

Instructors: Professor Manfred B. Steger & Professor Hagen Koo

Meeting Time & Place: Thursday, 3:00 - 5:30 pm; BUSAD E201

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SOC 715: SEMINAR IN CURRENT ISSUES IN SOCIOLOGY Fall 2017: NEOLIBERALISM

Course Description

The primary objective of this course is to discuss the historical and conceptual origins, evolution, and core dynamics of neoliberalism by exploring its concrete manifestations and impacts in various social, institutional, and geographical settings worldwide. The course proceeds from the assumption that “neoliberalism” is a rather broad and general concept referring to an economic model or paradigm that rose to prominence in the 1980s. Although neoliberals across the globe share a common belief in the classical liberal ideal of the self-regulating market, their doctrine comes in different hues and multiple variations. Reaganomics, for example, is not exactly the same as Thatcherism. Bill Clinton’s brand of market globalism diverges in some respects from Tony Blair’s Third Way. And political elites in the global South (often educated at the elite universities of the North) have learned to fit the dictates of the Washington Consensus to their own local contexts and political objectives. Thus, neoliberalism adapts to specific environments, problems, and opportunities.

This seminar presents neoliberalism as a multi-dimensional dynamic manifesting in three intertwined forms: (1) ideology; (2) mode of governance; (3) policy package. Rather than approaching neoliberalism as an abstract process, we will seek to understand concrete issues that serve as links between neoliberal theory and practice in our globalizing world. Thus, the seminar is divided into three main parts: (I) The Historical and Conceptual Development of Neoliberalism; (II) Social Impacts of Neoliberalism; and (III) Neoliberal Reason, Subjectivities, and Policies.

Critical of the antiquated disciplinary framework of the social sciences inherited from late 19th-century Europe, this seminar is designed to foster the kind of *transdisciplinary* approach that is required to make sense of the complexity of neoliberalism. Indeed, this course has been designed to respond to the growing social impacts of neoliberalism on issues that cross the social science disciplines as well as the established subfields within sociology.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

The SLOs for this course are closely aligned with the Sociology Department’s posted MA Program and PhD Program student learning outcomes (SSLOs). These can be found here: <http://www.sociology.hawaii.edu/documents/uhm-soc-ma-phd-slo.pdf>

The five main student-learning outcomes of this course are:

- *To understand the main dimensions, dynamics, and issues of neoliberalism and their historical evolution in modernity (MA SSLOs 1,2,5; PHD SSLOs 1,2,4;)*
- *To gain the ability of contrasting and comparing key concepts, themes, and debates in the literature on neoliberalism (MA SSLOs 1,2; PhD SSLOs 1,2,6);*
- *To acquire the empirically informed knowledge and skill to analyze a broad spectrum of contemporary neoliberal dynamics and with a critical eye toward the workings of asymmetrical power relations in contemporary societies (MA SSLOs 1,2; PhD SSLOs 1,2)*
- *To appreciate the role of both ideational and material forces in complex neoliberal dynamics in modern societies (MA SSLOs 1,2; PhD SSLOs 1,2)*
- *To produce empirically and theoretically informed written and oral work that reflects a contextual understanding of various dimensions and perspectives of neoliberalism in contemporary globalizing societies (MA SSLOs 1,2,5,6; PhD SSLOs 1,2,4,7).*

Readings: Primary Sources (required)

The following paperback books are available for purchase in the U.H. bookstore. Feel free to get cheaper e-book versions of these books (if available), **but do not use different editions** since we'll need to use the same textual references in class.

Books:

- 1) David M. Kotz, *The Rise and Fall of Neoliberal Capitalism* (Harvard University Press, 2015). ISBN: 978-0674725652
- 2) Manfred B. Steger, *Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2010). ISBN: 978-0199560516
- 3) Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (Zone Books, 2015). ISBN: 978-1935408536.

Articles and Book Chapters:

- 1) Joseph Stiglitz, "Of the Top 1%, by the 1%, for the 1%, *Vanityfair*, May 2011.
- 2) Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, translated by Arthur Goldhammer (President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2014), excerpts.
- 3) Koo, Hagen. 2017. Koo, Hagen. 2017. "Neoliberal Globalization and Educational Struggles in South Korea," unpublished paper.
- 4) Kalleberg, Arne. 2009. Precarious work, insecure workers: Employment relations in transition. *American Sociological Review*, 74(1), 1–22.

