

D. Syllabus Fall 2013

D.1. General Info about Economics 5080/6080

Instructor

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hans G. Ehrbar

Office: 363 OSH,

Tel: 801 581 7797 (office) and 801 908 6937 (home)

Email: ehrbar@economics.utah.edu

Class home page for Econ 5080:

<http://marx.economics.utah.edu/das-kapital/index.html>

Office hours: Any time Hans is in his office, or by appointment

Hans will post with the pseudonym Hans, and please call him "Hans" when referring to him or in the email conversations.

If you would like to look at the entire syllabus before committing yourself to the class, a printable version is at <http://marx.economics.utah.edu/das-kapital/pdf/print-syllabus-5080.pdf>. A pdf copy of the Annotations with useful links, which contains this syllabus as Appendix D, is available at <http://marx.economics.utah.edu/das-kapital/pdf/halfpage/akmk.pdf>.

Checklist: Five Steps to Get Started

The internet portion of this class does not use Canvas but ordinary email and public web pages. Therefore the following five steps are necessary to become part of Econ 5080/6080.

1. Buy the August 2013 edition of Hans G. Ehrbar's Annotations to Karl Marx's Capital at the University of Utah Book Store, details on p. 801 below.
2. Download the zip archive ec5080.zip and extract the contents into a separate folder on your computer. It contains the pdf files necessary for Econ 5080. Instructions are either on p. 824 below, or on the class home page <http://marx.economics.utah.edu/das-kapital/index.html>
3. You will get a lot of email during this class. This email discussion will be archived on the web, and although Hans sends responses and comments by email, some of his comments will only be visible in the archives. It is recommended to follow the

archived discussion so that you can see all of Hans's comments, and that you know the context of the emails presently sent. At the very least you should look at the archives every time just before you answer a homework question yourself. There are two ways to follow the discussion in the archives

- You can do this with your browser by visiting <http://marx.economics.utah.edu/das-kapital/2013fa/message.html>. This is the recommended way of keeping track of the conversation, simply because this is presently how Hans himself keeps track of it, therefore Hans will know immediately when something is missing and will fix it.

- You can also download nicely typeset pdf versions of the current conversations. For this you should download into the same folder where you are storing the pdfs extracted from the zip archive ec5080.zip the pdf transcript of the current class discussion 2013fa.pdf (which is not in the zip archive because it changes daily).

4. Go to <http://marx.economics.utah.edu/mailman/listinfo/das-kapital> and follow the instructions to subscribe to the mailing list das-kapital, which is the mailing list where all class participants submit their homeworks and term papers. This is an ordinary mailing list, similar to many on the internet, with the additional feature that the identity of the subscribers is protected by a pseudonym, and that also processes the question number of the question asked. Select a pseudonym which is not yet chosen. If you wish to receive email at several different email addresses, you may subscribe several addresses, using the same pseudonym for all. Each address entered into these subscription forms receives an email requesting confirmation, and in order to finalize the subscription you must respond to these emails.

5. After your subscription is complete, i.e., after you have received the welcome email telling you that you are now subscribed to das-kapital, you are required to send a simple email message to the homework address das-kapital@marx.economics.utah.edu where you tell the instructor and others in class why you are taking this class and what your learning objectives are. The first line in this message should be : : q:998 if you want your grades to be private, and : : q:999 if you want them to be public. Don't add anything else to this first line. The subject line should be just the letter M if you want your pseudonym to be of male gender, F if you want it to be female, or some brief explanation, perhaps "human regardless of gender" or "not a person but an argument" or "not binary but a continuum," or whatever; if you don't want to associate your pseudonym with the M or F genders.

This introductory email must not be in html but in plain text, and it must not have attachments. Otherwise it will not be accepted and you have to re-send it. You have to learn for this class anyway to send emails in plain text without attachments, and this introductory email is a test whether your email has the right format. Knowing how to

send plain text emails is a valuable skill for anyone participating in mailing lists. The links referenced in <http://marx.economics.utah.edu/das-kapital/netiquette.html>. give instructions about sending plain text emails without attachments. After sending your introductory email, you will get an immediate automated response which you should read carefully: either it tells you that something was wrong with your submission, so that you have to try again, or it tells you that things are ok and that you can start making your homework submissions now. **This response also tells you your shift number, which you need to know for some of the deadlines.**

To: das-kapital@marx.economics.utah.edu

Subject: M

----- Message Text -----

:::Q:998

Since we are entering turbulent times,

I am looking for arguments why Marx is wrong.

Please don't publish my grades.

