



DIALECTICAL THOUGHT

FROM HEGEL TO MARX

PHI 271

CLASS OVERVIEW

INSTRUCTOR

Taylor R. Genovese, Ph.D.

(he/him/his)

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Office Hours: Mondays: 10:00am–12:00pm

Tuesdays: 9:00am–10:00am

Thursdays: 9:00am–10:00am

Note on communication: I will make every effort to respond to emails within 24 hours. However, please note that I only check and respond to email between 8am and 5pm, Monday through Friday.

DETAILED COURSE INFORMATION

PHI 271 – Special Study Project – Dialectical Thought: From Hegel to Marx

CRN #: 6035

MEETING INFORMATION

Spring 2025

Wednesdays, 11:00am–12:15pm

SUNY – Dutchess Community College

Hudson Hall 408M

COURSE INFORMATION

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In 1807, with the publication of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, G.W.F. Hegel introduced a radically new perspective within Western philosophical thought, politics, art, and religion by cleaving away from the hegemonic systems of logic first established by Aristotle. While Hegel's dialectical approach to history may seem complex and enigmatic, it has proven to be a powerful tool for interpreting the various social, cultural, political, and economic currents that shape our lives. One of the most prominent figures to adopt Hegel's method was Karl Marx, who famously re-articulated Hegelian dialectics into an historical materialist framework to support his case for the inevitable and imminent construction of communism. In this course, we will explore the mechanics of dialectical thought, focusing especially on those thinkers who have used it to analyze and understand political and economic development.

ASSESSMENT

1. Participation (50%) All students are expected to arrive to class on time having read assigned readings ahead of our meeting and attend the entirety of class sessions. Students must bring in a written précis to class that consists of a 1-5 sentence summary of the readings being discussed that day as well as a section of the reading that they would like to interrogate collectively.
2. Paper or Project (50%) Students will write a 2,000–4,000 word position paper analyzing some contemporary/historical phenomena (political policies, philosophical arguments, social movements, etc.) or cultural artifacts (TV shows, movies, artistic works, etc.) using a dialectical framework. Alternatively, students can choose to work on a multimodal project (combining writing with another form of communication, such as photography, drawing, painting, film, podcasting, etc.). If you are interested in a multimodal project, please see me so we can discuss specifics.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Some of these texts are available for free through the [Marxists Internet Archive](#).

- George Ciccariello-Maher, *Decolonizing Dialectics* (Duke University Press, 2017)
- Maurice Cornforth, *Materialism and the Dialectical Method* (International Publishers, 1953)
- Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014)
- Prasenjit Duara (ed.), *Decolonization* (Routledge, 2004)
- Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (Pluto Press, 2008)
- David Graeber, *Bullshit Jobs* (Simon & Schuster, 2018)
- Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford University Press, 1977)
- Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Science of Logic* (Cambridge University Press, 2010)
- Stephen Houlgate, *An Introduction to Hegel* (Blackwell, 2005)
- Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *State and Revolution* (International Publishers, 1943)
- Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Foreign Languages Press, 2020)
- Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism* (University of North Carolina Press, 2000)
- Robert C. Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader, Second Edition* (W.W. Norton & Company, 1978)
- Mao Zedong, *On Practice and Contradiction* (Verso, 2017)

COURSE OUTLINE

Class Meeting	Topic / Readings
w January 22	<p><u>Introducing Hegel and Dialectics</u></p> <p>➤ Stephen Houlgate, "History and Truth" from <i>An Introduction to Hegel</i>, p. 4–25</p> <p>➤ V.I. Lenin, "Summary of Dialectics"</p> <p>➤ Lloyd Spencer and Andrzej Krauze, Excerpt from Hegel for Beginners</p>
w January 29	<p><u>Contradiction in Theory</u></p> <p>➤ G.W.F. Hegel, "Contradiction" from <i>The Science of Logic</i>, p. 374–385</p> <p>➤ Maurice Cornforth, "Contradiction" from <i>Materialism and the Dialectical Method</i>, p. 90–107</p>
w February 5	<p><u>Contradiction in Practice</u></p> <p>➤ Mao Zedong, "On Contradition" from <i>On Practice and Contradiction</i>, p. 74–112</p> <p>➤ Franz Fanon, "Algeria Unveiled" from <i>Decolonization</i>, p. 42–55</p>
w February 12	<p><u>The Master-Slave Dialectic</u></p> <p>➤ G.W.F. Hegel, "Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage" from <i>The Phenomenology of Spirit</i>, p. 111–119</p> <p>➤ George Ciccariello-Maher, "Decolonizing the Master-Slave Dialectic" from <i>Decolonizing Dialectics</i>, p. 53–70</p>
w February 19	<p><u>Hegel's Historical Context: The French and Haitian Revolutions</u></p> <p>➤ Susan Buck-Morss, "Hegel and Haiti" <i>Critical Inquiry</i> 26 (4): 821–865.</p>
w February 26	<p><u>Hegel and Recognition</u></p> <p>➤ Franz Fanon, "The Negro and Recognition" from <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i>, p. 163–173</p> <p>➤ Glen Sean Coulthard "The Politics of Recognition in Colonial Contexts" from <i>Red Skin, White Masks</i>, p. 25–49</p>
w March 5	<p><u>For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing</u></p> <p>➤ Karl Marx, "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing" from <i>The Marx-Engels Reader</i>, p. 12–15</p> <p>➤ Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach" from <i>The Marx-Engels Reader</i>, p. 143–145</p> <p>➤ Karl Marx, "The German Ideology" from <i>The Marx-Engels Reader</i>, p. 146–155</p>
w March 12	<p><u>Marx's Theory of History</u></p> <p>➤ Karl Marx, "The German Ideology" from <i>The Marx-Engels Reader</i>, p. 155–175</p> <p>➤ Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History"</p>
w March 19	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK
w March 26	<p><u>Class Struggle</u></p> <p>➤ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, <i>The Communist Manifesto</i>, p. 33–70</p>

Class Meeting	Topic / Readings
w April 2	<p><u>Base and Superstructure</u></p> <p>► Karl Marx, "Marx on the History of His Opinions" from <i>The Marx-Engels Reader</i>, p. 3–6</p> <p>► Karl Marx, "The German Ideology" from <i>The Marx-Engels Reader</i>, p. 176–188</p>
w April 9	<p><u>Alienation</u></p> <p>► Karl Marx, "Estranged Labor" in <i>Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844</i> from <i>The Marx-Engels Reader</i>, p. 70–81</p> <p>► David Graeber, "On the Phenomenon of Bullshit Jobs" from <i>Bullshit Jobs: A Theory</i> p. xiii–xxv</p>
w April 16	<p><u>What is the State?</u></p> <p>► V.I. Lenin, <i>State and Revolution</i>, p. 7–31</p>
w April 23	<p><u>Marxist State Analysis</u></p> <p>► V.I. Lenin, <i>State and Revolution</i>, p. 32–68</p>
w April 30	<p><u>Communism and the Withering Away of the State</u></p> <p>► V.I. Lenin, <i>State and Revolution</i>, p. 69–101</p>
w May 7	<p><u>Black Marxism</u></p> <p>► Huey P. Newton, "<u>Revolutionary Intercommunalism</u>"</p> <p>► Cedric J. Robinson, "Introduction" from <i>Black Marxism</i>, p. 36–40</p> <p>► Cedric J. Robinson, "An Ending" from <i>Black Marxism</i>, p. 346–357</p>
w May 14	<p>NO CLASS – FINALS WEEK</p> <p>Final Paper or Project due via email by 5/13 @ 11:59pm</p>