- 5) Rogers, Jackie. 1995. "Just a Temp: Experience and Structure of Alienation," *Work and Occupation*. (May 1995). Reprinted in R. Perruci and C. Perruci (2007).
- 6) Lee, Yoonkyung. 2014. "Labor after Neoliberalism: The Birth of the Insecure Class in South Korea." *Globalizations* 11 (4):1-19.
- 7) Apple, Michael W. 2001. "Comparing Neo-Liberal Projects and Inequality in Education." *Comparative Education* 37:409-423.
- 8) Abelmann, Nancy, So Jin Park, and Hyunhee Kim, "College rank and neo-liberal subjectivity in South Korea: the burden of self-development," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Volume 10, Number 2, 2009.
- 9) Marianne Cooper, *Cut Adrift: Families in Insecure Times* (University of California Press, 2014), Chapter 1, pp. 27-45.
- 10) Jean-Francois Bayart, "Globalization and Political Subjectivation: The Neoliberal Period', in *Global Subjects* (Polity, 2007), Chapter 5.
- 11) Manfred B. Steger, *Globalisms: The Great Ideological Struggle of the Twenty-First Century* (Roman & Littlefield, 2009), Chapters 1-2.
- 12) Manfred B. Steger, "Globalization and Social Imaginaries: The Changing Ideological Landscape of the Twenty-First Century," *Journal of Critical Globalization Studies* 1 (2009), pp. 9-30.
- 13) Toby Carroll and Darryl Jarvis, "The New Politics of Development: Citizens, Civil Society, and the Evolution of Neoliberal Development Policy," *Globalizations* 12.3 (2015), pp. 281-304;
- 14) Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France, 1978-79* (Palgrave 2008), Excerpts:
https://1000littlehammers.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/birth_of_biopolitics.pdf
- 15) Aihwa Ong, "Neoliberalism as mobile technology," *Trans Inst Br Geogr* NS 32, 3-8 (2007), pp. 1-8: http://www.aihwaong.info/sg_userfiles/neoliberalism_as_mobile_technology.pdf
- 16) Chris Lorenz, "If you are so smart, why are you under surveillance? Universities, neoliberalism, and public management," *Critical Inquiry* 38 (Spring 2012), pp. 599-629: <http://platform-hnu.nl/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Critical-Inquiry-If-youre-so-smart.pdf>
- 17) William Robinson, "Global Capitalism and the Restructuring of Education: The Transnational Capitalist Class' Quest to Suppress Critical Thinking," *Social Justice* 43.3 (2016), pp. 1-24.

Requirements and Assessment

We encourage you to maintain an exploratory mind and create your own active learning environment—not solely interacting with us, but with each other as well. We EXPECT REGULAR STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION. You must be willing to engage in class discussions. We will facilitate student discussions by creating a safe context that allows you to speak up freely. But we do not accept the equation of subjective experience or unreflective “common sense” with “truth.” Be prepared to engage with the questions raised in this seminar, regardless of your own preferences. Most of all, we are interested in preparing you for independent research which requires a tolerant, reflective mind, best summarized by Immanuel Kant’s dictum, *Sapere aude*—‘Have the courage to use your *own* understanding!’

The course readings and assignments have been carefully selected to generate broad in-class discussions and insightful oral presentations. Students are required to select a topic of their choice (in consultation with the instructors) for a **20-page research paper that relates the materials of this seminar to a topic of the student’s interest**. An abstract/outline of the paper (1 page) plus a research bibliography (10-15 entries), will be due Week 13 (November 16). At students’ request, the instructors will provide feedback on ONE draft of the term paper between November 14 and December 7 (face-to-face consultation in their office only—no email drafts!). In addition, in our last class on May 1, all students are required to give a short presentation on their paper topic and their selection of texts.

