How can you tell that communism was invented by communists, not scientists?  
Scientists would have tested it on mice first. (Russian joke)

Karl Marx developed one of the most radical and sustained critiques of capitalism and convinced many that capitalism had to be abolished. Yet the societies built in Marx’s name failed to reach higher standards of justice than the ones he criticized. This course examines Marx’s ideas and why Communist systems largely failed to achieve the goals to which they were dedicated, focusing particularly on Marx’s oversimplified view of politics. In the last section, we address contemporary critiques and defenses of capitalism and explore what it would take to construct a more just society.

Course objectives:
After this course, you should be able to:

Scholarship and knowledge
- Recognize and discuss the ideas of major Marxist thinkers
- Identify the variety of forms that Communism took in the world

Intellectual inquiry and communication
- Evaluate reasons why the concrete application of Marxist ideas varied so much from the ideas in the abstract
- Assess the consequences of various systems of social organization
- Critique arguments advocating particular policies or programs of change
- Appraise the role of comparison in predicting outcomes of efforts to transform the world
- Devise compelling oral and written arguments

Community building
- Predict the ways various forms of social organization affect different groups of people
- Manage conversations among groups of people who may disagree with each other on core values

Leadership and service
- Assess how policy choices affect the world in which we live
- Organize effective group activities and projects

Spirituality and values
- Identify the moral values and ethics that underlie efforts to transform society
- Appraise arguments about the nature of a just society
- Develop policy proposals to advance particular values

Students are expected to be civil and polite at all times. We will sometimes discuss topics that cut close to our core political and personal values, and it will be necessary to always respect contrasting opinions.

My office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 11:00-1:00, when you find me in, and by appointment. Feel free to drop by.
**Required books:** (at the bookstore)

There are additional readings on e-reserve (password: Communism13).

**Requirements:**
Participation, including group work – 25 percent of your grade for the course
Three five-page papers based on questions I provide – 45 percent
Quizzes – 10 percent
Final exam – 20 percent
All students must complete a course evaluation at the end of the class.

Additional short written, oral, and group assignments will arise

Missed quizzes must be excused by me before they are given. Otherwise, you will receive a grade of 0 for the missing work. Grades of 0 will also be given for missing papers. The zeros will be averaged into the final course grade. Late essays may be subject to penalties.

**Class participation**
The quality of this class depends a great deal on you and your readiness to contribute meaningfully to class discussions. You should think about class as a time for exploration, for figuring out what readings mean, and for critically evaluating arguments made by various authors, by other students, and by me. A number of things follow from this:

- **Attendance is required**, and excessive absence will harm your grade.

- **It is important to do the readings** listed for each class before coming to class. When possible, come prepared with questions that you would like to examine.

- **Laptops (and, of course, phones) may not be used in class.** While the most self-disciplined among us will not be distracted by the wealth of entertainments provided by the internet, laptops tend to reduce uninterrupted focus on the discussion and serve as barriers to honest and direct interaction.

**Student learning**
In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- **Course-level support** (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.

- **University-level support** (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Student Success Center (BSC 331) or by going to www.slu.edu/success.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 314-977-8885 or visit the Student Success Center.
Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.
**Academic honesty**
The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty such as soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of work submitted toward academic credit. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, examples include copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored by or revised by another person as the student’s own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination or quiz without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, sharing or receiving the questions from an on-line quiz with another student, taking an on-line quiz with the help of another student, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty.

All clear violations of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. In this course, academic dishonesty on an assignment will result in an automatic grade of 0 for that assignment and a report of academic dishonesty sent to the Academic Honesty Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences. In the case of Class B violations, the Academic Honesty Committee may impose a larger sanction including, but not limited to, assigning a failing grade in the course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University.

Students should refer to the following SLU website for more information about Class A and B violations and the procedures following a report of academic dishonesty: [http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml](http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml)

**Writing center:**
I encourage you to take advantage of the writing services in the Student Success Center; getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. Trained writing consultants can help with any kind of writing project, multimedia project, and/or oral presentation. They offer one-on-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, call 977-3484 or visit [http://www.slu.edu/writingservices.xml](http://www.slu.edu/writingservices.xml).

