

202 - Gramsci for Today. Reading the Prison Notebooks

Instructor: Roberto Fineschi

Office Hours: By appointment

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Course Description

The course introduces the student to Antonio Gramsci's thought; he was one of the most influential and read thinkers of the past century. His Prison Notebooks proposes a very original and creative interpretation of Marx's theory of society, that has become popular far beyond the close limits of marxism. His theory of hegemony, culture, the role of intellectuals have attracted and influenced a broad range of scholars and politicians. The course is not just an introduction to his work, but a critical investigations that tries to focus on which of his categories can still play a relevant role in the interpretation and transformation of current society.

The course is based on the most updated researches on Gramscian thought, also related to the ongoing publication of the new critical edition of his work.

Class meets twice a week. In each meeting, the first part is dedicated to answer questions and discuss points about the assigned materials. In the second part the teacher introduces new topics and provides materials to be studied for the next meeting.

Prerequisites

A solid background in political theory. Familiarity with classic political thought and marxism.

Course Hours

The course meets twice a week.

Student Learning Expectations

A deep understanding of Gramsci's thought. The capacity to reconstruct a theory in its historical context and be able to translate and adapt it for the understanding of the contemporary political thinking.

Course Outline

Week by Week Description:

Week I.

- 1) Course introduction. Historical context.
- 2) Cultural preconditions: Italian neoidealism.

Read: Hand-out

Week II.

- 1) Gramsci's Marx
- 2) Pre-prison writing. An overview.

Read: Hand-out

Week III.

- 1) Prison notebooks. General introduction.
- 2) Philosophy of praxis vs. historical materialism? 1

Read: Prison notebooks (selected pages).

Week IV.

- 1) Philosophy of praxis vs. historical materialism? 2
- 2) State and Civil society 1.

Read: Prison notebooks (selected pages).

Week V.

- 1) State and Civil society 1.

Read: Prison notebooks (selected pages).

2) Hegemony.

Read: Prison notebooks (selected pages).

Week VI.

1) Review.

2) Midterm exam.

Week VII.

1) Class, Party, Machiavelli 1

Read: Prison notebooks (selected pages).

2) Class, Party, Machiavelli 2

Read: Prison notebooks (selected pages).

Week VIII.

1) Historical block, revolution, and passive revolution.

Read: Prison notebooks (selected pages).

2) Intellectual and the organization of culture.

Read: Prison notebooks (selected pages).

Week IX.

1) Gramsci and Soviet Union (Lenin, Trotsky, Bucharin, Stalin).

Read: Prison notebooks (selected pages).

2) Gramsci's legacy.

Read: Prison notebooks (selected pages).

Week X.

1) Gramsci's legacy.

Read: Hand-out.

2) Gramsci for today.

Read: Hand-out.

Week XI.

1) Gramsci for today.

Read: Hand-out.

2) Final review.

Week XII.

Research paper due.

Final Exam

Assignments:

Every week students have to study the materials assigned by the teacher. They will be asked to write papers or personal comments and present those in class.

Textbook and required materials:

- Antonio Gramsci, Pre-prison Writings, Cambridge university Press, 1992.
- Antonio Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, Vol. I, Edited and translated by Joseph A. Buttigieg and Antonio Callari, Columbia University Press, New York, 1992.
- Antonio Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, Vol. II, Edited and translated by Joseph A. Buttigieg, Columbia University Press, New York, 1996.
- Antonio Gramsci, Columbia University Press III, Edited and translated by Joseph A. Buttigieg, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007.
- Peter D. Thomas, The Gramscian Moment, Philosophy, Hegemony and Marxism, Brill, 2009.
- Giuseppe Cospito, The Rhythm of Thought in Gramsci. A Diachronic Interpretation of Prison Notebooks, Brill, 2016.
- Guido Liguori, Gramsci's Pathways, Brill, 2015.
- Michele Filippini, Using Gramsci. A New Approach, Plutopresso, 2016.

- Antonio A. Santucci, Antonio Gramsci, Translated by Graziella Di Mauro, with Salvatore Engel-Di Mauro, Preface by Eric. Hobsbawm, Foreword by Joseph A. Buttigieg, Editor's note by Lelio La Porta, Monthly, Review Press, New York, 2010.
- Christine, Buci-Glucksmann, Gramsci and the State, Lawrence and Wishart, 1980.

Grading System

Attendance and Participation	30%
Weekly papers	20%
Midterm exam	25%
Final exam	25%

Every week, students will be asked to write a feedback paper or to produce a short essay on the topics considered in class.

Midterm and final exam can include multiple choice questions, open questions, short essays.

Course Policy

Academic Integrity:

Effective learning, teaching and research all depend upon the ability of members of the academic community to trust one another and to trust the integrity of work that is submitted for academic credit or conducted in the wider arena of scholarly research. Such an atmosphere of mutual trust fosters the free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential.

In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged, and work that is presented as original must be, in fact, original. Faculty, students, and administrative staff all share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at the Siena Art Institute and Siena School for Liberal Arts.

Students with documented disabilities:

Any student who has a documented disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and to facilitate the educational opportunity.

Participation and Attendance:

We consider attending class a crucial part of gaining the most from your study abroad experience. For this reason, we allow only **one unexcused absence** per course during the 15 weeks of the program. This means that you are only allowed to miss **one** lesson of each course for unexcused reasons. Reasons for an absence to be considered unexcused include absences related to personal travel (including delays, strikes, missed connections, etc.) or visits from family and friends.

In addition, being late to class on **4** occasions constitutes an unexcused absence. Please also consider that leaving before the end of the lesson or coming back late from a break is the equivalent of an unexcused absence.

Participation and attendance is worth 30% of the overall grade for every class.

Absences due to health-related issues are considered excused if the student informs the professor and office by email or phone before class begins.

No make-up exams or critiques will be considered unless warranted by extreme circumstances [for example, health, family tragedy] supported with proper documentation.