In your research paper, you must raise a clear research question and then engage your selected texts and topics with as much sophistication as possible. You should indicate how your textual analysis relates to your chosen topic and how it reveals something of political significance about the larger theme/context from which it is taken. Thus, you should engage in a careful analysis of your themes and texts and cite appropriate, short textual passages (full footnotes or endnotes). *No book reports or summaries please!* You are expected to incorporate in your papers external research (books, journal articles, and reviews). The instructors are happy to give you recommendations for additional secondary sources. If you wish such advice, please talk to them about it BEFORE you get to work on your paper. Your papers represent an exercise in political interpretation. A hardcopy of the research paper is due on **Monday, December 11, at noon, in Professor Steger’s office (or SOC department office). No late papers will be accepted.**

Finally, each student will be responsible for **serving as a discussant of ONE of our weekly reading assignments** (possibly with another student). You are expected to focus on and analyze concrete arguments in the readings cite self-selected textual passages taken from the readings. You will also raise questions for discussion and lead class discussion (50 min total). You will prepare discussion questions and involve the entire class in discussion. You will be asked to sign up for a specific week at the latest by the third week of class. Assignments on particular topics/weeks will be made on first-come, first-serve basis. In addition to the assigned reading, your presentation may include additional supportive (brief) materials (for example, handouts, charts, and/or visual materials like Power Points, video clips, or other web-based materials).

Regular class attendance is required. Please inform the instructors *in advance* if you have to miss class for really important reasons!

A Note on Grading

You must complete all assigned written and oral work in order to pass the seminar. Any student found guilty of plagiarism will fail the seminar (see academic dishonest section below). Your in-class presentation will count for 15%, your participation/attendance for 10%, and your research paper for 75%. Thus, your seminar grade will reflect your presentation, participation, and the overall quality of your written work. Students who participate regularly during our class discussions will receive *extra credit*—meaning that if you find yourself between two grades at the end of the semester, you will receive the *higher grade*.

Please be advised that *overparticipation* and the monopolization of class discussion at the expense of your peers may hurt the quality of the course, especially if such actions tend to derail the thematic agenda. I reserve the right to cut off discussion at any point in order keep us on track and help *all* students to engage with the relevant materials. A significant element in academic study is the ability to learn to listen to other voices. For the purposes of this course, you should interpret the grades you receive in the following terms:

1) Discussant Presentations:

An “A” will only be given to presentations that are clearly superior in form as well as content. Typically, such presentations of self-selected textual passages are coherent, well organized, and adhere to the given time frame. “A” students show their critical and careful reading of the text(s) and generate genuine interest and excitement for their topic. They lead discussions effortlessly, distribute speaking time fairly, and stay focused on their theme.

2) Research Paper:

Much of the above pertains to term papers as well. In addition to treating the subject in a sophisticated and creative manner, “A” papers exhibit elegant and clear prose. Such papers draw connections between non-obvious points; they are well organized and furnish adequate citations of primary and secondary sources without losing their own unique and distinct voice. An “A” paper in a graduate seminar should add a new wrinkle to the existing body of texts/literature. If this grade is to mean something, just doing a “good job” will result in a “B.” To get an “A,” you must demonstrate your ability to go *beyond* the expected.

No late papers will be accepted.

Office Hours

Monday, 9:30 – 11:00 am (Steger); and by appointment.

Students are encouraged to see us during office hours on a regular basis. Please clarify any difficult readings and/or other problems as soon as they arise. Don’t wait until the last few weeks of the semester.

Academic Conduct and Plagiarism

Students are expected to abide by the university’s policies regarding academic integrity. Actions that are academically dishonest include, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication of information, interfering with the education of another student. Violation of these policies will not be tolerated and will result in serious consequences including receiving no credit for the

assignment, a failing grade, or, in serious cases, it might lead to suspension or expulsion. The university policy on academic dishonesty can be found at the UH Manoa Student Conduct Code Policies Section IV Proscribed Conduct. For detail information, please consult the following website:

[http://studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct code/proscribed conduct.php](http://studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct%20code/proscribed%20conduct.php)

Disability Accommodation

If you have a disability for which you need an accommodation, please make an appointment with the UH Manoa KOKUA Program (Disability Access Services) at (808) 956-7511, or via email kokua@hawaii.edu. For more information please access its website:

<http://www.hawaii.edu/kokua/>

Subject to Change Statement

This syllabus and schedule are provisional and are subject to change. It is at the discretion of the instructor to do so for the purpose of furthering the educational objectives of the course. While the instructor will notify students of any changes through class announcements and email communications, it is students' responsibility to check on the course syllabus periodically for changes.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 (Aug 24): Introduction to the Course; General Overview