Since my learning objective is to argue against Marx,

I don't expect them to be very good.

Table D.1.: Initial email to the homework mailing list

The above five steps must be completed by your second class session, i.e., by Tuesday, Sep 3, 6 pm for the evening class, and Friday, Sep 6, 10:45 am for the day class. It is recommended that you complete these steps and start contributing to the homework mailing list as early as possible, so that you won't miss the important things that will be discussed in the early classes. Early participation is also rewarded by the rule that after you have made your first submission (even if it is an ungraded submission) most in-class sessions are voluntary as long as you keep up with the minimum requirements in homework contributions. The only in-class sessions mandatory for everyone are the exams *and* the third class session, which is Tuesday, Sep 10, 6 pm or Friday, Sep 13, 10:45 am.

After completing step 4. above, which subscribes you to das-kapital, you can send homework submissions to das-kapital@marx.economics.utah.edu. You should also receive a steady stream of emails in your inbox, namely, all homework submissions and discussion contributions of all class participants, including your own. You can also read the homeworks on the web at <http://marx.economics.utah.edu/das-kapital/2013fa/message.html>. This web site is updated frequently, and it contains the homework submissions in a cleaned-up and better organized form. Another option is the pdf archive of the current discussion at <http://marx.economics.utah.edu/das-kapital/pdf/ha1fpage/2013fa.pdf>. It is easier to see what is going on if you follow the discussion in these well organized archives than if you rely on your incoming emails only.

Overview

After linking into the class through the above five steps, you will be responsible for doing the assigned readings, answering the homework questions associated with the readings, contributing to the free discussion list, finding partners for your term paper and registering your term paper group, exams, exam resubmissions, writing the term paper co-operatively with your partners, plus you will have certain extra-credit opportunities. Every participant is also required to give specific feedback to the work of others. Students enrolling under the 6080 class number should consider themselves co-teachers who make some additional contribution enriching the class.

All rules are described precisely below: for instance, the schedule of all homeworks is given on pages 804–812, and the format in which homeworks must be submitted is illustrated in Table D.2 on p. 819. Every now and then it is necessary to adjust the rules and the software underlying this class to the evolving demands, therefore Hans may consider it necessary to change these rules with proper notice.

Prerequisites

The class does not have formal prerequisites, it is mainly about critical thinking and the close reading of a philosophical text (Marx's *Capital*). If you want to prepare for it, you might want to look at some introductory texts into Marxism. Especially helpful might be Michael Heinrich's guide to *Capital* [Heil2]. There is also a useful handbook *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* edited by Tom Bottomore [Bot83]. Since Marx's thought is closely related to critical realism, Hans also recommends the two books *Critical Realism: An Introduction to Roy Bhaskar's Philosophy* by Andrew Collier [Col94], and *A Realist Philosophy of Social Science: Explanation and Understanding* by Peter Manicas [Man06].

Class Goal

The purpose of the course is a close reading and collective discussion of Karl Marx's famous indictment of capitalist society, *Capital*. Although *Capital* was first published 145 years ago, it covers many issues relevant and debated today. Marx's analysis does not get much exposure in modern mainstream economics, not because it is wrong, but because it is critical of the capitalist system. The recent collapse of most socialist regimes does not invalidate Marx's *Capital*, which is a theory of capitalism, not socialism. Indeed, recent developments in capitalism have re-kindled interest in Marx. The scientific method employed in *Capital* may seem unfamiliar but is by no means outdated; Marx's method is a serious contender in the modern philosophical debates around "realism," and the various critiques of "positivism."

If this class is successful, you will collect experiences reading a difficult philosophical text, become acquainted with an alternative approach to social sciences, and gain new perspectives on contemporary capitalist society. While discussing gripping social, economic,

and philosophical questions, you also have the opportunity to co-operate with others and polish your internet skills.

You should be aware that Marxism is an embattled theory, which is sometimes met with hostility. It may hurt your employment prospects if you have too many Marxist classes on your transcript, and participants who intend to apply for US citizenship should be especially cautious.

Format of the Class

Time and Location of Classroom Sessions In Fall 2013, the class is taught in two sections, a day section 5080-001 resp. 6080-001 and an evening section 5080-002 resp. 6080-002. The day section meets Fridays 10:45–11:35 am in OSH 107 and the evening section Tuesdays 6–6:50 pm in OSH 113. All assignments are open for participants in both sections. It does not really matter which section you enroll for, but since there are two sections you have more flexibility with class meetings and exams.

