is America Itself,” *New York Times*, June 24, 2021.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/23/opinion/america-security-competitiveness.html?searchResultPosition=8>

Vaclav Havel, “The Power of the Powerless,” sections XX-XXII, pp. 72-80 (e-reserve). I’ve provided the entire essay, in case you are interested, but you are only responsible for the last sections.

Antonio Gramsci, “Intellectuals and Hegemony,” and “Revolution in the West,” in David McLellan, ed., *Marxism: Essential Writings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 264-272 (e-reserve).

Nafeenz Ahmed, “MIT Predicted in 1972 That Society Will Collapse This Century. New Research Shows We’re on Schedule.” *Vice*, July 14, 2021.

https://www.vice.com/en/article/z3xw3x/new-research-vindicates-1972-mit-prediction-that-society-will-collapse-soon?utm_source=lterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=campaign_2597584_nl_Daily-Briefing_date_20210716&cid=db&source=ams&sourceid=2457012

Is it possible to start a revolution by changing your mind and the minds of others?

April 9

Andrea D'Atri, "Introduction," from *Bread and Roses: gender and class under capitalism* (Pluto Press, 2021), pp. 1-8 (e-reserve).

Ann Cudd, "Enlightened capitalism: a feminist capitalist manifesto," from Ann E. Cudd and Nancy Holstrom, *Capitalism, For and Against: A Feminist Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 125-130 (e-reserve).

Manfred B. Steger and Ravi K. Roy, "What's 'neo' about liberalism?," from *Neoliberalism: a very short introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 1-20 (e-reserve).

Is (reformed) communism or capitalism more likely to advance the rights of all people?

QUIZ

April 11

Thomas Piketty, ch.7, "Democracy, Socialism, Progressive Taxation," from *A Brief History of Equality* (Cambridge, MA; The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2022), pp. 150

- April 25 SYNTHETIC ESSAY DUE, Submit through Canvas by 5pm
- April 30 Rosa Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution*, ch. 6, "The Problem of Dictatorship,"
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1918/russian-revolution/ch06.htm>
 and ch. 8 "Democracy and Dictatorship,"
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1918/russian-revolution/ch08.htm>
 Pipes, pp. 138-142.
 Archie Brown, "Cuba: A Caribbean Communist State," from *The Rise and Fall of Communism* (New York: Ecco, Harper Collins, 2009), pp. 293-312 (on e-reserve).
- Why do communist systems tend not to be democratic?*
- May 2 Carollee Bengelsdorf, *The Problem of Democracy in Cuba: Between Vision and Reality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 66-98 (e-reserve).
 Rut Diamint and Laura Tedesco, "Why Cubans took to the streets," *Open Democracy*, 23 July 2021.
<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/democraciaabierta/why-cubans-took-to-u001>
- What kind of political and economic system provides u001 ideal mix of fB4reedom and fB4airne&ss*
- May 9 FIB4NAhloon – 1:50pm

University and College Policies and AvB4ailabl Support

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service through which SLU fulfills its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern. The full University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be found on the Provost's Office website at: [https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/a5\(b1\)-4\(e c\)-14\(on\)4\(du\)472\(c\)q0.00000912 0 612 792 reW*nBT/F2 9.96 Tf1 0 0 1 72.024 147.57a5\(b1\)-iETQ.72.5](https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/a5(b1)-4(e c)-14(on)4(du)472(c)q0.00000912 0 612 792 reW*nBT/F2 9.96 Tf1 0 0 1 72.024 147.57a5(b1)-iETQ.72.5)

University Counseling Center