Readings for week 2 & 3: Steger, *Neoliberalism: A Very Short Introduction*, Chapter 1; Kotz, *The Rise and Fall of Neoliberal Capitalism*, Chapter 2; Steger, *Globalisms*, Chapters 1-2; Steger, *Globalization and Social Imaginaries: The Changing Ideological Landscape of the Twenty-First Century.*"

PART I: WHAT IS NEOLIBERALISM? HISTORICAL AND CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

WEEK 2 (Aug 31): NEOLIBERALISM, GLOBALIZATION, IDEOLOGY I

WEEK 3 (Sept 7): NEOLIBERALISM, GLOBALIZATION, IDEOLOGY II

Readings for week 4: Kotz, *The Rise and Fall of Neoliberal Capitalism*, Chapters, 3 & 4; Steger, *Neoliberalism*, Chapters 2 & 3.

WEEK 4 (Sept 14) THE RISE OF NEOLIBERAL CAPITALISM

Readings for week 5 & 6: Kotz, *The Rise and Fall of Neoliberal Capitalism*, Chapters 5 & 6
Student Presentation #1

WEEK 5 (Sept 21): THE CRISIS OF NEOLIBERALISM I

PBS Frontline: *Money, Power, and Wall Street (Videos)*

WEEK 6 (Sept 28): THE CRISIS OF NEOLIBERALISM II

Readings for week 7: Stiglitz, "Of the Top 1%, by the 1%, for the 1%"; Piketty, Excerpts from *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*; Cooper, "Cut Adrift: Families in Insecure Times."

Student Presentation #2

PART II: SOCIAL IMPACTS OF NEOLIBERALISM

WEEK 7 (Oct 5): NEOLIBERALISM AND INEQUALITY

Readings for week 8: Kalleberg, "Precarious work, insecure workers: Employment relations in transition"; Rogers, "Just a Temp: Experience and Structure of Alienation;" Lee, "Labor after Neoliberalism: The Birth of the Insecure Class in South Korea."

Student Presentation #3

WEEK 8 (Oct 12): NEOLIBERALISM AND JOB PRECARIETY

Readings for week 9: Apple, "Comparing Neo-Liberal Projects and Inequality in Education;" Abelmann et.al., "College rank and neo-liberal subjectivity in South Korea: the burden of self-development;" Koo, "Neoliberal Globalization and Educational Struggles in South Korea."

Student Presentation # 4

WEEK 9 (Oct 19): NEOLIBERAL GLOBALIZATION AND EDUCATION

Readings for week 10: Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics* (excerpts); Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, Chapters 2 & 3.

Student Presentation #5

PART III: NEOLIBERAL REASON, SUBJECTIVITIES, AND PUBLIC POLICY

WEEK 10 (Oct 26): NEOLIBERALISM AS GOVERNMENTALITY

Readings for week 11: Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, Chapters 1, 4, 5, 6; Ong, "Neoliberalism as a mobile technology."

Student Presentation #6

WEEK 11 (Nov 2): NEOLIBERAL REASON

Readings for week 12: Carroll and Jarvis, "The New Politics of Development: Citizens, Civil Society, and the Evolution of Neoliberal Development Policy;" Bayart, "Globalization and Political Subjectivation: The Neoliberal Period."

Student Presentation #7

WEEK 12 (Nov 9): GLOBAL NEOLIBERAL SUBJECTS

Readings for week 13: Chris Lorenz, "If you are so smart, why are you under surveillance? Universities, neoliberalism, and public management;" and William Robinson, "Global Capitalism and the Restructuring of Education: The Transnational Capitalist Class' Quest to Suppress Critical Thinking."

WEEK 13 (Nov 16): NEOLIBERALISM AS PUBLIC POLICY: HIGHER EDUCATION

Readings for week 15: Kotz, *The Rise and Fall of Neoliberal Capitalism*, Chapters 6-7.
1-page abstract and bibliography for research paper due.

Student Presentation #8

WEEK 14 (Nov 23): NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING

WEEK 15 (Nov 30): THE FUTURE OF NEOLIBERALISM

WEEK 16 (Dec 7): STUDENT RESEARCH PAPERS: SHORT PRESENTATIONS

Research Paper due: Mon, December 11, at noon. No late papers will be accepted.