Attendance Requirements Since the main class interactions take place by email, attendance at these class meetings is *voluntary* for everybody after they have successfully submitted their first homework contribution, with the following exceptions:

- Attendance is required for the third class session of the Semester. For the evening section this is Tuesday, Sep 10 at 6 pm, and for the day section it is Friday, Sep 13 at 10:45 am. Hans will discuss important technical issues about writing and internet etiquette.
- Attendance is required for the two in-class exams. The evening section exams are on Tuesday, Oct 1 and Tuesday, Nov 26, both at 6 pm, and the day section exams are on Friday, Oct 4 and Friday, Nov 22, both at 10:45 am.

For a careful reader of the class notes and participant in the email discussion, attendance in class should not be necessary. It is nevertheless recommended that you sometimes visit class. Written material can be brought to life and put into perspective by talking about it. You may attend either the day class on Fridays or the evening class on Tuesdays or both if you wish. Hans will try to make audio recordings of his classes (no guarantee that all of them succeed) and make them available for download from <http://marx.economic.utah.edu/das-kapital/2013fa/audio/index.html>. This allows you to listen to the class sessions on your own schedule.

Homeworks On pages 804–812 below you find a schedule of the homework assignments. Each participant must submit only six written answers over the course of the Semester, but these answers must be sent in six different homework periods and must be thoughtful and well executed. Your answers are forwarded to everybody in class, with the identity of

the author protected by a pseudonym or nick-name, i.e., an invented name to protect your identity, and you will get detailed feedback from the instructor and from others in class.

Your homeworks will be graded, and if you give explicit permission, these grades will be public, so that everyone who reads your contribution in the archives also sees the grade it has earned. This grade will never be associated with your name, since only your pseudonym, not your name, is visible in the email sent out to the class and in the archive. There is no requirement that you allow your grades to be made public, not even the presumption that you ought to give this permission; it is a completely voluntary option on your part, which you may also revoke again at any time.

You are expected to access your computer several times a week in order to read your email, and to participate in the email discussion. There are no pre-set times *when* you have to be at your computer; you can do so on your own schedule. However you must read the same material during the same half-week period as all other participants in the class, in order to be able to discuss these readings with them on the internet. You must access the computer more than just once or twice per week, because otherwise the amount of mail accumulated in your mailbox will be overwhelming. Hans may send random emails out just to test how long it takes you to respond. The format of this class presupposes that you have easy access to electronic mail, either from home, work, or school.

Class Materials You need the August 2013 edition of Hans Ehrbar's *Annotations to Karl Marx's Capital*, containing Hans's own translation of selected passages of *Capital*, with detailed notes and Study Questions, and also the syllabus for this class in the Appendix. You can buy your copy at the University Campus Store on the main campus of the University of Utah, tel. 801-581-6326. Normal hours are 8 am – 6 pm Monday through Friday, but 8 am – 7 pm on Tuesdays, and 11 – 4 on Saturdays. Last year's copy will not do; there are so many changes (Hans hopes improvements) between each print run that you definitely need the latest edition.

The Annotations contain the assigned passages of Marx's text in full. Volume One of Karl Marx's *Capital* is therefore only an *optional* textbook. It would be to your advantage to either use the Vintage edition [Mar76] ISBN 0-394-72657-X (which is identical to the Penguin edition ISBN 0-14-044568-4), or the German-language edition [Mar62], because the page references in the Annotations refer to these two editions. It is useful for the term paper to have your own paper copy of Marx's *Capital* since the chapters about which you have to write term papers are not in the Annotations. Your own paper copy also allows you to read Marx's text in one piece, not interrupted by interpretations and study questions. The easiest method to acquire Marx's *Capital* is to use the bilingual cap1.pdf available in the collection of pdf files for this class, or to read it in html at the Marxists Internet Archive www.marxists.org. But Hans thinks that reading and understanding a text on the computer screen is more difficult than having a printed version.

You must also download a number of pdf files to your computer, including a pdf copy of the Annotations. The pdf files have live links which allow you to follow cross references

in the document with a click of the mouse. Detailed downloading instructions are on p. 824 below, and also on the class home page marx.economics.utah.edu/das-kapital/index.html.

Since this course meets the communications and writing requirement, some resources about internet etiquette and writing are assembled at <http://marx.economics.utah.edu/das-kapital/netiquette.html>.

