Postcapitalist Desire

Course Syllabus

Mark Fisher

2024-11-23

Following Mark Fisher's death on Friday, 13 January 2017, the remaining ten weeks of the "Postcapitalist Desire" seminar did not go ahead as intended.
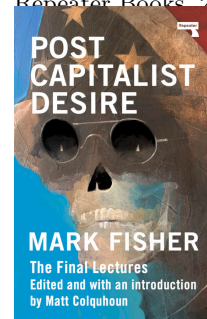
For the first few weeks, students continued to use the seminar room during the module's scheduled Monday morning time slots to sit together and remember their lecturer. Later, as the weeks progressed, the decision was made to try and continue the course in Fisher's memory.

The seminar was transformed into a kind of reading group, with the help of a number of Fisher's friends, colleagues, collaborators, and influences being invited to join students in their discussions of the texts that Fisher had intended to explore.

These reconstructed sessions later turned into a more public reading group, under the title "Nothings Into Somethings", in which some of these same texts were discussed again in a more public forum.1

The titles and readings for the following ten sessions are included below, along with readings for the five sessions above. This syllabus reflects the original form, content and editions used by Fisher, provided on the contents page of the reader he produced for the course.

From Mark Fisher, *Postcapitalist Desire: The Final Lectures* (London: Repeater Books, 2020).

Lecture One: What is Postcapitalism?

- Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams, "Post-Work Imaginaries" in **Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World Without Work** (London and New York: Verso, 2015), pp, 107–127. (If you can also read "Conclusion", pp. 175–183)

- J.K. Gibson-Graham, "Affects and Emotions for a Postcapitalist Politics" in **A Post-Capitalist Politics** (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), pp. 1–22

- Paul Mason, "The Prophets of Postcapitalism" in **Post-Capitalism: A Guide to Our Future** (London: Allen Lane, 2015), pp. 109–146

Lecture Two: "A Social and Psychic Revolution of Almost Inconceivable Magnitude": Countercultural Bohemia as Prefiguration

- Ellen Willis, "The Family: Love it or Leave it", in **Beginning to See the Light: Sex, Hope, and Rock-and-Roll** (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), pp. 149–168

- Herbert Marcuse, "The Dialectic of Civilization" in **Eros and Civilization** (London: Abacus, 1972), pp. 68–83

Lecture Three: From Class Consciousness to Group Consciousness

- Georg Lukács, "The Standpoint of the Proletariat" from **History and Class Consciousness**. Available online at the Marxist Internet Archive.

- Nancy C. Hartsock, "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism" in **The Feminist Standpoint Revisited**

and Other Essays (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998), pp. 105–132.

Lecture Four: "Union Power and Soul Power"

- Jefferson Cowie, "Old Fashioned Heroes of the New Working Class" in **Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class** (New York and London: The New Press, 2010), pp. 23–75.

Lecture Five: Libidinal Marxism

- Jean-François Lyotard, "The Desire Named Marx" in **Libidinal Economy** (London: Athlone Press, 1993), pp. 95–149

Lecture Six: Autonomia and the Refusal of Work

- Silvia Federici, "Wages Against Housework" in **Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction and Feminist Struggle** (Oakland: PM Press, 2012), pp. 15–21

- Nicholas Thoburn, "The Refusal of Work" in **Deleuze, Marx and Politics** (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 103–138

Lecture Seven: The Destruction of Democratic Socialism and the Origins of Neoliberalism: The Case of Chile

- Naomi Klein, "States of Shock: The Bloody Birth of the Counterrevolution" in **The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism** (London: Allen Lane, 2007), pp. 75–98.

- Eden Medina, "Cybernetics and Socialism" in **Cybernetic Revolutionaries: Technology and Politics in Allende's Chile** (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 15–41

Lecture Eight: The Invention of the Middle

- Carl Freedman, "Marx / Nietzsche / Freud / Nixon" in **The Age of Nixon: A Study in Cultural Power** (Winchester and Washington: Zer0 Books, 2012), pp. 71–107

- Penny Lewis, "Hardhats Versus Elite Droves: Consolidation of the Image" in **Hard Hats, Hippies and Hawks: The Vietnam Antiwar Movement as Myth and Memory** (Ithaca and London: ILR Press, 2013), pp. 159–185

Lecture Nine: Post-Fordism and New Times

- Stuart Hall, "The Meaning of New Times" in Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques (eds.), **New Times: The Changing Face of Politics in the Nineties** (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1989), pp. 116–136

- Paolo Virno, all sections from "Beyond the Coupling of the Terms 'Fear' / 'Anguish'" through to "Intellect as Score" in **A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life** (New York: Semiotext, 2004), pp. 31–66.

Lecture Ten: Technofeminism / Cyberfeminism

- Shulamith Firestone, "The Two Modes of Cultural History" in Armen Avanessian and Robin Mackay (eds.), **#ACCELERATE: The Accelerationist Reader** (Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2014), pp. 109–130

- Sadie Plant, all sections from "Cyborg Manifestos" through to "Cocoons" in **Zeros and Ones: Digital Women and the New Technoculture** (London: Fourth Estate, 1998), pp. 58–81

Lecture Eleven: Accelerationism

- Fredric Jameson, "Utopia as Replication" in **Valences of the Dialectic** (London and New York: Verso, 2009), pp. 410–435

- Nick Land, "Machinic Desire" in **Fanged Noumena: Collected Writings 1987-2007** (Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2012), pp. 319–344

Lecture Twelve: The Network and Its Discontents (1): Hardt and Negri

- Michael Hardt and Antonio Negi, "Beyond Capital?" in **Commonwealth** (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2009), pp. 263–324

Lecture Thirteen: The Network and Its Discontents (2): Peer to Peer

- Michel Bauwens, "Peer to Peer: From Technology to Politics" in Jan Servaes and Nico Carpentier (eds.), **Towards a Sustainable Information Society: Deconstructing WSIS** (Bristol: Intellect, 2006), pp. 151–168

- Jodi Dean, "The Common and the Commons" in **The Communist Horizon** (London and New York: Verso, 2012), pp. 119–156

Lecture Fourteen: Touchscreen Capture

- Jean Baudrillard, "The Tactile and the Digital" and "The Hyperrealism of Simulation" in **Symbolic Exchange and Death** (London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: SAGE, 1993), pp. 61–75

- Franco "Bifo" Berardi, "Info-Labour and 'Precarization'" in **Precarious Rhapsody** (London: Minor Compositions, 2009), pp. 30–54

Lecture Fifteen: Reinventing Prometheus

- Laboria Cuboniks, "Manifesto on Xenofeminism: A Politics for Alienation" (2015).

- Helen Hester, "Promethean Labours and Domestic Realism." https://vimeo.com/487185707