

G33.2530
ASIATIC MODE OF PRODUCTION:
THEORY AND HISTORY

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Description: This course investigates aspects of the historical interpretation of China in the 19th and 20th centuries, focusing on the genesis and development of one of the most debated and enduring tropes of the historiography of China: the Asiatic Mode of Production.

Write short (1-2 page) weekly memos on reading and e-mail to everyone; a final paper at the end of the semester.

Books:

- G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History* (NY: Dover Publications)
- Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, tr. Talcott Parsons (NY: Routledge, 1992)
- Max Weber, *The Religion of China*, tr. Hans H. Gerth (NY: Macmillan, 1964)
- Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (NY/London: Verso, 1979)
- Stephen Dunn, *The Fall and Rise of the Asiatic Mode of Production* (Routledge, 1982)

All other readings will be made available for students to xerox themselves.

PART I: THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Week 1: The Oriental World vs. the Modern World

- Montesquieu, selections on despotism
- Hegel, *Lecture on the Philosophy of History*, Introduction, Part I (The Oriental World), and Part IV, Section 3 (“The Modern Time”)

Week 2: Capitalism and Global Differentiation

- Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*
- Chow, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Intro & Chapter 1 (xerox)

Week 3: Bureaucratism—the wrong kind

- Weber, *The Religion of China*

Week 4: Marx

- Marx, selections from the *Grundrisse* (pp471-514; 537-543)
- Marx, selections from *Capital*, Vol. 3 (Chapter 16, 18, 37, 47)

Week 5: Lenin & Kautsky on the Agrarian Question

1. Karl Kautsky, *The Agrarian Question*, Vol 1, Chapters 5-8 (pp59-197)
2. Lenin, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, pp175-190; 315-334; 382-388; 546-556; 617-641.

Week 6: The AMP

1. Perry Anderson, "The Asiatic Mode of Production" (*Lineages of the Absolutist State* – pp462-549)
2. Hindess & Hirst, *Precapitalist modes of production* (Chapter 4)
3. H. Lubasz, "Marx's Concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production: A Genetic Analysis" (Jessop, ed., *Karl Marx's Social and Political Thought*, Vol. II)
4. K. Wittfogel, "The Ruling Bureaucracy of Oriental Despotism: A Phenomenon that Paralyzed Marx" (Jessop, ed., *Karl Marx's Social & Political Thought*, Vol II)

PART II: THE ASIATIC MODE OF PRODUCTION: HISTORY AND THEORY

Week 7: The Comintern and the Chinese Revolution

1. "National and colonial question," Parts I & II; 2nd Congress of the Comintern discussions (pp211-290 of Riddell, ed., Vol I) – July 1920
2. Appendix 2 on National and Colonial Questions (pp846-885 of Riddell, ed., Vol II)
3. Zinoviev's Theses on the Chinese Revolution (1927)
4. Trotsky, "Stalin and the Chinese Revolution" (from *Problems of the Chinese Revolution* – pp 267-310)

Week 8: The AMP debates: 1930s USSR

1. Stephen P. Dunn, *The Fall and Rise of the Asiatic Mode of Production*, Part I (pp1-38) AND
Below, all from: Bailey & Llobera, eds., *The Asiatic Mode of Production: Science & Politics:*"
1. Georgii Plekhanov, "Our differences" and "Civilization and the Great Historical Rivers"
2. L. I. Mad'iar, "The Legitimacy of the AMP"
3. M. Godes, "The Reaffirmation of Unilinealism"
4. K. Wittfogel, "The Stages of Development in Chinese Economic and Social History" and "The Theory of Oriental Society"

Week 9: The AMP debates: 1930s China

1. Gregory Blue, "China and Western social thought in the modern period" (from *China and Historical Capitalism*, pp57-109)
2. Timothy Brook, "Capitalism and the writing of modern history in China" (from *China and Historical Capitalism*, pp110-157)
3. Arif Dirlik, *Revolution and History*, Chapter 4, 6.
4. Joshua Fogel, "The Debates over the Asiatic Mode of Production in Soviet Russia, China, and Japan," *American Historical Review* (Vol 93, No. 1, Feb. 1988: 56-79).

PART III: THE PROBLEM OF TRANSITION AND THE RETURN OF THE AMP

Week 10: Transition: General theories/problems

1. Balibar & Althusser, *Reading Capital*, Part III (“The Basic Concepts of Historical Materialism,” pp199-308)
2. Hindess & Hirst, *Pre-capitalist modes of production*, Chapter 6 (“The transition from feudalism to capitalism,” pp260-307)
3. Deleuze & Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* (excerpts; around pp194-196 or more?)

Week 11: Transitioning in the socialist/postcolonial world

1. Samir Amin, “The Origin and Development of Underdevelopment” (from *Unequal Development*, pp198-292)
2. Gayatri Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (“Philosophy,” pp 67-111)
3. Mao Zedong, *A Critique of the Soviet Economy*

Week 12: Transition & the AMP’s return: 50s, 60s, 70s

1. Stephen Dunn, *The Fall and Rise of the AMP*, Part II
- Below, all from: Bailey & Llobera, eds., *The AMP: Science & Politics*
1. Ferenc Tökei, “The Asiatic Mode of Production” (249-263)
 2. Maurice Godelier, “The Asiatic Mode of Production” (264-277)
 3. Lawrence Krader, “Principles and Critique of the Asiatic Mode of Production” (325-334)

Week 13: Transitioning in the postsocialist world: the AMP in post-Mao China

Below, all from: T. Brook, ed., *The Asiatic Mode of Production in China*

1. Wu Dakun, “Some Questions Concerning Research on the Asiatic Mode of Production” (35-46)
2. Ke Changji, “Ancient Chinese Society and the AMP” (47-64)
3. Zhu Jiazhen, “Some Questions Concerning Research on the Theory of the Asiatic Mode of Production” (104-117)
4. Song Min, “The Scientific Validity of the Concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production” (149-156)
5. Su Kaihua, “The Meaning of the ‘Asiatic Mode of production’ and the Origin of the Term” (157-163)
6. Hu Zhongda, “The Asiatic Mode of Production and the Theory of Five MOPs” (164-175)

AND

1. Deng Xiaoping’s theory of the “primary stage of socialism”