Marxism and the Black Experience

AFRO 298 C
(a course outline)

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OVERVIEW: This course is generally about one of the main tendencies in the Black liberation movement (BLM) and specifically about its development during the 1970's. If in the 1960's the more militant aspects of the BLM were in the midst of mass struggle, then during the 1970's these activists sought to develop a revolutionary vanguard. Not only was there considerable theoretical-rhetorical development, there was also a considerable variation of political practice. This course is an opportunity to subject these activities of the 1970's to scholarly study.

OBJECTIVES:

1. to study the theory of Marxism as applied in the U.S. context
2. to study some radical aspects of the Black liberation movement
3. to study current aspects of currents of Black intellectual thought in the 1970's and 80's in relationship to Marxism.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. attend class and read assigned material
2. midterm exam, final exam and research paper
3. participation in class discussions

GRADING:

1. paper = 60%
2. exams = 40%

TEXTS: will be discussed in class

OVERALL COURSE OUTLINE

Part 1: Background

1. fundamentals of Marxism (Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao)
2. Old Left (CPUSA, SWP)
3. New Left (SDS, NCM)
4. Civil Rights Movement (SNCC)
5. Black liberation movement (Black Panther Party)
Part 2: Search for a Vanguard

1. League of Revolutionary Black Workers
2. Black Workers Congress
3. Congress of African People
4. Revolutionary Communist League
5. Youth Organization for Black Unity
6. Malcolm X Liberation University
7. African Liberation Support Committee
8. Revolutionary Workers League

Part 3: Variations

1. Polemics between Nationalists and Marxists
2. Intellectuals and Collectives
PART ONE

Course Calendar, lecture Topics and Required Readings

(* = handouts in class, some free, some cost)

Jan 19th  Introduction to Course

Jan 21  1. Fundamentals of Marxism

Jan 23  Continuation

Jan 26  2. Old Left (CPUSA and SWP)

Jan 28  3. New Left (SDS and NCM)

Jan 30  Continuation

Feb 2  4. Civil Rights Movement (SNCC)

Feb 4  Continuation

Feb 6  Continuation

Course Outline

1. Lenin, Karl Marx
2. Marx and Engels, Communist Manifesto
3. Mao, "On Practice" and "On Contradiction"

Peoples College, Intro Vol. II, Chapter 17
"Marxism and Black Liberation" pages 466-532
*1928-30 Theses on the Negro Question of the Communist International

James O'Brien, "A History of the New Left 1960-68"


Peoples College, Intro Vol. II, Chapter 15
"Civil Rights and the Struggle for Democracy" pages 321-385

James Foreman, Making of a Black Revolutionary (pages 234-386, skim the whole book)

Selections from Stanford University

SNCC Anthology (to be assigned)
Feb 9  5. Black Liberation Movement (Black Panther Party)

Sections from Black Panther Speaks edited by Philip Foner (to be assigned)

Bobby Seale, Seige the Time: The Story of Black Panther Party and Huey Newton (pages 59-197 skim the whole book)

Feb 11  Continuation

Feb 13  Continuation
LECTURE OUTLINE: #1. Fundamentals of Marxism

1. Philosophy and Method
   (a) Materialism
   (b) Dialectics

2. Historical Materialism
   (a) Origin and Structure of Society
   (b) Socio-Economic Formations

3. Political Economy
   (a) Surplus Value
   (b) Classes and the Class Struggle

4. Revolution
   (a) Strategy and Tactics
   (b) Dictatorship of Proletariat

5. Revolutions and Revolutionaries
   (a) Marx and Engels
   (b) Soviet Union (Lenin, Stalin)
   (c) China (Mao)
Course Bibliography

Overall


1. Fundamentals of Marxism

Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto (1848)

Mao Tse Tung, "On Practice" and "On Contradiction" (essays written in 1937)

Karl Marx, The German Ideology

Karl Marx, Capital (Volume 1)


Fredreich Engels, Anti-Dühring

V. I. Lenin, Imperialism

V. I. Lenin, The State and Revolution

J. V. Stalin, History of the Communist Party Soviet Union (Bolshevik) (1939)


2. Black History


3. Selected References to the Left


Benjamin Davis, *Communist Councilman From Harlem* (New York: International Publishers, )


Paul Robeson, *Here I Stand*


Angelo Herndon, *Let Me Live* (New York: )

4. **Black Liberation Movement 1960's**


Philip Foner, ed., *Black Panther Speaks*