Transcripts of the class email discussion are accessible through the class home page <http://marx.economics.utah.edu/das-kapital/index.html>. It is recommended that before doing any homework questions you look at the latest submissions in <http://marx.economics.utah.edu/das-kapital/2013fa/activity.html>, or the overall discussion this Semester in <http://marx.economics.utah.edu/das-kapital/2013fa/message.html>, or download the latest version of the typeset transcript of the current class discussion in pdf from <http://marx.economics.utah.edu/das-kapital/pdf/screen/2013fa.pdf> or <http://marx.economics.utah.edu/das-kapital/pdf/halfpage/2013fa.pdf> or <http://marx.economics.utah.edu/das-kapital/pdf/print/2013fa.pdf>. The web site and/or the pdf are important tools for doing your own homework. They contain, in a well-organized form, all the emails sent out to everybody in the class, and also show Hans's comments which are never disseminated by email. They have relevant links into the *Annotations* and the transcripts of past class discussions.

One week before each of the two in-class Exams, the University Copy Center at 158 Union Building on main campus will sell printed collections of all the submitted homeworks, in order to make it easier for you to prepare for the Exams. They will be called *Econ 5080 Questions and Answers*. Installments 1 and 2. The Copy Center is open 8 am – 5:30 pm Monday through Friday, tel. 801 587 7928. You will also be able to download these collections from the class home page. The class home page also shows all the multiple choice questions for you to practice.

No Final Exam There will be no Final Exam. This class is fairly labor intensive, but the heaviest work load is early in the Semester.

Special Circumstances The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodation in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the instructor and to the Center for Disability Services, <http://disability.utah.edu/>, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581 5020 to make arrangements for the kind of accommodation you need. If your personal circumstances call for a modification of the class requirements in order to receive a fair treatment, please see Hans in his office hour on or before Tuesday, Sep 10.

D.2. Schedule of Homework Assignments

This section contains a week-by-week calendar of the topics covered in class and your assignments. Every week you should consult the entry for the current homeworks so that you won't miss any assignments.

While reading the specific rules in the homework schedule below, you should be aware of the following general rules:

- Both day and evening classes are listed here. It does not matter for which class you are enrolled, the email assignments and everything else are the same.
- Homeworks will only be accepted during the three or four days when they are due.
- If you make more than one submission in the same homework period, your grade for this homework period will be the average of the individual grades.
- Not all your submissions are necessarily graded; you can also make "ungraded" submissions for which you get feedback and, if appropriate, an informational grade which does not enter the GPA calculation determining your final grade. In order to designate a submission as ungraded, add `ug` after the question number. Writing `ug` after the question number has further advantages: then your answer is accepted even after the deadline for the regular homework answers has expired, and your submission counts as one of your free discussion submissions (more about this in the last bullet point below).
- After sending in a graded homework answer, you have to wait until you get feedback and a grade from Hans before you can submit a graded answer to a different homework question. But this waiting time will not be more than 24 hours; after 24 hours you are free to make your next submission even if you have not yet received feedback from Hans. If you have to make an addendum to the same homework question, this is permitted. The required waiting time only applies if you answer a different question.
- Questions labeled "exam question" are accepted, but they always count as ungraded submissions. Many of them are too easy for homeworks, but some of them are not very easy but so important that Hans is requiring everybody in class to know the answers.
- Hans is building an archive of example answers which he considers correct for the given question. This is the *Answer* archive. Each question indicates the Semesters in which it was discussed and whether or not it is in the *Answer* archive. If you select a question with an answer in the *Answer* archive, you are expected to have studied the archived answer and to contribute new thoughts which improve this answer.
- It is recommended that you make at least two homework submissions in two different homework periods before the first exam and another two between the first and second

exam, and if you make less than two before the first exam, you should make up for the shortfall between the exams. If you follow this recommendation you will be rewarded with participation points.

- One of the most important rules is: you must make three different homework submissions in different homework periods up until Fall break, and another three after the Fall break. You will get separate grades for those two halves of the Semester. If you have less than three before Fall break, the missing submissions will be counted as E, and the same for the period after the Fall break.

- In addition to the six homework answers, each participant also has to make four contributions to a free discussion, in which *everything* can be discussed. This discussion takes place on the same mailing list using question numbers 888 (for general unrestricted discussion) or 350 (for discussions about Marx and the environment). These question numbers are always accepted. Because of the importance of environmental issues, everybody is required to write at least *one* submission about the environment, question 350. In order to keep track of the free discussion requirement, every participant is assigned to one of three shifts. Your shift number is given in almost every email you receive from Hans. The deadlines which you have to meet are staggered according to shift number. If you are in shift 1, then you must make your first free discussion contribution to das-kapital on or before Sunday, Sep 15, and if you are in shift 2 or 3, this deadline is 1 or 2 weeks later. After this first deadline, shift 1 must make at least one submission between Monday, Sep 16 and Sunday Oct 6, with the deadlines for the other shifts staggered by one or two weeks again, etc. Here are links to the third deadline for shift 1, 2, 3, and the fourth deadline for shift 1, 2, 3.