**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-70</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **A Quality Work** – work of superior quality. Class participation is voluntary, frequent, relevant, and demonstrates thoughtful reflection on the readings. Written work is clear, correct in content and presentation, well-organized and thought-provoking. Performance on exams demonstrates complete mastery of facts and concepts and the ability to apply concepts to new situations.

- **B Quality Work** – work of high quality. Class participation is voluntary, frequent, and reflects effort to understand the readings. Written work reflects a good understanding of the issues and concepts with minimal error. Performance on exams is very strong; demonstrates mastery of facts and concepts.

- **C Quality Work** – work that minimally meets the course requirements. Class participation is occasional and/or rarely voluntary, with comments that reveal only a superficial grasp of issues and concepts. Written work may be disorganized or contain errors. Performance on exams demonstrates knowledge of facts and concepts.
• **D Quality Work** – work that has minimal clarity and comprehension. Class participation is minimal, never voluntary, and reveals a lack of preparation and/or understanding. Written work is confusing, contradictory, repetitive, and/or not well supported. Writing is marred with errors. Performance on exams demonstrates minimal mastery of facts and concepts.

• **F Quality Work** – Unsatisfactory performance along most measures, often including missing assignments.

**The Marxist Critique of Capitalism**

“Both for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a revolution; this revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class overthrowing it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew.”

(Marx, *The German Ideology*)

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**January 15**

*Introduction*

**January 17**

*Think about the contours of an ideal society.* What kind of political system would be required? What distribution of property? How would work be organized? How would you get from the present society to that ideal? What aspects of present society would you hope to eliminate or retain?


James Madison, Federalist No. 10. Find online at: [www.law.ou.edu/hist/federalist/federalist-10-19/](http://www.law.ou.edu/hist/federalist/federalist-10-19/)


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**January 22**


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**January 24**


*Marx starts to make more sense the more you read. Keep moving forward; don't get stuck on details. If you've already read the Manifesto, skim it but read something else in the Tucker reader.*
Real-Existing Communism

Communism, as it was manifested in the world, produced great human suffering. In the Soviet Union, estimates are that up to 25 million people died as a result of Stalin's efforts at collectivization and the famine that ensued. More perished in the gulags and as a result of mass repression. Some estimates of the number of Chinese people who died during the Great Leap Forward reach as high as 43 million. Up to a quarter of the Cambodian population was slaughtered under Pol Pot. Why does the effort to put Marx's ideas into practice have such high human costs?
March 5  

The whole Black Book of Communism is available for free online. The quality of the text is better than for the e-reserve readings, but you’ll have to find the right sections. http://archive.org/details/TheBlackBookofCommunism10

March 7  
Margolin, “Cambodia: The Country of Disconcerting Crimes,” from The Black Book of Communism, pp. 577-611 (e-reserve). Feel free to finish the chapter if you want to.

QUIZ TWO

March 11-15  
SPRING BREAK

March 19  

March 21  

March 26  
ESSAY TWO DUE

March 28  
No class – Easter Break

Social Justice in a Post-Communist World

“With the supermarket as our temple and the singing commercial as our litany, are we likely to fire the world with an irresistible vision of America’s exalted purpose and inspiring way of life?” (Adlai Stevenson)

April 2  

April 4  

April 9  


April 25  Barry, and “Irresponsible Societies,” “Pathologies of Inequality,” pp. 154-185.

April 30  ESSAY THREE DUE


May 9  FINAL EXAM (8:30-9:30)

Additional readings on Marx and Engels:
Marx in Tucker: anything that inspires you, including "The Grundrisse," "Capital" (excerpts), "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte"


**Additional readings on existing communism:**


Communism, Capitalism, and Social Justice


Additional readings on post-communism and contemporary capitalism


Collier, Paul. 2007. *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can be done about