After these preliminaries, here are the assignments for all class sessions.

Evening session Tuesday, Aug 27, 6 pm: Discussion of the format of the class. Hans will also summarize very briefly the main differences between Marx's approach and the method of mainstream social sciences.

Things Everyone has to do Between their First and Second Class Sessions

As soon as possible at the beginning of the Semester (indeed you may do this before the Semester officially begins, as soon as the August 2013 edition of this syllabus is available), you should go through the five steps which tie your email accounts into this class, as described on p. 796 above.

Mon Aug 26–Thu Aug 29 w1 Between Monday, Aug 26 and Thursday, Aug 29, the reading assignment is section 1.1.a: [*The Commodity as Natural Object and Use-Value*], pp. 125–126.1 in *Capital*, pp. 1–24 in the Annotations. You should also consult appendices A and B for this. For the first few class sessions, Hans also recommends reading the Synopsis in Appendix C, which is a new resource still under construction. During these four days, you may submit per e-mail an answer to one of questions 5–65 or 1015–1019. This is for those who would like an early start. You can make this homework submission even before your

first class session. But if you miss this homework period, don't worry about it. If you would like to have a trial run, you should type up after the question number in your submission; in this case, Hans will read your homeworks carefully and give you feedback over email, and tell you what grade you would have received, but this grade will not be counted. This option is always open to you, not only in the first week; see page 813.

Day session Friday, Aug 30, 10:45 am w1 Hans will explain the format of the class for the day class. He will also discuss the topic covered in Assignment w1: Why begin with the commodity? The class always discusses the material right *after* the study questions for it were assigned as homeworks.

Fri Aug 30–Thu Sep 3, 6 pm w1 Reading assignment consists of the two subsections 1.1.a: [*The Commodity as Natural Object and Use-Value*] and 1.1.b: [*From Exchange-Value to Value*], pp. 125–127.3 in *Capital*, pp. 1–43 in the Annotations. You should concentrate especially on the second portion, “From Exchange-Value to Value,” which is an important section. All questions assigned this time come from this latter section. Hans wrote a detailed explanation of Marx's argument in the synopsis in Appendix C. Between Aug 30 and Sep 3, 6 pm, you may submit per e-mail an answer to one of questions 67–96. Because of the Labor Day weekend, this homework period is extended until Tuesday 6 pm; usually the homework periods end at 3 am (3 hours after midnight).

Evening session Tuesday, Sep 3, 6 pm w1: We will discuss the material covered in Assignment w1: the Sherlock-Holmes approach to uncovering hidden economic structures.

The Sep 3, 6pm–Thu Sep 5 w2 Read section 1.1.c: [*From Value to Labor*], pp. 127.4–128.3 in *Capital*, 43–57 in the Annotations. Between Sep 3 and Sep 5, questions 101–120 are assigned.

Last Day to Drop (Delete) Classes is Wednesday Sep 4

Day session Friday, Sep 6, 10:45 am w2: We will discuss the material covered in Assignment w2: How can prices be governed by labor content, if most market participants have no idea how much labor is in the things they trade?

Fri Sep 6–Thu Sep 10 w2 Read section 1.1.d: [*The Quantity of Value and Individual Differences*], pp. 128.4–131.1 in *Capital*, 57–72 in the Annotations. Between Sep 6 and Sep 10, 6 pm, questions 123–143 are assigned.

Evening session Tuesday Sep 10, 6 pm w2: It seems only fair that those who work at a slower pace get paid less. But is it? This is a mandatory session for the evening class. Hans will also talk about Internet etiquette and the technicalities of email discussions. This is also a good early opportunity to find partners for your term paper group.

The Sep 10–Thu Sep 12 w3 Read section 1.2: [*The Double Character of Labor Represented in Commodities*], pp. 131.2–137 in *Capital*, 72–97 in the Annotations. Between Sep 10, 6 pm, and Sep 12, questions 145–185 are assigned.

Day session Friday, Sep 13, 10:45 am w3: Marx explains why production in capitalism is drudgery and oppression rather than the joyful expansion of the worker's horizons. This is a mandatory session for the day class. Hans will also discuss Internet etiquette and the technicalities of email discussions. This is also a good early opportunity to find partners for